

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015LK039
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Castle Creche
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Coolbawn Meadows, Castleconnell, Co. Limerick
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<b>Eircode:</b>	V94 Y058
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Gillian Costello
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<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	27/02/2024
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	38	PM	33
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Tusla, Early Years Inspectorate , Estuary House, Henry St, Limerick
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	E Browne J Ryan
<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

This is an early years creche which first opened in July 2008. It is a private service which provides sessional, part-time and full day care to preschool children aged 6 months - 6 years of age.

The service operates from 07.30hrs to 18.00hrs and the setting caters for a maximum of 72 preschool children.

A school aged service is also provided to children attending the local primary school.

### Staffing

The staff roster demonstrated that 14 staff members including the registered provider and the manager are employed in the service.

On the day of inspection there were 8 staff members working directly with the preschool children across 4 playrooms and 4 staff available to work with the school aged children and cover kitchen duties. The registered provider and the manager are available to cover meal breaks, work in the playroom and office duties as required.

There are 10 staff members who hold a recognised childcare qualification.

### 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 an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 19, 24, 25, and 26 however, on inspection additional non-compliances which posed a risk were identified under Regulations 20 and 23 . 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 registered provider, 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, 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*

*(7) A registered provider shall ensure that all employees, unpaid workers and contractors are appropriately supervised and provided with appropriate information, and where necessary training, including in relation to the following:*

- (a) the policies, procedures and statements of the service specified in Schedule 5;*
- (b) Part VIIA (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013)) of the Act, and*
- (c) these Regulations.*

### Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) The registered provider was the designated person in charge and a named person documented as the manager was able to deputise as required.
  - (b) The registered provider and the manager were on the premises when the inspectors arrived at the service.
  - (c) There was a clear management structure in the service that identifies the lines of authority and accountability and the specific roles and responsibilities of each member of the management team.
- (2) All the staff files were checked on the day of the inspection and the following documents were available on file for these staff:
- (a) References from the person's past employers and the most recent employer were available for all staff.
  - (b) References from reputable sources in the case of a person who had no past employers were available where required.

(c) Vetting disclosures received from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána in accordance with the Act of 2012 in respect of all staff.

(d) Police vetting was in place for the staff members who had lived in another state for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months.

(4) The 10 staff members working with the children in the service had childcare qualifications ranging from level 5 to level 8 on the National Qualifications Framework.

(7) All staff had induction training and were briefed on

(a) The policies, procedures, and statements of the service.

(b) Part VIIA (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013)) of the Act, and

(c) Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services Regulations 2016).

### Part III – Management and Staff

#### Regulation 11 - Staffing levels

*(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.*

#### Compliance Information

(2) On the day of the inspection there were 8 staff working across 4 playrooms rooms with 38 pre-school children present in the morning and 6 staff working with 33 preschool children present in the afternoon. The minimum ratio of staff to children were working directly with the children in each room.

There were 5 preschool children and 1 staff in the Wobbler playroom.

There were 10 preschool children and 2 staff in Toddler playroom.

There were 10 preschool children and 2 staff in the Montessori playroom .

There were 13 preschool children and 2 staff in the Preschool playrooms.

Relief staff were available from 10 30 am to replace staff while taking meal breaks. A designated person was available to prepare, cook and serve food to all children attending the service.

There were 2 additional staff assigned to the care of the school aged children from 13 30 pm.

The registered provider and the manager were available to work in the playrooms , relief staff while on breaks and cover office duties.

### 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:

(1) Healthy eating was promoted within the service. Nutritious hot meals and snacks were prepared fresh on site each day and were served at regular intervals to the children in their individual room. Highchairs were used for babies at mealtimes. On the day of the inspection chicken curry and rice was served for dinner. Staff were observed supervising mealtimes and assisting children who needed help. The atmosphere during dining was relaxed and mealtimes were not rushed.

There was a separate sleep room available with a sufficient number of standard cots accessible at all times to the children in the Wobbler and Toddler rooms. Children over 2 years were on low level beds in the sleep room adjacent to the cot room. Staff stayed with these children while they were asleep. Children were closely observed during all sleep periods and all sleep checks were recorded.

Sanitary accommodation was located close to each room in the service. Nappy changing facilities were provided near the Baby/Wobbler and Toddler rooms. Staff were familiar with the procedure outlined in the nappy changing policy to ensure appropriate infection control practices. The privacy and dignity of the children was respected at all times .

Relaxation areas were provided in all rooms of the creche with comfortable seating, soft floor mats, blankets and cushions accessible. These rest areas provided cosy spaces for children to relax and take time out and away from active play areas when tired.

##### Physical Environment:

The service operated from a purposely designed building. The atmosphere in each room was unhurried and encouraging and children in each room appeared content and all were actively engaged in numerous activities. Each room was planned to meet the developmental needs of the age group in the room. The rooms accommodating the younger children had lots of soft floor coverings to facilitate floor play and activities. Low level tables and chairs were used for tabletop activities and for dining at mealtimes.

Accessible open shelving was used to store and display all equipment. Family pictures were displayed at children's eye level. Small world spaces, construction areas, home corners, imaginative play areas and messy play areas were noted in all rooms.

Each group had daily access to outdoor play spaces and sheltered areas outside permitting children to have uninhibited access to this area of the service throughout the day. The outdoor areas provided space and opportunities for children to run, jump, climb steps, balance, play ball games and use ride on toys. There was an emphasis on open ended materials such as sand and rice which was available both indoors and outdoors throughout the day.

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

#### Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

*(1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-*

*(b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.*

#### Non-Compliance Information

(1)(b)

There were 3 cots mattresses in use at the service that had no recognised safety standard in place. This posed a risk to the health and safety of the children.

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

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

The registered provider stated their response:

(1)(b)

The service has purchased 3 new mattresses and all mattresses will be regularly checked to ensure they comply with the required safety standards.

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

Photographs of mattresses.

#### Summary Comment

The action as stated by the registered provider have addressed the non-compliance identified under Regulation 20 Facilities for Rest and Play point (1)(b).

### 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:

- All internal doors were appropriately secured to prevent children accessing unsafe areas.
- All external areas were appropriately secured to prevent children from exiting unsupervised.
- All emergency exits and fire doors were unobstructed.
- All blind cords were secured on tension hooks and made safe in all rooms.
- All highchairs were in good condition and fitted with safety harnesses.
- All toys, furniture and play equipment were in good condition and free from sharp edges or corners.
- No flexes or cables were located within reach of children.
- The kitchen and the staff room were inaccessible to the preschool children.

##### Infection Control:

Infection control measures were in place in the service. Staff and children were observed washing their hands regularly throughout the day

#### Non-Compliance Information

##### General Safety:

1. Garda vetting was available for all staff members. However, on review of these vetting disclosures there was one not dated within the previous three years in adherence to with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.

It is acknowledged that the manager applied immediately for Grada vetting for the one staff member when it was identified that it was not in date . The vetting for this staff member was received into the Early Years Inspectorate on the 7<sup>th</sup> of March 2024.

##### Infection Control:

2. Hand operated lidded bins for waste disposal were in use in the children's bathrooms and some playrooms instead of the pedal operated lidded bins. This posed a risk of infection to the children and staff .

#### Action submitted by the Registered Provider

##### Corrective & Preventive Action

The registered provider stated in their response:

### General Safety:

1. The vetting for the staff member was renewed and emailed to the Early Years Inspectorate on the 7<sup>th</sup> of March. The service will ensure that Garda vetting for the staff members will be renewed within the previous 3-year period.

### Infection Control:

2. The service has replaced the hand operated bins with pedal operated lidded bins in all areas throughout the service.

### Supporting documentation submitted

Copy of Garda vetting and photograph of new bins.

### Summary Comment

The actions as stated by the registered provider have addressed the non-compliances identified under Regulation 23 points 1 and 2.

## 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.*

### Compliance Information

(1) All adults dropping children to the service checked the child in with the lead staff in charge in the relevant room of the service. At home time children were checked out of the service in a similar manner. The staff documented the children's arrival time and their departure time each day.

(3)(a) The service ensured that only children attending, the person who drops and collects and the employees gain access to the premises.

(b) All visitors to the service must be signed in and signed out by the manager or deputy in charge.

### 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) There were 9 staff members working in the service who had up to date training in first aid response for children.

(2)(a) There were suitably equipped first aid boxes available and easily accessible on site in the preschool facility.

(b) The first aid boxes were available to the children attending the pre-school service.

### 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 fire fighting 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)

Fire drills were carried out regularly and the most recent drill took place on the 21/02/2024. The previous fire drills record was dated 22/01/2024.

(b)

A record of the number, type and maintenance of firefighting equipment was available on the premises, and the service date was August 2023. There was a maintenance record available for the smoke alarm system and the most recent servicing of the fire alarm system was the 18<sup>th</sup> of October 2023.

(4)

The fire evacuation procedures were displayed at the main entrance area of the service and in the playrooms and the fire assembly point was the carpark at the front entrance to the service

### Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

#### Regulation 29 - Premises

*A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-*

- (a) of sound and stable structure,*
- (b) safe and secure,*
- (c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated*
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

#### Compliance Information

- (a) The building appeared to be of sound and stable structure both internally and externally.
- (b) The building appeared safe and secured. A buzzer system on the entrance door ensured all who entered the building were checked in by an authorised person in the manager's office. Outdoors the play areas were surrounded by secure high walls and gates where no unauthorised access to or exit from the area was permitted. All visitor access was managed appropriately with a visitor book available at the front door to record details of all who entered the building.
- (c) The rooms were adequately heated and ventilated. All areas were well lit by natural light and by artificial light when needed. There was no evidence of mould, mildew, stale smells, stuffiness or condensation.
- (d) Since the service was last inspected all areas outside had been deep cleaned. The areas outdoors and indoors were clean and routine cleaning schedules were in place for all internal and external areas.
- (e) There were an adequate number of toilets, wash hand basins and nappy changing areas available in the service. Handwashing and drying facilities were suitable and adequate. Potties for toilet training were appropriately cleaned, disinfected and stored appropriately in line with infection control measures.