

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LK092
--------------------------	-------------

Name of Service:	St. Colmans childcare services
-------------------------	--------------------------------

Address of Service:	Kilcolman Creche, Kilcolman, Ardagh, Co Limerick
----------------------------	---

Eircode:	V42 YP11
-----------------	----------

Name of Registered Provider:	Tara Robinson
-------------------------------------	---------------

Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
----------------------	--------------------------------

Date of Inspection:	29 April 2025
----------------------------	---------------

No of pre-school children:	AM	49	PM	41
-----------------------------------	----	----	----	----

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla, Early Years Inspectorate, Estuary House, Henry St, Limerick
---	--

Inspection undertaken by:	E Browne and J Ryan
----------------------------------	---------------------

Title:	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

This community full day childcare service first opened in 2007. It caters for children from 6 months to 6 years of age. It has a maximum capacity for approximately 58 children. The opening hours are from 07:30 – 18:00 hours, Monday – Friday for 51 weeks of the year. The premises are a purpose built, single storey childcare facilities located in a rural setting in the town land of Kilcolman, Ardagh, Co Limerick. The service has four playrooms in operation, two sleep rooms, a kitchen, nappy changing and sanitary facilities for children and adults and outdoor play areas to the rear and side of the premises. A school age service is also provided.

Staffing

There were 11 childcare staff working across four playrooms on the day of inspection. The manager and deputy manager were available on site and there was a staff member working in the kitchen.

The registered provider does not work on site in the creche.

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, 10, 11, 16, 19, 23, 25, 26 and 29. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

Inspection findings are documented in the inspection report which is first issued in draft format to the service with an opportunity to respond to any findings. Where statutory requirements are identified as not being met, the registered provider must demonstrate how they have rectified the non-compliance and will prevent any non-compliance from re occurring. The Corrective Action and Preventive Action plan (CAPA) will be used to inform decisions about compliance with regulatory requirements. Where the registered provider fails to meet the statutory requirements an escalation process may be commenced.

The inspectorate reserves the right to edit responses received for reasons including clarity, completeness and compliance with administrative and legal processes.

The contents of the report are compiled by the inspectorate body.

Additional Information

This inspection was triggered by information received from the manager at Kilcolman Community Creche.

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, 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.

(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) A designated person in charge of operating the service was present on the day of the inspection. There was a named person available who was able to deputise if required.
- (b) During the period of the inspection, the designated person in charge was present and the staff roster indicated that this person or their deputy were always available on the premises.
- (c) There was a clear management structure that identified the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each member of the management team.
- (2) The files of all staff members were viewed.
- (a) Two written and validated references were on file for all staff members working in the service.
- (b) References were submitted by staff from other reputable sources where two past employers were not available.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures received from the National Vetting Bureau of Garda Síochána were available for all staff members present and working at the service. Garda vetting for 16 adults was dated within the last three years as per the regulatory notice, EYI-RN12.3 renewal of garda vetting, published by the Inspectorate in September 2023 and effective from 1 January 2024. The Garda vetting for 2 staff members that were not dated within the last three years was outlined in Regulation 23.
- (d) Police vetting and supporting documentation for the persons who had lived in another country for longer than 6 consecutive months were all on file.
- (3) All of the above documentation was furnished to the registered provider prior to each new staff member taking up employment at the facility.
- (4) All the staff members working directly with children held an appropriate qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education or an equivalent such qualification.
- (7) All new staff had induction training and were supervised 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).

Regular team meetings were held each term, and records were maintained of all staff meetings and of induction training for new staff.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.

Compliance Information

The following policies were viewed and meet the requirements of the regulation. These policies were available to the staff members working in the service and to all the parents/ guardians of the preschool children attending the service.

Staff Training

Staff Supervision

Accident and Incidents

Risk Management

Non-Compliance Information

1. The above policies were viewed by the inspectors, and it was noted that the policies were not signed off by the person approving the policies, and the last review date was March 2021. This was at variance with the policies for the service which stated that all policies will be reviewed annually and signed off by management.
2. A daily documented risk assessment of playrooms, sanitary areas, sleep areas and outdoors were not available, and annual/quarterly/monthly risk assessment of the entire building and operations were not available. This is at variance with the services Risk Management policy which stated that:
 - Daily risk assessments of playrooms, sanitary areas, sleep areas and outdoors will be carried out and will be documented.
 - Annual/quarterly and or monthly risk assessments will be carried out as appropriate of the entire building and operations and will be recorded by the service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action: The manager has stated that:

1. All policies have been reviewed, updated and signed by the manager.
2. A daily risk assessment of the building was carried out by the manager. Daily risk assessments of playrooms, sanitary areas, sleep areas and outdoors will be carried out and will be documented. Annual/quarterly and or monthly risk assessments will be carried out as appropriate of the entire building and operations and will be recorded by the service.

Supporting documentation submitted:

Copies of five daily risk assessment were submitted and the updated services policies

Summary Comment

The evidence submitted was viewed and deemed to meet the regulatory requirements of Regulation 10.

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.

Compliance Information

(1) On the day of the inspection, there were 11 childcare staff working across four care rooms with 49 pre-school children present in the morning and 41 children present in the afternoon. During the period of inspection, the minimum ratio of staff to children was maintained, and an adequate number of childcare staff were working directly with the children in each care room.

1. Baby Room – There were 6 babies (1 to 1.5yrs) and 2 staff.
2. Toddlers Room (Acorn room)– There were 8 pre-school children (2 -3yrs) and 2 staff.
3. Preschool Room (Butterfly room)– There were 15 children (2.5-5yrs) and 4 staff.
4. Montessori room - There were 20 children(3-5yrs) and 3 staff.

The person in charge and deputy were on site and available to cover in each playroom as required.

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:

(k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.

Compliance Information

(1)

(k) The staff had maintained a record of the details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 19 - Health, welfare and development of child

(1) A registered provider shall, in providing a pre-school service, ensure that-

(a) each child's learning, development and well-being is facilitated within the daily life of the pre-school service through the provision of the appropriate activities, interaction, materials and equipment, having regard to the age and stage of development of the child, and

Compliance Information

BASIC NEEDS

The service promoted healthy eating by providing fresh, nutritious meals and snacks throughout the day. Children were encouraged to serve themselves as they get older. Meals were accompanied by drinks, and the older children were involved in preparing and laying the tables for mealtimes and cleaning up after each meal. A dish of pasta, mince, carrots and pasta sauce was served for the main meal on the day of the inspection.

Sanitation facilities were conveniently located near rooms, with nappy changing areas for younger children and accessible toilets for older ones, located close to each room. The staff responded promptly to the children's individual needs in relation to nappy changing, toileting and toilet training.

Children's sleep areas were well-equipped, with separate rooms for those under two, standard cots, and regular sleep checks documented. The older children had access to low beds and a calm environment with dimmed

lighting. Rest areas were available in all rooms with age-appropriate seating and comfort items, and quiet periods were encouraged.

The children had a regular change of environment. They spent long periods of time outdoors and each age group had access to their own play area.

The service supported children in forming and sustaining positive relationships with the childcare staff. The children in each playroom were assigned a key person which helps to support the forming of secure relationships with the adults caring for them. The staff were heard using soft tones of voice, the child's individual name, and getting down to their level and making eye contact and listening to the child.

PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT

The physical environment in each room was carefully planned and well-suited to the children's needs, with ample play space, varied materials for exploration, and organised activity areas in all rooms. The setting fostered creativity and independence through accessible imaginative play equipment. The room environments were flexible and responsive to the emerging changing needs, preferences and interests of the children.

Lots of clear floor space for movement was available in the Baby room and the Toddler room to help improve children's gross motor development. Low level tables and chairs were used for dining at mealtimes and for tabletop activities. Items of interest were visible on all walls at children's eye level. In the Preschool rooms low level open shelving units were well stocked with age-appropriate play materials and equipment. These were all labelled, easily visible and accessible. The materials included fine motor development tools like peg boards and threading and cognitive development resources such as puzzles and construction materials. The language development activities like storytelling and social conversation were included in all the children's play activities.

On the day of the inspection children from each of the playrooms were observed in the various outdoor areas. Children had the opportunities to be outside as often as possible. The equipment and materials in the outdoor play areas supported children's play, movement and exploration and provided opportunities exclusive to the outdoors.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

A registered provider shall ensure that all reasonable measures are taken to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of a pre-school child attending the service and that the environment of the service is safe.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Garda vetting was available for the 18 adults working in the service.

However, the Garda vetting disclosures for two adults was not dated within the last three years as per the regulatory notice, EYI-RN12.3 renewal of garda vetting, published by the Inspectorate in September 2023 and effective from 1 January 2024.

Infection Control:

2. There were four mattresses in use that did not have a mattress protection cover in place. This posed a risk of cross infection and made the cleaning process of the mattresses difficult.

3. The paper towel and toilet roll were not stored appropriately in a dispenser and at the appropriate level for the children's use in the sanitary accommodation for the Acorn playroom. This posed a risk of cross infection.

Fire Safety:

4. The emergency fire exit doors in the nappy changing room and the Babys and Toddlers sleep rooms were blocked with equipment and materials. This posed a safety risk to children and staff in the event of having to evacuate the building in an emergency.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action: The manager has stated that:

General Safety:

1. Garda vetting was applied for the two staff members and submitted to the Early years' inspectorate following the inspection. Management have now put in place a system to ensure that all staff members Garda vetting will be renewed within the three-year timeframe.

Infection Control:

2. Four waterproof mattresses were purchased to replace the non-waterproof mattresses. These are wipe-able and are now in place in the cot room.

3. Hand paper towels and toilet paper were fitted to dispenser in the toilet facilities throughout the service. Staff were advised of the importance of ensuring these items are in the dispensers for the children to access independently.

Fire Safety:

4. The items blocking the fire exits doors were immediately removed. A sign was added to the fire doors to discourage items from being placed in front of them in the future. This check is included in the managers morning risk assessment.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copies of the garda vetting for the two staff members, invoices of materials purchased, and photos were submitted to demonstrate the actions taken to correct the non-compliances.

Summary Comment

The evidence submitted was viewed and deemed to meet the regulatory requirement of Regulation 23 Safety, Infection Control and Fire Safety.

These will be reviewed at the next inspection.

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 was the person in charge and additional staff members who had up to date first aid responder training in place.

(2)(a) The person in charge ensured that suitable equipped first aid boxes for children were safely stored in easily accessible and conspicuous positions at the premises.

(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) There were fire drill records available on file for 2024 and 2025. The last recorded fire drill was dated the 25 April 2025.
- (b) The firefighting equipment and the smoke alarm system were serviced in April and May of 2025. The maintenance certificates were submitted to the Early years' Inspectorate office.
- (4) A fire action notice was clearly displayed in the service.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

- A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required.

Non-Compliance Information

- (d)
1. The radiator in the sanitary accommodation adjacent to the Montessori playroom was in a poor state of repair. The paint work was chipped and flaking off.
 2. The toilet bowls were heavily stained in the sanitary accommodation adjacent to the Montessori playroom.
 3. Repair work was incomplete on the ceiling of the sanitary accommodation adjacent to the Montessori playroom.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action: The manager has stated that:

- (d)
- 1.The radiator was cleaned, and a painter has been booked to paint the radiator by the end of the summer.
 - 2.The toilets continue to be cleaned with non-abrasive cleaning chemicals and new toilet bowls have been ordered.
 - 3.The repair work on the ceiling tile will be completed by the end of the summer.

Supporting documentation submitted

Invoice for equipment purchased submitted.

Summary Comment

The actions taken by the registered provider will address the non-compliances identified. These will be reviewed at the next inspection.