

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015GY063
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Childrens Republic
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Killeeneen N.S., Killeeneen, Craughwell, Co. Galway.
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<b>Eircode:</b>	H91 E293
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Claire Kendrick
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<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	23/01/2025
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	24	PM	N/A
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	TUSLA - Child and Family Agency, Early Years Inspectorate, Quality Assurance Directorate, Clinical & Administration Building, Block A - (1st Floor- Green Corridor), Merlin Park, Galway.
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	S. Meehan & F. Nic Dhonnacha.
<b>Title:</b>	Early Years Inspectors.

### 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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not Applicable
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### Description of service

Children’s Republic operates from Killeeneen national school, near the village of Craughwell, Co. Galway. An Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme and sessional care programme is offered from 9.00 am to 12.15 pm, Monday to Friday. The pre-school caters for children aged between 2 years to 6 years of age. The pre-school is based in two classrooms namely Seomra Beag and Seomra Mór. The pre-school children have access at designated times to secure outdoor play areas, to the side and rear of the national school, for play activities and exploration.

### Staffing

The registered provider is the designated person in charge and there is a named person who can deputise. There are four adults, including the registered provider working and caring for the children in the service. In addition, there was an administrator working in the service office. Three adults hold 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.

### 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 and premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under:

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels

Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures

Regulation 28 - Insurance

However, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under:

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

Regulation 19 - Health, welfare and development of child

Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

Regulation 25 - First aid

Regulation 29 - Premises

Regulation 30 - Minimum space requirements.

These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations 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.

### Additional Information

23/01/2025 An immediate action notice was issued as the number of children accommodated in Seomra Mor was in excess of the number of children allowed. There were 24 children when the maximum number of children allowed is 22 at any one time. Please refer to Regulation 30 in the body of the report.

When the inspection commenced the adult, child ratio was not adhered to as there were 2 adults caring for 24 pre-school children when 3 were required. This was non-compliant on the previous inspection dated 12/05/2022. Please refer to Regulation 11 in the body of the report.

24/01/2025 The registered provider stated in her response for Regulation 9(4) that the unqualified adult will no longer work directly with children and the adult in question has been removed from the roster.

Regulation 30(3) The registered provider stated that in the future the two playrooms in the service will be used and this will ensure that the maximum of 22 sessional children will not be exceeded in Seomra Mor.

### Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, staff members 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 was the designated person in charge and there was a named person available to deputise in the service.

(b) The registered provider was the person in charge and was on the premises and remained on site for the duration of the inspection. Documentary evidence indicated that either the designated person in charge or deputy were available, on the premises, when the pre-school children were present.

All five adult files were reviewed:

(2)(a)&(b) Ten validated references were from a past employer or a source other than a past employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all five adults. However, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. Please refer to the information outlined under regulation 23 of this report.

(d) Documented evidence indicated that 2 adults had lived outside of jurisdiction for over 6 consecutive months, while over the age of 18 years and had the required police vetting.

(4) Three of four adults working directly with the children had evidence of a childcare qualification to at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at a Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

### Non-Compliance Information

An immediate action was issued on the 23/01/2025.

(4) At 10.15 am an unqualified adult was working directly in Seomra Mor with children and had no evidence of a childcare qualification to at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at a Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent. This was a non-compliance on the last inspection 12/05/2022.

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

The registered provider stated in their response:

The registered provider stated in her response to the immediate action notice on the 24/01/2025 that:

The unqualified adult will no longer work directly with children and the adult in question has been removed from the roster.

### Corrective and Preventive Action

The unqualified adult no longer works in the service and has been removed from the roster. The service will ensure that only qualified adults work with children in the future.

### Supporting documentation submitted

Copy of the roster with the adult removed from employment.

### Summary Comment

The documented evidence was reviewed by the inspectors and has been deemed to have met the requirements under 9 (4).

## 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.*

### Non-Compliance Information

- (1) During the period of 9.00 am to 10.15 am the registered provider did not ensure that an adequate number of adults were working directly with the children. There were 2 adults working in the service with 24 pre-school children.
- (3) The registered provider did not ensure that the minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained, there were 2 adults working in the service with 24 pre-school children between 9.00 am to 10.15 am. The adult child ratio is 1 adult for every 11 preschool children on a sessional basis.

## Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider stated in their response:

### Corrective and Preventive Action

- (1) and (3) We have now three adults always working directly with children and a relief. We have also
- (2) advertised for another relief adult.

### Supporting documentation submitted

- (1) and (3) A copy of the roster and the advertisement for a new staff member was submitted to the Early Years Inspectorate.

## Summary Comment

The documented evidence submitted has been reviewed and has met the requirements of this part of the Regulations.

## Part IV – Information and Records

### Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

*(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:*

- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

## Compliance Information

- (1)
  - (h) Details of children’s attendance was recorded on the childcare application.
  - (i) A staff roster was available.
  - (k) A sample of 9 accidents and incidents report forms were recorded and there was evidence available that parents were informed and their signature was obtained following an accident or incident involving their child in the preschool service.

### 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.

#### Compliance Information

19(1)(a)

##### BASIC NEEDS:

- Healthy eating was promoted within the service. The service offered a rolling snack system. A designated table was available in each playroom. The rolling snack involved a child choosing when they have snack and as much as possible serving themselves rather than all being seated at the same time, with no choice. The food observed was healthy and nutritious.
- The snacks provided by parents and guardians consisted of a selection of sandwiches, brown bread, cheese, ham, rice cakes, yogurts, crackers, and pieces of fruit.
- There was water on a drink's trolley in Seomra Mór for the children to self-serve and access their drinks throughout the morning session.
- Most children were toilet trained and either toileted independently or with some assistance as required. The staff supervised children's hand washing before snack time, after toileting, after blowing their noses, after outdoor play.
- The children had plenty of opportunities to move about freely, exploring their environment both indoors and outdoors.
- The children had the opportunity to play outside, on the day of the inspection. These children were appropriately dressed wearing hats and coats while outside.

##### SUPPORTING RELATIONSHIPS AROUND CHILDREN:

- A key person system was in place for each child to support their development and to inform curriculum planning. Documentary evidence indicated that the role of the key person was also to liaise with parents and guardians.

- The staff verbally provided parents with daily information on their child’s experiences in the pre-school including the child’s likes, interests and preferences and play activities engaged in. This information was provided at collection/drop off times, via text messages and by phone calls.
- The service used a social media messaging application. There was evidence that activities the children participated in throughout the session were shared with parents and guardians.
- The service used a childcare application to interact with parents and guardians on each child’s learning and development. The inspectors viewed this application, and were shown the service polices, medication records, accident and incident records, templates, and staff observations.
- Each child had an individual scrapbook and copy books showing their individual art and craft work, drawings and writings.
- The staff were observed to be caring and supportive in their interactions with the children. During observed interactions, the staff demonstrated that they knew the children well, recognising and valuing their individual interests, needs and learning. The staff were observed to be interested in the children, spoke in low tones, listened to them, and responded to their requests.
- In the Seomra Mór playroom, the children engaged in free play, story time, tabletop activities and during circle time sang songs together. The children were observed at construction, sorting shapes and colours, stacking materials, playing with transport vehicles, colouring and playing with flour in sand basins, with dolls and soft toys.
- The children played outside at the side of the pre-school. These children were observed driving go carts, riding on scooters and running on the new colourful walking track around the school grounds.

### PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

- The layout of the Seomra Mór allowed the staff to supervise the children as they moved into the different interest areas.
- The equipment was stored on low-level shelving and was readily accessible by the pre-school children. The play equipment and materials were age and stage appropriate.
- The resources were organised and easily accessible to each pre-school child.
- The playrooms had new wipeable couches, poofs and matting available for the provision of rest and relaxation for the preschool children.

### In Seomra Mór

- There were well defined interest areas available in the playroom which allowed for imaginary, messy, sensory play and quiet play activity area. The play equipment also gave children the opportunity to develop their fine and gross motor skills.
- The materials and play equipment were visible and readily available to promote independent access by children.
- Visual aids, maps, posters, themes, and children's artwork were displayed at a low level for children to view.

### In Seomra Beag

- There were well defined interest areas which included a tabletop area for activities, arts/crafts area, a fully equipped household area and a selection of musical instruments. There was also Montessori equipment, a small world section, transport area, a selection of jigsaws and puzzles. Child size table and chairs were provided for circle time and tabletop activities.
- Displayed on the walls was children's expressive artwork, springtime artwork with handmade drawings of bird nesting, sheep, and daffodils. There was also an all about me wall with handprints, birthdays, and pictures of family members.

### OUTDOOR PLAY AREA:

- There was a combination of grass, artificial grass area, impact absorbing surface with a pitch, walking track and basketball court.
- There were additional play items in a secure storage area with a selection of ride on toys, sports equipment and play materials.

### Non-Compliance Information

#### Basic Needs

- The dignity of the child was not respected at nappy changing as other children and adults could view children being changed. The registered provider had moved the location of the nappy changing unit since the last inspection to the lobby area on the way into the children's sanitary area.

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

The registered provider stated in their response:

**Corrective and Preventive Action**

The nappy changing unit is moved to protect the dignity of the child and a new sink fitted.

**Supporting documentation submitted**

Confirmation of the work to be carried out was submitted to the Early Years Inspectors.

**Summary Comment**

The evidence submitted was reviewed and has been deemed to have met the regulatory requirements of this part of the Regulations. This will be reviewed on next inspection.

**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.*

**Non-Compliance Information**

**General Safety:**

1. Garda vetting was available for five adults, however three of these vetting disclosures were not dated within the previous three years in adherence to with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting' posing a potential safety risk for children.

**Infection Control:**

2. The nappy changing bin in the nappy changing area was not a self-sealing, foot pedalled, leak proof bin which may pose as a risk of cross infection.
3. The foot pedal waste bin in the children's sanitary area was broken. This may present as a risk of cross infection for a preschool child.

**Action submitted by the Registered Provider**

The registered provider stated in their response:

**Corrective & Preventive Action**

**General Safety:**

1. Garda vetting was renewed for the three adults, we will ensure they are in date going forward.

### Infection Control:

2. The nappy changing bin has been replaced with a leak-proof, self-sealing pedal bin. This is to reduce the risk of cross infection.
3. The broken pedal bin in the children's sanitary area has been replaced.

### Supporting documentation submitted

#### General Safety:

1. A copy of the renewed Garda vetting for the three adults was submitted.

#### Infection Control:

2. A picture of the new nappy changing bin.
3. A picture of the new pedal bin.

### Summary Comment

On review of the evidence submitted the Early Years Inspectors has deemed it has met the regulatory requirements under Regulation 23.

## 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) Three suitably equipped first aid boxes were available and in an easily accessible conspicuous position.

(b) The first aid boxes were readily available, with content items within date.

### Non-Compliance Information

(1) No adult working in the pre-school service had evidence of First Aid Responder (FAR) first aid course, it is acknowledged that four staff had a paediatric first aid training course. This may pose as a safety risk to

both children and adults attending the service. This was a previous non-compliance on the last inspection on the 12/05/2022.

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

The registered provider stated in their response:

#### **Corrective and Preventive Action**

First Aid Responder (FAR) first aid courses have been booked for two staff members. We will ensure that a staff member with a in date First Aid Responder training certificate is available during the operation of the service.

#### **Supporting documentation submitted**

Confirmation of the training date and payment.

### Summary Comment

On review of the evidence submitted the Early Years Inspectors has deemed it has met the regulatory requirements under Regulation 25.

## 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 firefighting 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) Arrangements were in place to record monthly fire drills. The last documented fire drill was dated 7<sup>th</sup> of January 2025.
- (b) A record of the number, type, and maintenance of firefighting equipment in the service was on file. Records indicated that the last annual maintenance for the firefighting equipment was dated 14<sup>th</sup> of February 2024. Records indicated that the last maintenance documentation for the fire detection system were dated the 22<sup>nd</sup> of February 2024.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed inside the entrance door to the service.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

#### Compliance Information

The service had insurance with an expiry date 27<sup>th</sup> of March 2025, which was for a sessional care service for 35 pre-school children and included the following: -

- public liability insurance,
- insurance against fire and theft,
- buildings insurance,
- insurance for outings undertaken as part of the service provision.

## Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

### Regulation 29 - Premises

*A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-*  
*(e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

#### Non-Compliance Information

- (e) A designated wash hand basin was not available for effective handwashing at nappy changing procedures.  
This may pose as a risk of cross infection for a preschool child.

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

The registered provider stated in their response:

##### **Corrective and Preventive Action**

(e) The wash hand basin in the nappy changing area will be fitted over the break to ensure that the risk of cross infection is reduced.

##### **Supporting documentation submitted**

(e) Confirmation that the work will be carried.

#### Summary Comment

On review of the evidence submitted the Early Years Inspectors has deemed it has met the regulatory requirements under Regulation 29 (e).

## Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

### Regulation 30 - Minimum space requirements

*(3) A registered provider of a sessional pre-school service or a pre-school service in a drop-in centre shall ensure that a minimum of 1.818 square metres of clear floor space is available for each child attending the service.*

#### Non-Compliance Information

An immediate action notice was issued on the 23/01/25.

- (3) There were 24 preschool children being cared for in the Seomra Mor playroom. The maximum number of children attending a sessional service is 22 in any one room at any time during the operation of a sessional service.

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

The registered provider stated in the response to the immediate action notice on the 24/01/2025 that:

- (3) In the future the 2 playrooms in the service will be used and this will ensure that the maximum of 22 sessional children will not be exceeded in Seomra Mor.

#### Corrective and Preventive Action

- (3) The playrooms going forward will only have a maximum of 22 sessional children.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

- (3) The registered provider stated in the immediate action notice that overcrowding in the playrooms would not happen going forward.

#### Summary Comment

On review of the registered providers response, it has been deemed to have met the requirements and will be reviewed on next inspection.