

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015LM029		
<b>Name of Service:</b>	Clooncarne Explorers Childcare LTD		
<b>Address of Service:</b>	Clooncarne, Bornacoola, Mohill, Co. Leitrim		
<b>Eircode:</b>	N41 W728		
<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Mary Callaghan Mallon		
<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional		
<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	07/10/2025		
<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	13	PM N/A
<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate, TUSLA Child & Family Agency, Markievicz House, Barrack St, Sligo, F91 XC84		
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	L Costello		
<b>Title:</b>	Early Years Inspector		
<b>Authority to Inspect</b>			
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		

### Description of service

Clooncarne Explorers Childcare LTD is a sessional preschool service operating from 9.15am-12.45pm each weekday for children aged 2-6 years. The service operates an outdoor based programme on the site of the registered providers dwelling house which is located in the rural townland of Clooncarne. The premises consists of one large garden/play space, two sheltered play areas, a poly tunnel and a building which houses both children's sanitary accommodation and an office.

### Staffing

There are three adults employed to work in the service on a daily basis which includes the registered provider who is on site and working with the children. On the day of inspection two adults worked directly with the preschool children. All staff members hold at least the minimum Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) Level 5 in Early Childhood Care and Education.

### 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 inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 15, 16(k), 19, 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 inspector wishes 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.*

### Compliance Information

(1) (a) (b).

There was a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required. Both adults were present throughout the inspection.

(2) (a) (b).

Three adults are employed in the service, and all three adults' files were reviewed. Five validated written references from a past employer and one validated reference from a source other than a past employer were available in respect of the three adults.

(c)

Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for the three staff.

The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d)

One adult who had lived outside the state for a period of six consecutive months or more had international police vetting available for review by the inspector.

(4)

The three adults had attained major awards in Early childhood care and education at level 5 or above on the national framework of qualifications, or qualifications deemed by the Department of Children, Disability and Equality (DCDE) to meet the regulatory requirement

### 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.*

*(3) Subject to paragraph (5), a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 2 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) therefore at that reference number is satisfied.*

#### Compliance Information

(1) There were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the preschool service. There were two adults working directly with 13 children on the morning of the unannounced inspection.

(3) The minimum ratio of adults to children ratio were provided on the day of the inspection in accordance with the required ratio considering the ages of the children and the length of time each child spent in the service.

### 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.*

*(2) A registered provider of a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or of 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 particulars specified in subparagraphs (a), (d), (e) and (f) of paragraph (1).*

*(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-*  
*(c) an authorised person.*

*(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) is retained for a period of 2 years from the date on which the child to whom it relates ceases to attend the service.*

### Compliance Information

1) (a-i)

A sample of ten records of the children attending the service were reviewed. The required information including the authorisation to collect the child, details of illness or special needs of the child, emergency contact and record of immunisations were fully completed for each child.

(3) (a)

The records in writing were available for inspection by the early year's inspector.

(4)

The person in charge confirmed that the records are retained for the required period as set out in the regulations.

### 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.*

*(2) A registered provider shall ensure that-*

*(b) a record referred to in subparagraph (h), (j) or (k) of paragraph (1) is retained for a period of 2 years from the date on which the child to whom it relates ceases to attend the service, or in the case of a preschool service in a drop-in centre or of a temporary pre-school service, for a period of 2 years from the date on which the child attends the service.*

*(3) A record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection on the premises, and the documents and records referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall be open to inspection whether on the premises or elsewhere, by an authorised person.*

#### Compliance Information

(1)(k)

A sample of ten accidents and incident forms were reviewed on the services information technology application. Records reviewed demonstrate that risk assessments were completed after incidents and parents were informed of the accident or incident.

(1)(b)

The registered provider is aware of the statutory requirement to retain these records for a period of two years.

(3)

These records were available on the day for review by the authorised person.

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

### Regulation 19 - Health, welfare and development of child

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

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

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

*(b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.*

### Compliance Information

#### Basic Needs:

- The service operates outdoors and provides various shelters throughout the outdoor space to ensure children are protected from the elements.
- The service operated a rolling snack where children could avail of their snack at a time that suited them. On the day of inspection, most children in attendance sat together to have their snack.
- Snacks are provided from home and on the day consisted of variety of fruit, yoghurts, cheese dippers and a variety of sandwiches.
- The children had access to their water bottles which were stored in the dining area and allowed the children to help themselves to a drink when they felt thirsty.
- Children's toileting and hygiene needs were promptly and sensitively attended to. Self-toileting by the children was encouraged. A staff member was observed supervising and assisting where required each of the children when hand washing and hand drying.
- Children's belongings such as coats and bags were stored on child height hooks in one of the shelters and spare clothes were provided from home in case a child needed fresh clothes from playing outdoors.

#### Supporting Relationships:

- The staff members were observed to be calm and relaxed whilst facilitating play opportunities and carrying out caring duties. Only low tones were used, and good eye contact was observed with the children during one-to-one engagement.

- The staff members were observed to work well together and the children were familiar with the routine. The staff members were observed to regularly check in with each other to ensure all children were in sight of at least one adult.
- Staff helped children to recognise and understand sharing and working together as a group as seen on day of inspection when children were involved in various activities including tidying up. The children were observed waiting their turn in game playing activities such as a s ‘foxes and Rabbits’ which promoted inclusion and encouragement of peers.
- Story book time in the garden encouraged language development and movement songs encouraged gross motor skill development and self-expression.
- The service used an application for communication with families where pictures of the day’s activities could be sent directly to families.

### Physical and Material Environment:

- The service operates outdoors and uses the natural landscape as its backdrop to provide a feeling of calmness and serenity. Natural hedging growing blackberries, flowers and plants provide opportunities for learning and experimenting.
- The outdoor area has clearly defined interest areas including sand pits, climbing frames, mud kitchens, swings, playhouses and construction areas. Sheltered areas provide tabletop activities with puzzles, jigsaws and arts and crafts. Home areas with dolls and buggies.
- A large, grassed area provided opportunities for running gross motor development and game playing. On the day the children were observed to be content using their imagination to create a variety of games using the large open area.
- A concrete area was set up with a road map and traffic cones to create a roadway for tractors, bikes and a variety of ride on toys.

### Curriculum:

- Evidence of long term and short-term planning was displayed on the notice board. The focus presently was on autumn and Halloween.
- Observations recorded demonstrated the children’s learning in the natural environment and using the natural resources to stimulate children’s curiosity. One example recorded is the child’s observation of cobwebs and the spider’s home and where the toilet would be. The educators took this learning opportunity to educate the children about cobwebs and animals’ homes.

### Part VI - Safety

#### Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

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

#### Compliance Information

##### General Safety:

- The service had a pet dog which the inspector observed to have limited and supervised access to the children on the day. This was in line with the services policy.
- The area is secured with solid wooden fencing and green metal fencing all through the perimeter of the service.
- Cleaning products were stored out of reach of the preschool child.
- All doors were secured to restrict unauthorised access.
- The service has a risk assessment in place where the area is checked prior the children's arrival. On discussion with staff members, they were knowledgeable about hazards to watch out for and the importance of keeping the area secure.
- Children had appropriate waterproof clothing and footwear for playing in the outdoors in all weathers.

##### Infection Control:

- Tables were observed to be washed with warm water and detergent prior to children having snacks.
- Children were observed to wash their hands prior to snack time and after using the bathroom.

##### Fire Safety:

- The fire assembly point was clearly displayed in the service at the bottom of the outdoor area.
- The fire emergency evacuation plan and emergency contacts were displayed on the service wall.
- There was evidence of monthly evacuation drills.

#### Non-Compliance Information

##### General Safety:

- (1) Nettles were overhanging into the children's play area and posed a risk to the preschool children.
- (2) The bin in the children's dining area was not the required foot pedal operated bin.
- (3) Perishable items in lunch boxes such as yoghurts and cheese strings were not stored in a refrigerator but in the child's bag.

**Infection Control:**

- (4) A communal hand towel was provided for hand drying in the children’s dining area. This communal use posed a risk of infection control.

**Action submitted by the Registered Provider**

**Corrective & Preventive Action**

**General Safety:**

In a written response the registered provider stated:

1. Nettles growing through the fence have been cut back. This will be monitored and included in maintenance checks. Staff will carry out risk assessment and education with the children on Nature of which Nettles is a part of.

**Infection Control:**

2. The bin in the children’s snack area has been removed and replaced with a foot operated bin.
3. There is a fridge available for children’s snacks. Parents are informed at the start of the year to send perishable food in a zip locked bag. A reminder has been sent to parents.
4. Individual hand towels are provided from the dispenser. Used handtowels are placed in bucket on the opposite side of the wash station. Used handtowels are washed after each use.

**Supporting documentation submitted**

**General Safety:**

1. Photographic evidence submitted.

**Infection Control:**

2. Photographic evidence submitted.
3. Photographic evidence submitted
4. Photographic evidence submitted.

**Summary Comment**

The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider adequately address the non-compliance found on inspection. This regulation is now compliant.

### 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)

The registered provider ensured that there was a person trained in first aid for children available to the children throughout the hours of operation.

(2)(a) (b)

A suitably stocked first aid kit for the number of children availing of the service was stored correctly and available to the preschool children.

### 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.*

*(2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-*

*(c) an authorised person.*

*(3) A registered provider shall ensure that a record referred to in paragraph (2) is retained for a period of 5 years after its creation*

*(5) 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)

The Registered provider ensured that monthly fire evacuation drills occur in the service, the most recent on the 17 September 2025.

(b)

A list of all firefighting equipment and its service date of October 2024 were available for review.

(2) (c)

These records were made available to the authorised person on the day of inspection.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

## Compliance Information

The Registered provider demonstrated with certification adequate insurance for 22 preschool children in a sessional service up until the 27 March 2026.