

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015LD025				
<b>Name of Service:</b>	Dromard Childcare Community Group CLG				
<b>Address of Service:</b>	Legga, Moyne, Co. Longford				
<b>Eircode:</b>	N39 AF83				
<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Mary Mimmagh				
<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional				
<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	20/06/2024				
<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>AM</td> <td>26</td> <td>PM</td> <td>22</td> </tr> </table>	AM	26	PM	22
AM	26	PM	22		

<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Year's Inspectorate, TUSLA, Child and Family Agency, Government Buildings, Convent Road, Roscommon, Co. Roscommon.
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	A Kennedy and M Farrell
<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).

Conditions if applicable

Not applicable

### Description of service

Dromard Childcare Community Group CLG is a non-profit, community based childcare service located in a rural area of Co. Longford. The service is registered to provide full day care, parttime and sessional services to children aged from 0-6 years of age from 08:15-18:00 hours. The premises is a purpose-built building with three playrooms, one of which was originally a very large playroom that now has a partition creating two separate playrooms. A kitchen, sanitary facilities, an office and a staff room are provided in the building. The children have access to dedicated enclosed outdoor play areas and also have access to a nearby artificial grass playing pitch on the grounds of the adjacent Gaelic Athletic Association sports facilities.

### Staffing

There were ten staff working in the service at the time of the inspection including childcare staff, administrative staff and cook/kitchen staff. The registered provider does not work directly in the service.

### 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 sections of regulations 9, 11,16, 19, 22, 23, 25, 26 and 28. 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.

### Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the person in charge, 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.*

*(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) There was a named person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.
  - (b) A sample of staff attendance records reviewed found that the person in charge or deputy person in charge were available at all times.
- (2) Through discussion with the designated person in charge and review of documentation it was confirmed that there were four new staff employed in the service since the most recent focused inspection of the 5 February 2021. The vetting files for the other six staff in the service had been previously inspected and were found to have been compliant. The vetting files for the four new staff were reviewed and the following information was available for the staff:
- (a) &(b) Six of the eight written validated references, on file for the four staff were from a past employer or from a source other than the past employer.
  - (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for ten staff members. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years for nine of the staff.
  - (d) None of the staff had worked outside the jurisdiction, for six months or more, while over the age of 18 years of age thereby police vetting was not required.
- (4) Seven staff who were working directly with children, held a Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI), at a Level 5 to 7 in Early Childhood Care and Education. Copies of qualifications were on file for the seven staff.

### Non-Compliance Information

- (2)(a)(b) Two staff had only one written validated reference on file where two references were required.
- (c) The garda vetting disclosure presented for one staff member did not meet the regulatory requirements as it was for an educational work experience placement and not for their current employment.

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

#### Corrective and Preventive Action

On 30<sup>th</sup> of July and 8<sup>th</sup> of August 2024, the person in charge submitted a written response to state:

- (2)(a) &(b) The two staff have supplied a second reference and these have been added to staff details file.

(c) Garda vetting has been obtained for the staff member.

The person in charge will ensure the staff details are checked on a yearly basis to ensure all the necessary documents are on file and new staff will have all necessary documents before starting employment.

### **Supporting documentation submitted**

Photographic evidence of a second validated reference for the two staff and evidence of garda vetting for one staff was submitted to the office of the early years inspectorate.

### **Summary Comment**

The inspectors have reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliances identified under Regulation 9 has been adequately addressed.

## **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) There were 6 adults working directly with 26 children on the inspectors' unannounced arrival to the service.

(2) The minimum adult to child ratios were provided on the day of the unannounced inspection in accordance with the required ratios considering the ages of the children and the length of time each child spent in the service as outlined below:

Creche playroom: 3 adults cared for 12 children availing of full time and part-time day care services during the inspection. Three children were aged one year, eight children were aged between two year and three years and one child was aged three years.

Playgroup 1 room and playgroup 2: 3 adults cared for 14 children availing of fulltime and parttime daycare services during the inspection. Five children were aged from 2 years 8 months to 3 years 6 months and nine children were aged between 4-5 years.

(8) (a) There were at least two adults present at all times during the unannounced inspection.

## 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;

#### Non-Compliance Information

(1)(a) A record of employment/employment history was not on file for two staff.

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

##### Corrective and Preventive Action

On 30<sup>th</sup> of July and 8<sup>th</sup> of August 2024, the person in charge submitted a written response to state

(1)(a) The two staff have supplied an updated record of employment/employment history.

##### Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence of an updated record of employment/employment history was submitted for the two staff to the office of the early years inspectorate.

#### Summary Comment

The inspectors have reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 16 has been adequately addressed.

### 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

(1)

(a) The service used a child-centred approach to organising activities in the service to accommodate children's needs for eating, sleeping, toileting and playing depending on their age and developmental stage. Mealtimes were observed to be appropriately spaced out over the day as detailed under regulation 22. The older children in the Creche playroom sat on age-appropriate chairs in a group at a low-level table to eat their meals with five-point highchairs used by the younger children. The children from playgroup 1 and playgroup 2 sat at age-appropriate tables and chairs to eat their meals. The children were closely supervised by staff during meals and encouraged to feed themselves where possible. Bibs were put on the younger children where appropriate to protect their clothing from spillages.

The individual sleep needs of the children in the Creche playroom were catered for in partnership with parents. Children were placed in standard cots in a separate sleep room to sleep by the staff when they showed signs of tiredness during the day. Individual clean linen was provided, and the sleep room lighting was dimmed to create a restful atmosphere. There were also scheduled rest/sleep times for some of the children in the Creche playroom that needed sleep. Stackable beds were provided for older children to rest on accommodating their individual needs. Soft seating was provided in the playrooms for children to rest/relax on throughout the day if they wished to.

Children's nappies were observed to be changed when children's individual needs dictated by staff who were observed to chat and engage with the children during the nappy changes. Older children who were able to use the toilet independently were supported by the staff to do so but were within earshot of staff if they needed help. Boxes of tissues were available in the playrooms for children to clean their noses with as needed. The children's hands were encouraged and reminded to wash their hands, supervised and helped by staff as needed at appropriate times for example after using the toilet and nappy changes and after outdoor play.

All children spent substantial amounts of time playing outdoors on the day. There was an enclosed outdoor play area to the side of the premises directly accessible from the Creche playroom. The staff left the door from the Creche playroom open allowing children to move freely between the indoor and outdoor play areas. The Creche playroom outdoor area had ground covering of artificial grass with a varied selection of outdoor play equipment including fixed play equipment and ride on toys to support and encourage physical activity and gross motor development. The children were observed to play in a small interactive playhouse and with dolls and pushchairs brought outside by the staff. Before dinner the staff brought soft seating outside and the children sat and listened while the staff read short stories to them. Children could see the adjacent football pitch through the wooden fence and some children were observed to look out at it. The children from play group 1 and 2 spent a significant amount of time during the inspection between the astro pitch area and the designated play area of the service as they had a sports day. The outdoor area had a ground covering of soft matting with a varied selection of outdoor play equipment including a selection of playhouses, a mud kitchen, a buddy bench, a slide prams and buggies, a selection of ride on toys and balance bikes to support physical activity and gross motor development.

The playrooms were laid out to allow children access ranges of toys and play materials at low levels allowing them to choose and replace toys. Equipment used on the day was appropriate for the age and developmental stages of the children using them such as the wooden train set and large amount of wooden building blocks that older children in the Creche playroom chose to play with on the floor. The children had access to toys facilitating messy play in the Creche playroom such as a lidded sandbox with plastic toys. There were low-level plastic room dividers in the Creche playroom to allow separation of the younger and older children when needed. One side of the playroom had toys and equipment for younger children including insert, music making and stacking toys. There was a soft rest area and a standing interactive activity table that the staff said is used for young infants for very short periods of time. This was not observed to be in use during the inspection. The other section of the Creche playroom had tabletop activities including magnets and puzzles, dolls and accessories, a small kitchen, construction toys and transport toys including toy tractors reflecting the rural location of the service. The children from playgroup 1 and 2 were observed at free play, drawing, at construction, playing with puzzles, jigsaws, and insets, at mix and match, playing with animals and transport vehicles, playing kitchen and house. At circle time, the older children gave their views, news, and stories. The staff read books and the children chatted about same. The staff used visual aids and probed with questions such as ‘who is this?’, ‘how many are there?’, ‘where is that?’ and ‘tell me what this is?’.

The staff were positive when communicating with children providing them with praise and encouragement. Children were soothed and comforted by staff if upset. A staff member was observed to use positive methods to encourage children to share toys when playing outdoors where a child became upset when another child took a toy that they had been playing with. The children were prepared for transitions between activities by the staff for example when dinnertime was approaching in the Creche playroom. The staff informed the inspectors that communication notebooks were used for communicating with parents of younger children and children new to the service. There were verbal handovers of information given to older children's parents/guardians and this was observed by the inspectors at collection times during the day. Staff kept written records of the children's activities and progress in individual "My Learning Journals". These documents also held samples of children's paintings and the sample viewed by inspectors had been signed periodically by parents. The service was in the process of updating a service information booklet that is to be given to parents of new children starting in the service.

The staff supported children in forming and sustaining positive relationships by having a key person system for each child, showing respect for each unique child and developing their trust, listening to the voice of the child as they communicate their needs, thoughts, and experiences both verbally and non-verbally, by reading children's cues, gestures, and body language, using soft tones, the child's individual name, and getting down to their level and making eye contact, providing opportunities for individual and small group activities and play, leading to increased social awareness, co-operation, collaboration, teamwork, and a sense of belonging, and providing opportunities for children to learn from each other and with each other, to work together, join in and contribute to projects and tasks.

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

#### Regulation 22 – Food and drink

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

#### Compliance Information

Mealtimes were appropriately scheduled on the day of the inspection. Snacks were provided by the service midmorning with the younger children attending the Creche playroom given chopped fruit, toast, some dry cereal and cheese eaten in the dining room area. Cereal was available for children who had not eaten breakfast before attending the service. Drinks of water or milk were readily available throughout the day and given to the children by the staff in the children’s individual cups, drinking bottles or beakers. The main meal on the day provided by the service was a warm main meal of chicken, mashed potato, carrots, turnip and gravy served in bowls for the younger children and on plates for the older children with age-appropriate cutlery provided. Additional portions were provided for some children in the Creche playroom who wanted extra food. An alternative pasta dish was given to children who did not want to eat the main meal. The cook informed the inspectors that the meal provided in the afternoon was planned to be a warm meal of baked beans and potato waffles.

### 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 main entrance door to the service was appropriately secured during the inspection allowing the staff to control access to the service and prevent children from leaving unnoticed. The inspectors were admitted by staff following production of identification documents. Cleaning products were stored out of reach of children. The kitchen was inaccessible to the children. toys and play equipment were in good condition and suitable for the age and developmental stages of the children using them on the day. The external play areas to the rear of the premises were secure so that children could not leave the area unsupervised and unauthorised persons could not enter the area. Fire doors throughout the building were unobstructed. Leads, cables, and flexes were wall

mounted and secured to prevent any trip or strangulation hazard. The heating system was thermostatically controlled, to ensure the temperature was maintained between 18°C to 22°C. All toys and play equipment were observed to be safe and in good condition. Daily records of attendance were kept for all the children attending the service.

### **Infection Control:**

The service was found to be very clean, and staff were observed to clean down surfaces such as tables after use. Staff kept written records of cleaning procedures carried out in the service. Warm water, liquid soap and paper towels were provided for handwashing and drying purposes with children and staff cleaning their hands regularly. Aprons and gloves were used appropriately by staff when changing children's nappies with changing mats cleaned down after use. Appropriate bins were used for the disposal of nappies. There was separate storage of children's personal items such as nappies and cleansing wipes. Individual storage containers were provided for children's soothers. Boxes of tissues were available in the playrooms and a staff member was observed to prompt a child to clean his nose and dispose of the tissue safely. Windows were opened by staff at times to ventilate the playrooms.

### **Administration of Medication:**

The staff showed awareness of the correct procedures for the administration and storage of medication. No child required to have medication given to them during the inspection. Medicines were found to be appropriately stored and within their expiry dates in the Creche playroom.

### **Safe Sleep:**

Standard wooden cots were provided in a separate sleep room and used by the young children in the service. The cot mattresses had wipeable coverings and were cleaned appropriately with individual bed linen provided. The air temperature of the sleep room where a child under one year was sleeping was recorded at 19.7°C within the required range of 16-20 °C for a child of this age. Adequate space was available in the sleep room to allow 50cm of space between each cot. The staff were observed to preform regular checks on a sleeping child at least every ten minutes recording observations of their colour, breathing and position. Staff demonstrated an awareness of sudden infant death prevention guidance placing children down to sleep on their backs and monitoring sleep room temperature's regularly.

### **Fire Safety:**

The emergency exits were observed to be free from obstruction during the inspection.

## Non-Compliance Information

### General Safety:

1. A thumb lock device positioned at child height was fitted on the fire door leading to the sides of the building in the Playgroup 2 which could pose a potential safety concern.  
  
It is acknowledged on 26<sup>th</sup> of June 2024 the person in charge submitted photographic evidence to the office of the early years inspectorate of an additional securing mechanism fitted on the fire door.
2. A number of windows in service including the dining room and in Playgroup 2 room opened outwards and did not have safety mechanisms in place with the potential risk of children leaving the areas.
3. A blind cord in the dining room was not secured in the safety device provided on the wall. The blind was secured immediately by staff members when this was brought to their attention.
4. The door to an area known as the “storeroom” was unsecured with the door open on the inspector’s arrival. This area had cleaning equipment and a heater and vacuum system and required securing to prevent access by children.
5. Two hinges on two of the low cabinet doors in Playgroup 1 were not adequately secured and could pose a potential safety concern.

### Infection Control:

6. Some play equipment including small plastic balls and a ball pond were stored in one of the adult sanitary units posing a potential infection control risk.
7. A number of waste bins were not foot pedal operated including an open bin in a sanitary unit and an open waste bin in the dining room and an unlidded bin in Playgroup 1 posing infection control risks.

### Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective & Preventive Action

### General Safety:

On 26<sup>th</sup> of June, 30<sup>th</sup> of July and 8<sup>th</sup> of August 2024, the person in charge submitted a written response to state

1. An additional securing mechanism has been fitted on the fire door in Playgroup 2.
2. Safety mechanisms have been fitted on the windows of the dining room and Playgroup 2.
3. The blind cord attachment has been secured to the wall in the dining room.
4. The door to the storeroom has had a lock fitted to ensure the children cannot access this space.
5. New hinges have been fitted on the low cabinet doors in Playgroup 1.

### Infection Control:

6. The adult sanitary unit has been cleared out with the play equipment and plastic balls removed, cleaned and these are now stored in the attic .The staff have been advised to ensure that the sanitary accomodation is not used to store items.
7. All waste bins replaced with foot pedal bins throughout the facility and the bins will be checked on a regular basis to ensure they are in proper working order and replaced if necessary.

### **Supporting documentation submitted**

#### **General Safety:**

On the 24<sup>th</sup> of June, 30<sup>th</sup> of July and 8<sup>th</sup> of August 2024, the person in charge submitted;

1. photographic evidence of an additional securing mechanism fitted on the fire door in Playgroup 2.
2. photographic evidence of a securing mechanism fitted on the windows of the dining room and Playgroup 2.
3. photographic evidence of the secured blind cord on the window in the dining room.
4. photographic evidence of the securing mechanism fitted on the door of the storeroom.
5. photographic evidence of the replaced hinges on the doors under the low cabinet doors in Playgroup 1.

#### **Infection Control:**

6. photographic evidence of the cleared space in the adult sanitary accomodation.
7. photographic evidence of the new foot operated pedal bins throughout the premises.

A maintenance checklist was submitted for the premises.

### **Summary Comment**

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

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 25 - First aid

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

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

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

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

#### Compliance Information

(1) Certificates of the completion of First Aid Response (FAR) training courses with expiry dates ranging from 08/09 to 01/12/2025 were available for eight staff members in the service.

#### Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a) and (b)

Inadequate first aid equipment supplies were available on the day for the numbers of children in the service including alcohol wipes that had passed expiry dates and eye pads that did not meet the requirements.

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

##### Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(a) and (b)

On 8<sup>th</sup> of August 2024, the person in charge advised that the wipes and eye pads have been replaced and the contents of the first aid box will be checked every 6 months to ensure they are complete and in date.

##### Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence was submitted to the office of the early years inspectorate of the replaced wipes and eye pads.

#### Summary Comment

The inspectors have reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 25 has been adequately addressed.

### Part VI - Safety

#### Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures

- (1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of-
- (a) any fire drill that takes place in the premises, and
  - (b) the number, type and maintenance record of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.
- (2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-
- (c) an authorised person.
- (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) Written records of the fire drills undertaken in the service were kept by staff with the last fire drill recorded as having been undertaken on the 2 May 2024.
- (b) The service provided a certificate of the number, type and maintenance of the smoke alarms that had been certified as having been last maintained on the 17 October 2023 and the fire-fighting equipment in September 2023.
- (4) Notices of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were conspicuously displayed in the Creche playroom including a map of the evacuation route.

#### Non-Compliance Information

- (1) (a) Written records of the fire drills undertaken in the service were available however, the fire drills were not carried out on a monthly basis as required.

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

##### Corrective and Preventive Action

- (1) (a)  
On 8 August 2024, the person in charge submitted a written response to state they would ensure to carry out a fire drill on the first week every month and all staff have been informed of same with reminders on the calendar to ensure it is carried out monthly.

##### Supporting documentation submitted

Documentary evidence of the written record of the monthly fire drills was submitted to the office of the early years inspectorate.

#### Summary Comment

The inspectors have reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 26 has been adequately addressed.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

#### Compliance Information

There was evidence of certification of adequate insurance which had an expiry date of 27 March 2025.

The insurance for 38 pre-school children was for a full day care service and included the following: -

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