

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015FL070
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Name of Service:	Clochán Cora Ltd.
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Address of Service:	Whitestown Road, Rush, Co. Dublin
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Eircode:	K56 NX82
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Name of Registered Provider:	Collette Kelly
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	08/04/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	22	PM	0
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, 181-189 Lakeshore Drive, Airside Business Park, Swords, Co. Dublin K67 Y5C6.
Inspection undertaken by:	S. Taaffe
Title:	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
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Description of service

Clochán Cora Ltd. is a sessional early years service operated from a single storey purpose built premises located to the rear of a registered provider's home on the outskirts of Rush in North County Dublin. The service was established by the registered provider in 2006 and is conducted from one pre-school room with double doors in place leading to an adjoining covered play space and also to an adjoining fully enclosed outdoor play area. The service operates during term-time for 38 weeks each year and is registered to accommodate a maximum of 22 pre-school children aged between 2 and 6 years. Clochán Cora Ltd. participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme from 9.00am to 12.00midday each weekday with the option provided for the children to attend for an extra 30 minutes from 12.00 to 12.30pm daily for an additional fee. School aged children are not accommodated in the service.

Staffing

In addition to managing the operation of the early years service, the registered provider works in the service on a daily basis caring for the pre-school children, supported by a team of 3 staff members, all of whom work directly with the children. One of these 3 staff members is employed to reduce the adult to child ratio, and when necessary to work directly with a child with additional needs, a post which is funded by the Minister as part of the Access and Inclusion Model scheme.

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 regulations 9, 11, 15, 19, 21, 23, 25 and 28.

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 provider, 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*

(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.

(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 registered provider is the designated person in charge of the service and two named staff members are appointed to deputise in the absence of the registered provider when required.

(b) The registered provider was present and in charge of the service when the inspector arrived unannounced to the service at 9.35am on the day of inspection.

The staff files for the registered provider and the 3 staff members were reviewed.

(2)(a)(b) There were 2 written validated references available for the registered provider and for the 3 staff members.

(a) Four of the 8 written references available were from past employers.

(b) Four of the 8 written references available were from sources other than a past employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for the registered provider and for the 3 staff members. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Not applicable as following a review of the staff files there was no evidence that international police vetting was required for any member of staff.

(4) The registered provider and the 3 staff members held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 - 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ).

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.*
- (3) Subject to paragraph (5), a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 2 of Schedule 6 opposite a particular reference number specified in column (1) of that Part in respect of the age range of the children specified in column (2) therefore at that reference number is satisfied.*
- (8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-*
- (c) a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that, where the person in charge operates the service single-handedly, a second person familiar with the operation of the service and in a position to provide assistance to the person in charge in operating the service is, at all times, within close distance of the service and available to attend the service to assist the person in charge in the event of an emergency.*

Compliance Information

- (1) During the inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the service.
- (2) The registered provider and 3 staff members were working directly with 22 pre-school children aged 3 years 3 months to 5 years 1 month, all attending the service on a sessional basis on the day of inspection. One of these staff members was employed to reduce the adult to child ratio, and when necessary, to support a child with additional needs as part of the Access and Inclusion Model scheme.
- (8)(c) Not applicable as 4 adults work in the service on a daily basis.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:

- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;*
- (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;*
- (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;*
- (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;*
- (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;*
- (f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;*
- (g) the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner;*
- (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;*
- (i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.*

(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-

- (c) an authorised person.*

Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider ensured a record in writing was available in respect of all 22 children attending the service and each form contained the required information as specified in (a) to (j) in this regulation.

(3)(c) The children's records were open to inspection as requested by the inspector as an authorised person.

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-

(a) each child's learning, development and well-being is facilitated within the daily life of the pre-school service through the provision of the appropriate activities, interaction, materials and equipment, having regard to the age and stage of development of the child, and

Compliance Information

(1)(a) The following examples demonstrate how each child's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the daily life of the service:

Basic needs:

- The atmosphere in the service was warm and child centred. The registered provider and staff members spoke positively and kindly to and about the children during the inspection and were observed initiating conversations and listening carefully to the children's stories and questions, and responding to the children in an interested and engaged manner.
- The service promoted healthy eating and children brought their own healthy packed lunches and drinks to the service. The registered provider and staff members chatted with the children during snack time, encouraging conversation and extending interactions.
- The close proximity of the sanitary accommodation to the pre-school room facilitated the children to use the toilet independently with the registered provider and staff members heard providing gentle reminders to the children to wash their hands afterwards. Assistance was provided to the children when necessary.
- After snack, the double doors were opened leading from the pre-school room to the adjoining covered outdoor structure, facilitating the children to engage in outdoor play despite the rainy weather conditions that prevailed on the day of inspection. A number of children who opted to return indoors to play were readily facilitated to do so with the adults observed supporting the children in their chosen play activities in both spaces.

Supporting relationships around children:

- The registered provider and staff members demonstrated skilful interaction strategies to support the children's play, learning and development, as evidenced in occasions when the adults acted as a play partners with the children and supported the children's participation in their chosen activities.
- The children were observed to be familiar with the registered provider and staff members and sought out their guidance and support in a relaxed manner throughout the session. Many children demonstrated a sense of pride in their success during the session and were observed engaging with the adults to share their achievements. A number of children were heard expressing happiness to be back in the pre-school service following the Easter break.
- The children in the service were encouraged to value and respect each other. This was particularly evidenced by the positive regard shown by the children, as well as the staff members, towards a child with additional needs in the service. The adults used Lámh as well as oral vocabulary to facilitate each child's inclusion and involvement in a caring and balanced way and all the children were also observed using a range of Lámh vocabulary during the session. The adults praised the children for kind actions, sharing, taking turns and saying please and thank you.
- Transitions were well supported in the service. A pictorial display of the daily routine and activities was on display at the children's eye level in the pre-school room and a picture exchange communication approach was used very effectively by a staff member and a child to establish joint attention and indicate preferences. Throughout the session verbal strategies including tidy-up-themed songs were used by the adults to inform and prepare children for up-coming activities and movement.
- Partnership with parents was demonstrated during the inspection with photographs of the children engaging in play activities shared with the parents on a mobile phone application. Parents were greeted warmly and communicated with in an unhurried manner on their arrival to the service.

Physical and material environment:

- The service was very well resourced with an extensive range and quantity of equipment, toys and materials to support the children's play and extend their learning and natural curiosity.
- The children appeared confident and content in their environment. The layout of the internal and external room and the outdoor play area supported the children's independence in making choices and provided lots of opportunity for the children to initiate and take the lead in activities. The children were observed collaborating with each other in relation to their play plans.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

- The pre-school room, the adjoining covered outdoor structure and the outdoor play area were laid out in clearly defined interest areas and it was evident that each area had been carefully considered by the registered provider and staff members to ensure they were visually stimulating and inviting for children. The interest areas included a home corner containing wooden kitchen units equipped with real world utensils and appliances, a hospital area with bed, an art area, a construction area and a well-resourced library area. Wall space in each interest area was used to enhance the space with examples of this evidenced in the brick wall scene provided at the home area, the large fruit and vegetable shop mural displayed at the shop area, and the hospital scene and health care staff images provided at the hospital area.
- In the store room adjoining the pre-school room a broad range of further play materials and equipment were observed, including some of which were stored in a number of boxes labelled with the days of the week which were rotated for use in the pre-school room on a scheduled day each week to provide variety for the children.
- The environment demonstrated that detailed pre-planning took place in relation to the curriculum. On the day of inspection the documented theme was spring, which was evidenced through art work and models under construction in the service, in the posters and pictures on display, songs sung and books available, and in group discussions which took place between the adults and the children.
- The children had access to a roofed wooden structure which adjoined the pre-school room and which provided the children and staff members with shelter from rain and direct sunlight. This area provided a sense of bringing the indoors out and it provided the opportunity for children to be outdoors on a daily basis regardless of the weather. Zipped screen panels were in place to enclose the space when required. Within the structure there were a range of interest areas including a library area, arts and crafts area, musical instruments, and tray-top activity tables with sensorial materials including a wide range of playdough. The service's outdoor play area adjoined the outdoor room and was fully enclosed by walls and fencing. The surface consisted of a paved pathway, impact-absorbent matting and fine rounded pebbles. A covered lean-to shelter was used to store a wide range of ride-on toys.

A construction area was established with diggers, wheelbarrows, shovels and spades, a pebble pit, building site signs on stands and planks on tyres. Other play equipment included two spacious well-equipped outdoor kitchens, a plastic climbing frame with a tunnel and two slides attached, a plastic play house and balance beams.

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

General Safety:

- The premises and outdoor play area were appropriately secured to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the service.
- The water temperature in the sanitary accommodation in the service did not exceed the recommended maximum water temperature of 43°C. This reduced the risk of scalding for the children in attendance.
- Cleaning agents were stored safely out of the reach of children.
- The play materials and equipment provided in the service were stored on stable-based low level shelving which reduced the risk of the furniture toppling over and causing injury to a child.

Infection Control:

- There was running warm water, liquid soap and paper hand towels provided for hand hygiene at the wash hand basins in the sanitary accommodation of the service. The children were encouraged to wash their hands before eating, after using the toilet, and after outdoor and messy play, with assistance provided when necessary.
- Children's lunches which contained perishable food items including meat and dairy products, provided by parents for the morning snack, were refrigerated on arrival to the service. This reduced the risk of bacteria multiplying to levels which could result in food contamination.
- Documented up to date cleaning records were maintained on the premises. The premises and the play equipment and materials were in a clean and hygienic condition.
- The outdoor sand pits were fitted with secure lids to prevent contamination by animals and birds when not in use.

Administration of Medication:

- There were forms available to record the details of any medication administered to a child in the service, should the need arise.

Fire Safety:

- Emergency exits in the service were clear and unobstructed.

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

(1) The registered provider and 2 staff members held in-date First Aid Response (FAR) training which ensured that a person with FAR training was at all times immediately available to the children attending the service.

(2)(a)(b) The first aid boxes were suitably equipped and easily accessible to the staff and available at all times for the children attending the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

A registered provider shall ensure that the pre-school service is adequately insured.

Compliance Information

The registered provider had insurance cover in place for 22 pre-school children attending the service on a sessional basis. The policy showed that the service was insured until 27/03/2025.