

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015DY244			
<b>Name of Service:</b>	Connolly Children's Centre			
<b>Address of Service:</b>	Ashgrove Community Centre, The Coombe, Inchicore, Dublin 8, Co. Dublin			
<b>Eircode:</b>	D08 E8RH			
<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Elsie Kelly , Emer Mulvey			
<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional			
<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	04/10/2023			
<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	29	PM	27
<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate 2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor, Unit 4/5 The Nexus Building Blanchardstown Corporate Park Ballycoolin Dublin 15   D15 CF9K			
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	T. Nelson			
<b>Title:</b>	Early Years Inspector			

### Authority to Inspect

The Tusla Early Years Inspectorate carries out inspections of Early Years Services under Section 58(J) of the Child Care Act 1991 (as inserted by Section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013).

**Conditions if applicable** Not applicable.

### Description of service

Connolly Childrens Centre is a full day care service located in a residential area of Dublin City Centre and is registered to provide fulltime, parttime and sessional early childhood care and education to a maximum of 40 children aged 1 to 6 years Monday to Friday. The service operates an Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme sessional service from 9.30am to 12.30pm.

Connolly Children Centre operates from a two-story premises with three care rooms on the ground floor to include Toddler 1 room (1 to 2 years old), Toddler 2 room (2 - 3 years old) and the Preschool room (2 years and 8 months – 5 years old). There are nappy changing and sanitary facilities located off the care rooms. The cot room, kitchen and reception are also located on this floor. The office and staff room are located on the first floor. The service has exclusive access to an enclosed outdoor play area located within walking distance to the premises where there is access to indoor shelter and sanitary accommodation.

### Staffing

There are currently 14 staff employed by the service including the two registered providers, eight childcare staff who work directly with the children, a support staff member who is currently undergoing a training programme to complete a level 5 qualification, a kitchen staff member, an administration worker and a cleaner who attends outside of the operational hours of the service. The registered providers work in the service, managing the oversight of the service and providing cover where needed across the rooms. There were 11 staff present on the day of the inspection including the two registered providers, seven childcare staff, a support staff member and kitchen staff member.

### Methodology

Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate is the independent statutory regulator of early years services in Ireland. The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 define the duty of a registered provider to ensure the safety and well-being of children and to comply with these regulations. This Act also gives Tusla the authority to assess compliance with the regulations. The purpose of regulation in relation to early years services is to ensure that the care, safety, and well-being of children attending such services is upheld. Inspections of early years services are planned based on the following:

- Previous inspection history
- Any information received in relation to the service

The findings on inspection are based on:

- Information obtained through examination of documentation
- Direct observation
- Discussion with relevant staff

This inspection was unannounced and focused on the area of governance/ health, welfare and development of child/ safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under:

- Regulation 9(1),(2)(a)(b)(c)(d),(3) (4) Management and Recruitment
- Regulation 11(1),(4), Staffing Levels
- Regulation 19(1)(b) Health, Welfare and Development of child
- Regulation 22 Food and Drink
- Regulation 23 Safeguarding the Health, Safety and Welfare of the Child
- Regulation 25 First Aid
- Regulation 26 Fire Safety Measures

However, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 27. This finding is outlined within the relevant regulation within this report.

Inspection findings are documented in the inspection report which is first issued in draft format to the service with an opportunity to respond to any findings. Where statutory requirements are identified as not being met, the registered provider must demonstrate how they have rectified the non-compliance and will prevent any non-compliance from re occurring. The Corrective Action and Preventive Action plan (CAPA) will be used to inform decisions about compliance with regulatory requirements. Where the registered provider fails to meet the statutory requirements an escalation process may be commenced.

The inspectorate reserves the right to edit responses received for reasons including clarity, completeness and compliance with administrative and legal processes.

The contents of the report are compiled by the inspectorate body.

### Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered providers, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

### Part III – Management and Staff

#### Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

*(1) A registered provider shall ensure that-*

- (a) the service has a designated person in charge and a named person who is able to deputise as required,*
- (b) at all times during the period when the pre-school service is being carried on, the designated person in charge or the named person referred to in subparagraph (a) is on the premises, and*
- (c) there is a clear management structure in the service that identifies the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and unpaid worker.*

*(2) A registered provider shall ensure that each employee, unpaid worker and contractor is suitable and competent taking into consideration the nature of the needs of children, including by-*

- (a) consideration of references from the person's past employers, if any, and in particular the most recent employer, if any,*
- (b) consideration of references from reputable sources in the case of a person who has no past employers,*
- (c) consideration of the vetting disclosure received from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána in accordance with the Act of 2012 in respect of the person, and*
- (d) ensuring, insofar as is practicable, that where a person has lived in a state other than the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months, he or she provides police vetting from the police authorities in that state.*

*(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.*

*(4) A registered provider shall ensure that, without prejudice to the generality of paragraph (2) and subject to paragraphs (5) and (6), each employee working directly with children attending the service holds at least a major award in Early childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.*

## Compliance Information

(1)(a) The service had a designated person in charge and named person to deputise as required.

(b) The person in charge was present during the inspection.

The files of 13 staff were reviewed, including four staff who were new to the service since the last inspection held on the 2 November 2021. The registered provider had completed the following checks to ensure the staff members were suitable and competent:

- (2)
- (a) Eleven validated written references were available from recent past employers.
  - (b) Fifteen validated written references were available from a source other than a past employer.
  - (c) Completed Garda vetting disclosures were available in respect of the 13 staff members.
  - (d) There was documentary evidence available to show that no adults had lived outside of the state for six months or more as an adult.
- (3) Documentary evidence was available that checks had been carried out prior to the four staff members who were new to the service since the last inspection on the 10 August 2021 had commenced employment.
- (4) The ten staff who worked directly with children attending the service held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed eligible by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth Affairs.

## Part III – Management and Staff

### Regulation 11 - Staffing levels

*(1) Subject to this Regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that there is at all times an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.*

*(4) Subject to paragraph (5), where a registered provider contemporaneously provides-*

*(a) a sessional pre-school service, and*

*(b) a full day care service or a part-time day care service, or both, the minimum ratio of adults to children applicable for the duration of the sessional pre-school service in respect of the children attending that service shall be the ratio specified in paragraph (3).*

### Compliance Information

(1) On the day of inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the service to meet their basic care needs. There were nine staff available to the 29 children.

(4) The adult to child ratios were correct when the inspectors arrived unannounced to the service and throughout the inspection. Seven staff were allocated to work directly with the 29 children who were present on the day of the inspection with a breakdown as follows:

- Toddler 1 room - 2 adults to 5 children aged between 1-2 years old.
- Toddler 2 room - 2 adults to 8 children aged between 1-2 years old.
- Preschool room - 3 adults to 16 children aged between 2 years 8 months -5 years old.

## Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

### Regulation 19 - Health, welfare and development of child

*(1) A registered provider shall, in providing a pre-school service, ensure that-*

*(b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.*

### Compliance Information

(1)(b) Appropriate and suitable care practices were in place, for example:

- Practices such as mealtimes, nappy changing and toileting were observed to be timely and pleasant experiences for the children. The mealtime experience was observed to be led by the age and developmental stage of the children. Children were encouraged to self-feed during mealtime, and they were provided with appropriate equipment to facilitate this. Children had immediate access to suitable sanitary accommodation and handwashing facilities while in the outdoor play area.
- Sleep was observed to be led by the needs of the children and was flexible according to their needs.
- The staff interacted with the children in a respectful, warm and sensitive manner. Appropriate verbal and nonverbal communication such as low tones, eye level contact, touch and other strategies were observed. These strategies can facilitate and support positive emotional and social development and behaviours in young children.
- Daily routines were available and were reflected in practice. Routine provides for predictability and comfort for young children. New children to the service were observed to have routines that were flexible according to their needs and were supported with a staggered settling in period.
- Staff were observed respectfully tending to the care needs of the children with sensitivity. For example, on the outing staff ensured the children were appropriately dressed and assisted them to adjust their clothing, facilitating a positive sense of identity.

### Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

#### Regulation 22 – Food and drink

*A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.*

#### Compliance Information

The service ensured there was adequate and suitable food and drinks available. For example:

1. The service followed a four-week menu plan, and the documentary evidence available showed there was a varied selection of food available, with alternative options for children with specific dietary requirements.
2. Food offered throughout the day included breakfast at 9.15am, a hot meal at 12.00pm, fruit at 3.00pm and a tea at 4.00pm. On the day of the inspection the children were offered porridge and a selection of cereals with fruits for breakfast and chicken curry with rice for lunch. Additional portions were available.
3. Drinking water was freely available in the care rooms throughout the day, and milk was offered at mealtimes.

### Part VI - Safety

#### Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

*A registered provider shall ensure that all reasonable measures are taken to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of a pre-school child attending the service and that the environment of the service is safe.*

#### Compliance Information

The following safeguards were in place:

##### General Safety:

- The entrance to the service was secure on arrival. Staff monitor and manage entry to the service to restrict unauthorised access and to prevent children from exiting unsupervised.
- Cleaning products were observed to be stored up high out of children's reach.
- The outdoor area which the children had use of was fully enclosed, ensuring children did not have access to the street.
- Cables from the television and radio in the care rooms were observed to be secured.
- A record of accident and incidents was maintained.

##### Infection Control:

- Thermostatically controlled warm water, liquid soap and appropriate hand drying facilities were available at the hand wash basins used by children and staff.
- Childrens' soothers were stored in individual lidded boxes.
- Children with dirty noses were tended to immediately.
- Disposable protective gloves and aprons were worn for nappy changes and appropriate hand washing was completed after.

### Administration of Medication:

- There was a documented care plan available for a child who required medication, and staff were aware of the practices around this.
- Appropriate medication consent and administration forms were maintained.

### Non-Compliance Information

#### General Safety:

1. The two sand areas in the outdoor play area which the children use were left uncovered when not in use and there was no risk checklist in place to check them for hazards. This posed a risk of children coming to contact with harmful or toxic materials or waste.

#### Infection Control:

2. The nappy disposal system in use required repeated hand contact with the waste disposal unit. This increased the potential risk of cross contamination.

#### Safe Sleep:

3. Sleep practices were not in line with current safe sleep guidance or the service policy on safe sleep. The following practices were observed:
  - Children under 2 years old were observed to sleep on sleep-mats and there was no agreed sleep plan available with parental permission and there was no risk assessment in place. A sleep plan, incorporating a risk assessment, should be completed before moving a child from a cot to a sleep-mat.
  - Four sleep-mats and a cot were observed to be placed directly adjacent to each other in the cot room, restricting access to sleeping children. There must be adequate space between cots and sleep-mats in order to tend to the care needs of sleeping children.

This was identified as a non-compliance on the previous inspection on the 2 November 2021 and the preventive measures in place did not prevent a reoccurrence.

#### Fire Safety:

- The details of the attendance of the children in Toddler 2 room was not accurately recorded in the Entry checklist which staff reported is used for fire drills. Contemporaneous accurate attendance logs must be maintained to support the safe evacuation of children in an emergency.

### Outing:

- Outings to the private park which is not adjacent to the service and involves a five-minute walk were not in line with safe practice or the service policy on outings. The following practices were observed:
  - There was no risk assessment in place.
  - There was no attendance sheet detailing the names of the children and their contact details on the outing. It is acknowledged that a head count sheet was completed.
  - There was no person trained to First Aid Response level on the outing.

Appropriate safeguarding measures must be in place when children leave the premises.

### Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective & Preventive Action

##### General Safety:

##### corrective action

- Corrective action: Both sand areas will be covered before exiting the playground and the covers removed on entry. A member of staff will check both sand areas and surrounding playground for any hazards before the children enter.  
Preventive action: A safety checklist has been put in place and will be signed by the member of staff that completes the inspection.

##### Infection Control:

- Corrective action: The nappy disposal bin has been replaced by a pedal bin so there will be no further hand contact.  
Preventive action: During a staff meeting; cross contamination was discussed. Staff are aware of the potential dangers it entails and will ensure they no longer touch the nappy bin with their hands but use the pedal instead.

##### Safe Sleep:

- Corrective action: The sleep mattresses have been removed and replaced by cots with sufficient space to attend to the care and needs of each sleeping child. Any child under the age of two will sleep in a cot. A member of staff will wait with the children until they are asleep then monitor them using a baby monitor.

Children will be checked every ten minutes by touch. Children over the age of two will sleep on the sleep mattress in toddler room one with sufficient space and complete supervision at all times.

Preventive action: A risk assessment and sleep plan has now been devised and put into place for any child sleeping on a sleep mattress and in the event of a child under the age of two sleeping on a mattress, parental consent will be obtained. Both the risk assessment and sleep plan will be displayed in the sleeping areas.

### Fire Safety:

- Corrective action: During a staff meeting, staff were informed of the importance of signing in and documenting the attendance of every child as they come in as this is to support a safe evacuation in case of an emergency. Senior workers/room leaders will take responsibility for this.

Preventive action: Sign in sheet will be taken to the playground so in the event of a child being dropped to the playground the staff can sign them in immediately. Parents and staff were advised that under no circumstances could a child be dropped off while walking to and from the playground.

### Outing:

- Corrective action: A risk assessment and risk assessment checklist has been developed and implemented by the manager who collaborated it with all members of staff. Each childcare unit has been provided with an emergency contact list of parents or guardians of the children in their care. Staff are aware that it is their responsibility to abide by our policy and procedure and bring the emergency contact list with them to the playground. A FAR course has been booked and confirmed for eight of the staff members commencing 4 November 2023 ensuring there will always be a trained first aider available to the children.

Preventive action: A staff member from each childcare unit has been designated to carry out the risk assessment before the children go to the playground. In the event of the staff member being absent due to illness or annual leave the risk assessment will be carried out by either another member of staff or the manager. Staff will ensure that the creche mobile phone provided is at all times topped up with credit and in good working condition before leaving for the playground so therefor at all times will be able to contact the parents or creche if needed. The manager will ensure that training is kept up to date and given the demand for first aid training will book any future training well in advance.

### Supporting documentation submitted

#### General Safety:

- Photographic evidence of sand covers. Copy of playground checklist. Minutes of staff meeting.

### Infection Control:

2. Photographic evidence of new bins. Minutes of staff meeting.

### Safe Sleep:

3. Photographic evidence of the sleep room and the toddler room at sleep time. Copy of newly developed Sleep Plan. Sleep time risk assessment. Minutes of staff meeting. Copy of parental consent sheet.

### Fire Safety:

4. Minutes of staff meeting.

### Outings:

5. Copy of emergency contact list for playground. Copy of risk assessment. Copy of staff minutes. Evidence of booking of FAR training.

### Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliances identified under Regulation 23 have been adequately addressed.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 25 - First aid

*(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a person trained in first aid for children is, at all times, immediately available to the children attending the pre-school service.*

*(2) A registered provider shall ensure that a suitably equipped first aid box for children-*

*(a) is safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position on the premises, and*

*(b) is available to the children attending the pre-school service at all times.*

### Compliance Information

(2)(a) and (b) A suitably equipped first aid box was available and was safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position on the premises.

### Non-Compliance Information

(1) There was no documentary evidence available to demonstrate that a person trained to First Aid Responder level was available to the children attending the service during the operational hours of the service.

It is acknowledged that a staff member trained in Paediatric First Aid was available to the children.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

## Corrective and Preventive Action

(1) Corrective action: FAR training was booked for 4 November 2023 for eight staff members and will be completed by 18 November 2023.

Preventive action: The manager will ensure that training is kept up to date and given the demand for first aid training will book any future training well in advance. The staff member that has the paediatric first aid training will be onsite and available consistently until all training has been completed.

## Supporting documentation submitted

Evidence of booking for FAR training.

## Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the action and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 25 has been adequately addressed.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures

*(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of-*

*(a) any fire drill that takes place in the premises, and*

*(b) the number, type and maintenance record of fire fighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.*

*(4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire shall be displayed in a conspicuous position in the premises.*

## Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) A record of fire drills was available on the premises with the last drill dated as having been carried out on the 2 October 2023.
- (b) An up-to-date maintenance record was available for the Fire extinguishers and smoke alarms in the premises. The fire extinguishers were serviced in December 2022 and the smoke alarms were maintained on the 4 October 2023.
- (4) A procedure to be followed in the event of a fire was on display in each of the care rooms.

## Part VI – Safety

## Regulation 27 – Supervision

*A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.*

### Non-Compliance Information

The children were not observed to be appropriately supervised at all times. A child under two years old was observed to sleep on a low bed in the cot room with no direct supervision. It is acknowledged the child was checked at 10-minute intervals. When children are sleeping on sleep-mats, supervision must be provided at all times. The supervising adult must remain in the room to ensure adequate supervision of sleeping children. The adult/child ratio should be the same as for waking children.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective and Preventive Action

Corrective action: A new sleep plan has been implemented which states all children under two will sleep in the sleep room in their own cot, monitored until every child is asleep and then monitored using a sleep monitor, and checked by touch every ten minutes. The sleep mattresses have been moved to toddler room 1 for the use of children over the age of two under complete supervision ensuring the correct ratio is met.

Preventive action: Staff are aware of the new sleep plan and understand that children on a mattress must have supervision at all times while remaining in ratios.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence of new sleep arrangements. Newly developed sleep plan. Minutes of staff meeting.

### Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 27 has been adequately addressed.