

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015KY033
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Name of Service:	Cordal Community Preschool and Playgroup CLG
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Address of Service:	Kilmurry, Cordal, Castleisland, Co. Kerry
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Eircode:	V92 X015
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Name of Registered Provider:	Pat Mc Elligott
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date of Inspection:	26/06/2023
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No of pre-school children:	AM	18	PM	1
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	134 Bank Place, Mallow, Cork. P51 EC59.
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Inspection undertaken by:	E. Friel
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Title:	Early Years Inspector
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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

Cordal Community Pre-school Playgroup is an early years setting providing options of full day care, part-time and sessional services. The facility is registered to accommodate children aged from 2 years of age to 6 years old and the Early Childhood care and Education (ECCE) Scheme is facilitated between the hours of 9.30 am and 12.30 pm. The service is open 50 weeks of the year, and a breakfast club is available from 7.30 am until 9.10 am and in the afternoon from 2.00 pm until 6.00 pm.

Cordal Community Pre-school Playgroup is located in the rural village of Cordal, near Castleisland in North Kerry. It operates from a purpose-built building located at the rear of Kilmurry National School. The premises consists of a small entrance hall off which there is the main care room and a small kitchen. There are two children's toilet cubicles and an adult toilet cubicle where the changing unit is located. The service shares a secure outdoor play area with the school

Staffing

There are seven adults employed in the service including the manager, two AIM Support Workers, two school age care workers and a chef.

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 and safety. The inspections may also focus on other areas as required.

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 manager, deputy, 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.

(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 ensured that there was a designated person in charge (manager) and a person available to deputise (deputy).
 - (b) The manager and deputy were both on the premises when the inspector arrived. The staff roster indicated that either the manager or the deputy were available on the premises while the pre-school children were present.
 - (c) There was a clear management structure in place and staff were aware of their roles and responsibilities.
- (2) Recruitment files for all seven staff were reviewed.
- (a) There were five validated references from past employers.
 - (b) There were two references from sources other than previous employers, only one of which was validated.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures from the National Vetting Bureau were available for all seven staff members.
 - (d) An international police disclosure was on file for one adult who had lived outside the State for a period of six consecutive months or longer as an adult.
- (4) Three of the adults working with the pre-school children each held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications. The fourth adult held a Letter of Eligibility from the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth. The other three adults did not require qualifications.

Non-Compliance Information

- (2)
- (a) (b) There were seven references and eight validations missing in respect of four employees.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (2)
- (a)(b) All references and validations have now been placed in the staff files. A new validation template has been developed and will be completed prior to employees commencing employment in the future.

Supporting documentation submitted

- (2)
- (a) (b) Copies of the seven missing references and eight validations were received in the office of the inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The corrective actions implemented by the manager have addressed the non-compliances identified under Regulation 9 (2) (a) (b).

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) The registered provider ensured that there were an adequate number of adults working with the children throughout the inspection.

(2) Staff rosters and attendance records were available to evidence that the minimum ratio of adults to children was adhered to. There were eighteen pre-school children in attendance with four adults in the morning. In the afternoon there was one pre-school child along with ten school age children in attendance with three adults.

(8)

(a) The registered provider ensured that there were at least two adults on the premises at all times.

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.*

Compliance Information

(1) The records for all nineteen pre-school children attending the service were reviewed. All were found to contain the particulars (a) to (i) above.

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

BASIC NEEDS:

- Food observed being consumed on the day of inspection was healthy and nutritious. The service provides breakfast between 7.30 am and 9.10 pm which staff stated consists of cereals, toast and fruit juice. Parents/guardians had prepared snack for the morning (10.30 am) and afternoon (3.00 pm) which were noted to consist of filled sandwiches, pepperoni, yogurts, and a variety of fruits. The hot meal of stew, potatoes and carrots was served at 1.15 pm and this had been prepared by the chef in the service kitchen. Staff stated fruit is available at 5.00 pm if children are hungry. Water was available throughout the morning from individually labelled sports bottles which were easily accessible from a basket on a shelf.
- Nappy changing was carried out as and when required. The staff member was observed speaking to the child during this time using it as an opportunity for warm one to one interaction.
- Staff were observed helping children dress themselves after toileting. They had dress up outfits on as it was there last day before the summer holidays.
- A large rest/quiet area was available allowing the children to relax. It was fitted with soft furnishings including sofas and chairs. A large selection of age and stage appropriate books were located in a bookcase nearby.
- The children could move freely and explore indoors and were observed playing outdoors throughout the morning.

SUPPORTING CHILDREN'S RELATIONSHIPS:

- During mealtimes staff sat at the tables and engaged in social conversation with the children, the atmosphere was noted to be happy and relaxed, with children talking about up-and-coming holidays.
- Inclusion plans were implemented in line with the child's own needs. Children who required movement breaks were accommodated by staff throughout the morning.
- Staff were observed helping children to find positive solutions to minor issues, supporting them and reminding them that their actions or words may hurt other children's feelings.

- Children were heard being encouraged and praised by staff when observed using good manners and assisting their friends. Examples were children helping each other with tasks at the snack table and using please and thank you when talking to each other and staff.
- A key person approach was stated as being in operation within the service. Staff stated that the key person is responsible for writing observations for each child. Examples of the observations which were stored in learning journals, and had been signed by the parents, were available and were furnished to the inspector to view.
- Various communication methods were in use to exchange information with parents/guardians. The inspector was furnished with examples of activities and general information which had recently been shared with parents via a software application. Staff were observed also exchanging information with parents at drop off and collection and by phone on the day.
- Staff stated that informal staff meetings take place daily with topics including planning, resources and activities being discussed.
- The staff were observed working together as a team throughout the inspection. At lunch breaks the staff were heard exchanging information on children which was important such as parent messages regarding the pick-up time for children.

PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

- The room was laid out in clearly defined areas which provided opportunities for learning across all developmental areas. Children were observed in sensory play in the form of playdough, sand, wooden rollers and brushes, and arts and crafts throughout the morning. Imaginary play was available with a variety of resources including a wooden kitchen with a cooker, fridge and oven, dolls, buggies, and a pirate ship. Fine skills were facilitated with coloured pencils, threading, and scissors available for cutting. Puzzles and construction materials were noted for cognitive development.
- Equipment, appropriate to the age and stage of the children, was stored in baskets on low-level shelving making them easily accessible, encouraging choice and offering opportunities for self-directed play.
- There was room to move around freely, and the layout facilitated staff to supervise children easily as they moved from each area in the care room.
- Children had the opportunity to play in the outdoor play area throughout the morning. A range of developmentally appropriate equipment promoting gross motor skills was provided including police tricycles, hoops and balls and buggy boards which the children were observed sitting on and using the slope of the playground to glide down to the bottom.

PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES:

- Staff stated that photographs and detailed activities documenting the children's day in the service are sent home twice weekly. These were available on a software application which the inspector viewed on the day.
- Language development was supported through a variety of strategies including one to one and group discussions.

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:

- Entry to the service was by bell at the front gate which is answered by a staff member ensuring there is no entry by unauthorised adults. The main door is operated by a keypad on the outside and an electronic switch on the inside. The switch is out of reach of the ensuring that they cannot leave the service unsupervised.
- Low-level doors and windows in the care room were fitted with visibility strips.
- Restrictors were fitted on all windows.
- All four windows blind cords were secured on hooks, out of reach of the children.
- Heavy equipment and furniture was secured to prevent tipping or falling.
- All indoor and outdoor toys appeared in good conditioned and looked well maintained.
- The television flex was out of reach of the children and it was mounted securely.
- The indoor waste was stored in pedal operated bins and the outdoor waste was behind locked gates, inaccessible to the children.
- Individual medication was labelled, stored in a sealed storage box on a high shelf out of reach of the children.
- Cleaning agents were stored in a high cupboard.
- The kitchen area was closed and not accessible by the children.
- The outdoor play perimeter was secured with high metal fencing and three bolted gates.

Infection Control:

- The windows in the care room were opened allowing for the circulation of fresh air.
- Thermostatically controlled hot water (38°C) was available in the wash hand basin in use by the adults and children in the service. Paper towels in dispensers, dispensing soap and pedal operated bins were in use.
- Children were observed washing their hands before food, coming in from outdoor play and after toileting.
- Staff changing nappies were observed following the nappy changing procedure of the service. The staff member wore disposable gloves and an apron, the mat was disinfected after use, both the adult and child washed their hands after the nappy change and the nappy was disposed of immediately.
- Tissues were readily available, and children were observed washing their hands after use.
- Perishable food was stored in the fridge preventing spoilage.
- Cleaning rotas, morning checks and daily checklists were completed and up to date.
- Staff were observed disinfecting tables and sweeping the floors before and after the serving of food.

Administration of Medication:

- Anti-febrile medication was available and stored out of reach on a high shelf in the kitchen.

Safe Sleep:

- Sleep mats were available for children who required to rest or sleep. All of the windows were fitted with blinds allowing for the light coming in to be adjusted, if required.

Fire Safety:

- Fire doors were fitted with alarms, push bars and thumb twist cylinders aiding the quick evacuation of children in an emergency.
- The fire assembly point was located in the outdoor play area a suitable distance from the service.
- Firefighting equipment was secured to the walls.

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) Certificates were available to evidence that a person trained as a First Aid Responder (FAR) was available at all times.

(2)

(a) (b) The first aid box was stored in the kitchen, on a high shelf out of reach of the children, and was available at all times throughout the inspection.

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) A written record of regular monthly fire drills were recorded in the service. The last drill had taken place on 30/05/2023.

(b) Written records were available of the number and type of firefighting equipment and the smoke alarms. The certificates were dated 10/10/22 and 8/3/23 respectively.

(4) The fire evacuation procedures were located at the fire exit door.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured that the pre-school service was insured. The certificate indicated that the service is covered for twenty-five children on a full day care basis. The expiry date of the certificate was noted as 27 March 2024.