

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015KK046
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Name of Service:	The Village Childcare & Community Services
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Address of Service:	54/55 Hollybank Lawn, Clongowen, Waterford Road, Kilkenny, Co. Kilkenny
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Eircode:	R95 DD27
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Name of Registered Provider:	Martin Cornally
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Service type:	Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	10/11/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	21	PM	20
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla Child and Family Agency, Athy Road, Carlow.
Inspection undertaken by:	Norma Thornton
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

The Village Childcare and Community Services is a community childcare service in Hollybank Lawns in the residential estate of Clongowen, off the Waterford Road in Kilkenny city. The childcare service provides a sessional and part-time service between the hours of 08:30 to 13:15, Monday to Friday. The sessional early childhood care and education is provided from 08:30 to 11:30 hours.

The premises consists of two adjoined semi-detached houses which have been adapted to provide a classroom for 2- to 3-year-old children on the ground floor and two classrooms on the first floor for children attending the ECCE. There is also a kitchen area, administration office and staff room on the ground floor with a covered outdoor lay area to the rear of the service which can be divided into further sections as required for use.

Staffing

There were 11 staff members employed in the service which included 6 early years educators, who as part of their role in the service work directly with the pre-school children, a kitchen staff member, an office administrator, two school age care practitioners and a third level student in education.

The registered provider does not work in the service.

All six staff members who worked directly with the pre-school child held qualifications in early childhood care and education ranging from level 5 to level 8 on the national Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) framework.

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

The inspection focused on assessment of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 16, 19, 23, 24, 25, 26 and 28

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under the following regulations 16, 23 and 24.

As a result, the scope of the inspection included the following classrooms- the Teddy Bears classroom on the ground floor and the ECCE classrooms on the first floor.

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 designated person in charge, office administrator staff, 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 designated person in charge was present in the service for the duration of the inspection.

(b) The staff roster demonstrated that the designated person in charge or a named deputy designated person in charge, was always onsite while the service was in operation.

(c) A clear outline of the management of the structure was displayed on the notice board in the entrance hall of the service, identifying the lines of authority, accountability, the roles, and responsibilities of individuals in the service.

(2) Staff files for 11 staff members were reviewed by the inspector.

- (a)(b) Two validated references were available on file for each of the staff members from either a past employer or from a reputable source.
- (c) Garda vetting certificates were available on file for each staff member. The registered provider demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d) A police vetting disclosure certificate was on file for one staff member employed in the service who had lived outside of the state for a period of longer than six months.
- (4) Certificates of qualifications were available for inspection, for each staff member, who as part of their role were working directly with the children, demonstrating that each staff member held at least a minimum Level 5 to Level 8 qualification in early childhood care and education on the national QQI Framework.

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.*
- (2) Subject to paragraphs (4) and (5), a registered provider of a full day care service or a part-time day care service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 1 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) thereof at that reference number is satisfied.*
- (8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-*
- (a) a registered provider of a pre-school service other than a child-minding service or a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that there are at least 2 adults on the premises at all times,*

Compliance Information

- (1) Throughout the inspection, there was an adequate number of staff members working directly with the children attending the service.
- (2) There was an adequate number of adults working directly with the children throughout the inspection. In the Teddy Bears classroom there were 2 staff members present with 5 children aged 2 to 3 years. Upstairs in the two ECCE rooms which had joined and mixed for activities, there were 15 children aged 3 to 5 years of age with an additional child settling in for approximately one hour.
- (8) On review of the staff present and the staff roster available, the inspector was assured that there were always at least 2 qualified staff members always present in the service.

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:

- (a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;*
- (b) details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services;*
- (c) details of the adult:child ratios in the service;*
- (d) the type of care or programme provided in the service;*
- (e) the facilities available;*
- (f) the opening hours and fees;*
- (g) the policies, procedures and statements the service is required to maintain in accordance with Regulation 10;*
- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*
- (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

Compliance Information

(1)(a)- (i) On review of documentation and records open for inspection and in discussion with the designated person in charge the inspector observed that there was a record maintained for elements (a) to (i) in the service.

- Staff files clearly recorded the name, position, qualifications and experience of each person employed in the service.
- The service’s statement of purpose and function was available displayed clearly on the notice board in the main entrance hall.
- Policies and procedures as required by regulation 10 were available in the service and revised annually.
- The staff roster for the current week was displayed and made available to the inspector with past staff rosters also available for review.
- Staff demonstrated that they were well informed in relation to the service’s administration of medications records and the maintenance of administration of medication records. A sample of five administration of

medication records were reviewed by the inspector and observed to have been completed in line with the service's administration of medication policy.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(k) A sample of 34 Accident and Incident records were reviewed for the period from 26 March 2025 to 24 October 2025. The inspector observed that 9 records of accidents/ incidents which had taken place in the service had not been signed by the child's parent / guardian. It is acknowledged that on several forms the staff member completing the form had documented that the parent/ guardian had been informed however 9 records remained unsigned by parents/ guardians which was at variance with the service's accident and Incident policy which states "Parents / Guardians will be asked to sign off on the accident/incident form."

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider and designated person in charge have submitted the following actions.

Corrective and Preventive Action

The Accident & Incident forms have been revised and amended immediately, media application /phone call, text message info removed from form, follow up actions time & details added to the template immediately.

All staff notified immediately, each group was also informed by person in charge of changes made. Policy made available for staff to read again.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copy of revised policy and copy of staff confirming that they were informed of the amendments.

Summary Comment

The actions submitted are appropriate to address the non-compliance. The implementation of these actions will be reviewed on next inspection.

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

(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)(a)(b)

The following observations were made by the inspector during the inspection.

In all three classrooms children were provided with opportunities to choose their activities during free play and were observed to independently move from play activities that had been set up on tables such as play dough and cutting and gluing activities to the areas of interest that were provided in each classroom for imaginary play.

The children's classrooms had been developed to enhance each child's identity and belonging with each child's family picture displayed on the "Our Family Wall" in the ECCE classrooms. Each child had an individual learning folder which they could access on a low shelf. Each folder contained examples of the curricular work that the children had participated in and photographs of the activities.

At 10:00 hours the children had their morning snack. The designated kitchen staff member provided each classroom with a tray of a variety of crackers, rice crackers, cheeses, bananas, apple slices, a selection of cold meats and yogurt drinks. Children were each provided with a plate and each child selected what they would like to eat. Staff sat with the children at mealtimes and explained to the inspector that the service had recently been selected for the national pre-school nutrition programme. In participation with the programme children were very much involved in the planning and decision making around what they would like to eat. A discussion of what foods the children would like to try and to buy for their morning snack had taken place with a group of children engaging on an outing with staff members to select samples of the food items that they would like to see included in their morning snack. The staff explained to the inspector that they arranged that the meal as part of the pre-school nutrition programme took place at 10:00 to ensure all pre-schoolchildren present for the ECCE service were included and that children who remained for the par-time service bought an additional cold meal from home to eat at 12:00 hours.

The children were confident and animated in telling the inspector about their shopping trip and their participation in the programme with photographs of them shopping having been recorded. Children also informed the inspector that they had requested food items to make dishes such as scrambled eggs and a selection of flavoured muffins and that they had planned to make scones this week.

At snack time, children chose what items they wanted and often went back to get some more or tried something that another friend was trying or making such as a cracker sandwich. The snack time was unhurried with staff supporting children to try new things and reassuring the children that if they didn't like something that they could put it to the side of their plate. Each child had access to their individual drinks bottle which they confidently fetched from the drinks station prior to sitting down for their meal. Children were involved in giving out plates to their friends and explaining what food items that they thought tasted nice and encouraged each other to try things.

The children were able to show the inspector the shopping centre that they had visited which was photographed along with other landmarks such as the local cathedral, football stadium and castle displayed in the children's "Our Community".

The inspector observed that staff strived to ensure all children were happy in the service taking time to form bonds and build relationships with the children. In both the Teddy Bears classroom and the ECCE classroom, one new child was settling in and another child who had returned from being away from the service for a while was refamiliarizing themselves with the routine. In both instances the service facilitated the mothers of the children to stay with the children engaging in play activities and reaffirming the child's confidence and familiarity with the environment.

When one parent slipped away, while the child was engaged in the play activities, staff assured the parent they would support the child and call if there were any issues. When eventually the child became aware that their parent had left and became upset, the staff member reassured the child offering cuddles and opportunities to sit and read or play a game which distracted and calmed the child helping them to settle again.

The inspector observed that a staff member in the Teddy Bears classroom promptly responded to a child's tantrum again with distraction and using music which the staff discovered had a calming effect, in particular specific lyrics to a song which the child was observed to immediately respond to and relaxed by the comfort provided by staff.

Staff informed the inspector that they found having children from a variety of diverse backgrounds and cultures often provided challenges with language development however they found singing and musical activities promoted development of language and understanding while also having a calming influence. The designated

person in charge confirmed that several staff were enrolled to do a course in using music to promote children's learning and development in the coming weeks.

The inspector observed that all the children had access to the outdoor play area at the back of the service which was covered over and provided the children to be outdoors for most of their time in the service. The area provided the children with a choice of activities from sand play to water play with a thermoregulated handwash basin provided, transport areas, a large playhouse mud kitchen and open shelving with clear boxes of play equipment which the children could be observed being familiar with and accessing independently. Staff were observed engaged in play with children building sandcastles and fetching more bags of sand at the request of the children even though the sand box was well supplied. Staff promoted children's confidence using positive affirmation when the children achieved activities or tried new games.

Positive behaviours such as sharing or helping another friend were rewarded with kind words and acknowledging the behaviour.

Staff were observed to be kind and patient taking time to speak with parents at collection time and explaining how children were progressing.

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 service was secured with a call bell system at the main entrance, to prevent any unauthorised person from entering the building and to prevent any child exiting the building unsupervised. Staff in the service office had a clear view of any person approaching the entrance of the service.

Wooden gates secured the front drive outside the main entrance reducing the risk of children running into the carpark when collected by parents or guardians.

The outdoor play area was secured with a high wall and double secured wooden side gates at both gable ends of the premises.

The inspector observed that the children from the Teddy Bears classroom could directly access the outdoor area via the sliding door at the back of their classroom and the ECCE classrooms were able to get to the outdoor area via the lobby area outside the kitchen, at the left gable end of the building.

The inspector observed that there were no cleaning products or equipment within access of the children and in discussion with staff was reassured that all cleaning products and equipment had a designated storage area and were stored out of the reach of the children.

Infection Control:

There was an adequate number of toilet and nappy changing facilities provided on both floors of the service to meet the needs of the children present. A designated staff toilet was available on the ground floor.

The children's toilets were child sized, and each toilet unit was supplied with liquid hand soap and paper towelling, which the children could easily access and use.

Staff were observed to adhere to nappy changing procedures, wearing gloves and aprons appropriately and practicing effective hand washing at the appropriate times. Children had their hands washed after nappy changing and all children were encouraged to wash their hands post toileting, messy play, outdoor play and prior to mealtimes.

Safe Sleep:

Staff in the Teddy Bear classroom confirmed that there were stackable beds with appropriate clean fitted sheets and cellular blankets available for the children who wished to avail of a rest during their time at the service. Sleep records of any child who did sleep were available for review and demonstrated that staff ensured that each sleeping child's position, colour and breathing were recorded every ten minutes in line with the service's safe sleep policy and safe sleep guidelines.

Outing:

The service had an outings policy in place which they implemented in practice recently when they took several of the children to the local supermarket. The designated person in charge demonstrated that parents' consent had been obtained, a risk assessment carried out, and the insurance company informed as part of the implementation of the service's outings policy.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) no person other than-

(i) pre-school child attending the service,

(ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,

(iii) an employee, or

(iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and

(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (3)(b) is retained for a period of one year from the date to which it relates.

Compliance Information

(1) The staff in each of the Teddy Bear's classroom and in the ECCE classrooms upstairs demonstrated to the inspector that each pre-school child's daily attendance and departure times to and from the service were recorded daily. On review of the attendance records the number of children present in the service correlated with the attendance records maintained by the staff.

(3)(a)(b) The staff ensured that no other person other than a pre-school child, person dropping or collecting a child, employee or unpaid worker could enter the premises without their entry being approved by an employee. All authorised visitors to the service were required to record the date of entry, their name, contact number, reason for entry, check in and out times on the visitors record book located at the main entrance. The inspector was requested to document the above details in the visitor book on arrival to the service.

(4) The record maintained of any entry of a visitor to the service had been maintained since 2023.

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

There were two staff members employed in the service with current certification in the required first aid responder (FAR) training for children. At all times while the service was operating, the two staff members with FAR training were present.

This was reflected in the staff roster reviewed by the inspector on the day of inspection. Records in staff files demonstrated that three staff members had recently carried out refresher course training in FAR which was not due to expire until 24 June 2027. The designated person in charge stated that additional staff were due to attend FAR training in the coming months.

(2)(a)(b)

There was a first aid bag available in each of the classrooms and there was a main first aid bag available and easily accessible on a shelf in the lobby area adjacent to the kitchen.

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) The designated person in charge ensured that the following fire records were maintained.
- (a) There was a written record of the monthly fire drills that took place in the service. The last fire drill was recorded as having taken place on the 20 October 2025.
 - (b) A record was maintained of the dates of checking and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and fire alarm system in the service, by a reputable contractor. The last maintenance check for the firefighting equipment was recorded as having taken place in April 2025 and the last maintenance service for the smoke alarm system was recorded as having last taken place on the 27 August 2025.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire or fire drill were clearly displayed inside the main entrance door and in each classroom.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

An insurance certificate displaying adequate insurance for a part-time childcare service for up to 45 preschool children was displayed on the notice board in the entrance hall.

The insurance certificate provided cover from 28 March 2025 to the 27 March 2026.