

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015MH033		
Name of Service:	Trim Community Childcare CLG		
Address of Service:	The Maudlins, Trim, Co. Meath		
Eircode:	C15 Y32F		
Name of Registered Provider:	Marie Daly		
Service type:	Full Day		
Date of Inspection:	11/06/2024		
No of pre-school children:	AM	95	PM 63
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Family Resource Centre Commons Road Navan, Co. Meath		
Inspection undertaken by:	AM Cunningham, S Taaffe, AM Coyle		
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

Trim Community Childcare CLG is an established community based childcare facility located within the local community in Trim, Co Meath. The childcare centre is managed by Crann Support Group. The childcare service provides full day care, part time and a sessional service to children aged from 0 to 6 years. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme. There are six care rooms within the building, namely the Nursery Room, Wobbler Room, Toddler Room, Explorers Room and two ECCE rooms called the Red Room and the Green Room where a sessional service is facilitated in the morning time and where children attending for full day care are facilitated in the afternoon. Additionally, an Outdoor Pre-school is facilitated each morning. The service operates from 07:00am to 18:30pm from Monday to Friday and caters for a maximum of 160 children. Additional facilities include a kitchen, sanitary facilities (nappy changing areas), and sleep rooms. Outdoor areas directly accessible from the care rooms were available in addition to the Outdoor Pre-school. Adequate parking is available to the front of the pre-school.

Staffing

The registered provider is not centre based but is available to staff as required. The registered provider employs 46 staff members which includes a manager, and 2 assistant managers to manage the service on a daily basis, 27 staff members provide direct care to children, one of whom also provides AIM support to children, 3 administration staff, 4 staff are employed to work in the kitchen, and 1 bus driver. Eight additional staff members are employed to work in the school aged service only. Two volunteers also work in the service with the school aged children.

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.

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, 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.

(6A) Paragraph (4) shall not apply to an employee of a registered provider where - (a) the registered provider receives funding for the employment of the employee pursuant to a scheme funded by the Minister and known as the Access and Inclusion Model, and (b) the employment of the employee is for the purpose of providing support, pursuant to the scheme referred to in subparagraph (a), for a child attending the service to enable the child to participate in the programme known as the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) funding Programme."

Compliance Information

(1) (a) The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.

(b) A designated person in charge was on the premises when the inspectors arrived unannounced to carry out the inspection.

(c) A clear management structure was displayed in the entrance hallway in the service.

The assistant manager stated that there are 8 new staff members employed since the previous inspection. Remaining staff files were reviewed at the previous inspection on the 7th November 2023 and met regulatory compliance on completion of the CAPA process.

(2)(a) & (b) Eight staff files were reviewed. This included four staff members who cared for pre-school children and 3 staff members who cared for school aged children only, and 1 staff member employed in the kitchen. Sixteen validated written references were available either from a past employer or from a reputable source.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for the 8 adults. Garda vetting was obtained within the three-year timeframe for all staff members as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice.

(d) Police vetting was not required as no staff member resided outside the jurisdiction for a period of more than 6 consecutive months as an adult.

(4) The four new childcare staff members had a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 and above on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

(6A) One staff member was employed under the scheme known as the Access and Inclusion Model.

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.

(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) On the day of the inspection there was an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the service.

The assistant manager was available to provide support to the care rooms.

- The **Nursery Room** had 8 children ranging in age from 8 months to 17 months, all children attending on full day care basis being cared for by 3 staff members.
- The **Wobbler Room** had 11 children ranging in age from 1 year to 2 years, all children attending on a full day care basis being cared for by 3 adults.
- The **Toddler Room** had 11 children ranging in age from 2 years 2 months to 2 years 5 months all attending on a full day care basis being cared for by 2 adults.
- The **Explorers Room** had 11 children ranging in age from 2 years 9 months to 3 years 4 months attending the service on a full day care basis being cared for by 2 adults.
- The **Red Pre-school Room** had 13 children ranging in age from 3 years 5 months to 4 years, of which 11 were attending a full day care service and 2 were attending a sessional service, being cared for by 5 adults when the children were taken on an outing on the morning of the inspection and, otherwise, 2 adults.
- The **Green Pre-school Room** had 13 children ranging in age from 3 years 6 months to 5 years 5 months being cared for by 2 adults, of which 5 children were attending for full day care and 8 children were attending a sessional service.
- The **Outdoor Pre-school**: had 28 children ranging in age from 3 years 6 months to 5 years 6 months being cared for by 4 adults, including 1 adult providing AIM support, of which 13 children were attending for full day care and 15 were attending a sessional service.

(8) The registered provider ensured that there were always two adults on the premises when the service was in operation, as evidenced by the staff roster.

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

(1)(a) The following observations were made on how each child's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the daily life in the service:

Basic needs:

- All children individual needs were met with additional care, attention and supervision given as required. Childrens rotated between their care rooms and the outdoor spaces during the day.
- Staff members were observed changing children's nappies regularly and in a timely manner with warm one-to-one interactions during direct care. Older children were encouraged to become independent and self-caring, suitable to their age and stage of development which included using the toilet, hand washing, caring for their belongings and tidying away after activities and play.
- Children were observed enjoying meaningful, sustained play with tabletop activities, art and crafts and free playing with lots of conversation and laughter observed. Staff supported children's learning with activities that were observed to be fun and creative.
- The staff members sat and chatted with the children at mealtimes, helping the children when required whilst encouraging conversation and extending interactions.
- In the Nursery and Wobbler rooms sleep was child led with some children availing of an early morning nap while the older children were placed to sleep for a scheduled period of rest at the service's designated sleep time after dinner.
- The service embraces outdoor play and learning. Children were observed enjoying imaginative, energetic play with both their peers and staff members.
- Transitions were handled smoothly with children being given ample time to complete one activity before starting the next.
- For children who required additional supports, the inspectors found there were suitable up-dated care plans in place to facilitate their meaningful participation in the service, acknowledging the children's interests and preferences.

Supporting relationships around children:

- The staff spoke to all children in a positive way and listened attentively to each child. They used welcoming facial expressions and gentle vocal tones.
- The service showed a positive regard towards the families of the children and family links were nurtured in the service with family photographs displayed on “The Family Wall” in the care rooms which gave a sense of identity and belonging.
- Children in the Red Room went on a tour to a farm for the morning, when they returned, they were heard happily telling staff about their adventure.
- Children and parents were greeted at drop off and collection with friendly conversations overheard. Staff took the opportunity to update parents on the children’s day in the service, this information was also shared on the service’s electronic devices which were updated throughout the day.
- Overall, the children appeared comfortable, happy, and relaxed in their environment.

Non-Compliance Information

1. In the Toddler room the children were stripped down to their tops/t-shirt and nappy when they returned from the outdoor area and prior to having their dinner. On discussion with staff this practice was carried out to speed the transition for the children from eating to going to sleep. This routine was carried out as a time saving exercise and was not child-centred practice.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

This was addressed immediately, and the children no longer get ready for bed before dinner. They have their meal and then get ready (undressed to their vests) for bed.

All staff are aware that this is the practice to be carried out

Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider has addressed the non compliance in Regulation 19.

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.

(3) A registered provider of a full day care service, a part-time day care service or a childminding service, other than such a service to which paragraph (2) applies, shall ensure that-

(a) a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the pre-school children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises,

Compliance Information

(1)(b) Three cot rooms were available with a total of 21 cots for the children under 2 years who required sleep. Low beds were available for the children over 2 years of age requiring sleep. Staff spoke to the Inspector about the how they manage linen appropriately. Within the six indoor care rooms and outdoor pre-school there were soft furnishings, cushions, and mats for children to take a break from activities and rest if needed.

(3)(a) There was a suitable, safe, and secure outdoor spaces to the rear of the premises. Designated outdoor areas directly accessible from the care rooms were available divided by wooden fencing. The surface areas consisted of predominately grass, with small areas of hard surface. Small, covered areas were available in the outdoor areas to facilitate children to be protected from direct sunlight or rain. A soft surfaced area was available to facilitate the children attending the Red and Green ECCE Rooms.

The children attending the Outdoor Pre-school were accommodated in the spacious enclosed outdoor area to the rear of the premises from 9.30am to 12.30pm each day, before the children who were remaining on a part-time or full day care basis moved into the Green Room and the Red Room for dinner and the remainder of the day. Each afternoon, school aged children were accommodated in their own log cabin and generally accessed this outdoor space. The Outdoor Pre-school was mainly surfaced in natural grass and in soil, with a section of concrete in place to the front of the wooden log cabin known as the Wet Room where children could shelter to change out of their waterproof clothing at the end of the session, if required. A full-width roller door was in place along the front of the Wet Room which facilitated the space to be fully open along one wall. A paved pathway was in place leading across from the Wet Room to the sanitary facilities provided towards the opposite end of the outdoor space. Well-established trees, hedging, willow structures and hedging provided shelter and defined spaces for activity and play.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

- The care rooms and outdoor pre-school service (with the exception of the rooms outlined below) were well resourced with play materials and equipment which were laid out in interest areas which were spacious and uncluttered. The play materials and equipment incorporated natural/sensorial materials, art and crafts, a range of suitable toys and books which were easily accessible on open shelving at their height which supported children to select and become involved in meaningful, sustained play experiences. The interest areas in the Outdoor Pre-school included a polytunnel with planting boxes, gardening tools and ride-on toys, digging patches, willow structures, an outdoor kitchen, a shop area, a large water table with pouring attachments, an upright sensory activity station and sit-on fixed spring rocking toys. The Outdoor Pre-school placed a focus on supporting children to engage in exploration and messy play using natural materials including soil, sticks, twigs, leaves, berries, stones, mud and off-cuts of wood in varying lengths. Books and art supplies including paint, glue, scissors, and paper were provided on open shelving in the Wet Room. Further play materials including jigsaws and play equipment to support the development of the children's fine motor skills were provided in lidded sturdy containers in an outdoor storage unit.

Non-Compliance Information

Areas of interest in the Wobbler room and Toddler room were poorly developed and resourced. In both care rooms the kitchen had limited support equipment available, the library area was poorly developed, the dress up stand was used for storage of bags and not for dress up clothes to enhance role play or imaginative play.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Equipment has been added to both kitchen areas and developed further - see photos submitted.
Dress up was purchased for both rooms and the dress up stand is used for this purpose only.
The library was developed further- adding song books, family photo books and also more books for storytelling.
Staff are aware that if any equipment needs to be replaced that they notify management immediately.

Staff have asked parents to bring in recyclables for the kitchen area and to continuously send in family photos etc.

Summary Comment

The registered provider submitted photographic evidence of the areas of interest developed. The non-compliance's in Regulation 21 have been addressed.

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

The service had a 4-week menu plan with a variety of dishes ranging from vegetarian, meat and poultry freshly prepared in the service. All food is provided by the service except for the children attending on a sessional basis who brought in their own lunch. There was evidence of a good supply of fresh fruit and vegetables in the kitchen store in addition to a supply of canned and dried foods. Morning snack commences at 10am which was hot cross buns and orange segments, dinner was served at 12midday which was chicken a la king, extra helpings were available if children requested some and afternoon snack was served at 3pm which consisted of beans and toast. Water and milk were the drinks of choice.

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 following safety measures were in place on the day of inspection:

- The main door to the service was secured and the outdoor spaces were enclosed and had secure gates. These security measures ensured that a child did not exit unsupervised and restricted unauthorised persons from gaining access to the service and outdoor spaces.
- All cleaning agents were stored out of reach of the children.
- All furniture and display units had a stable base with no risk of toppling identified.
- Staff members in the Outdoor Pre-school service were observed and also described the importance of providing appropriate supervision both through sight and sound when the children were engaging in outdoor play in the natural environment in order to ensure their safety.

Infection Control:

The following infection control measures were observed:

- The hand washing policy and nappy changing policy were implemented in practice with appropriate hand washing for staff and children observed at all times. Thermostatically controlled warm water, liquid soap and paper hand towels were available in the sanitary facilities both indoors and outdoors.
- A container was available to place mouthed toys after use by the young children. Staff in the care rooms stated they are washed in warm soapy water.
- The service was clean with cleaning schedules available.
- The children's snacks provided from home were refrigerated on arrival for the children attending the indoor pre-school rooms and also the outdoor service. This reduced the risk of bacteria multiplying to levels which could result in food contamination.

Safe Sleep:

Safe sleep practices were observed in the service as demonstrated by the following examples:

- The temperature of the cot room was maintained between 16 to 20⁰ C while children were sleeping.
- A sleep log recording the position, colour and breathing pattern was recorded at 10 minutes intervals on all sleeping children.

- Children sleeping on stackable beds were supervised at all times.

Fire Safety:

The following fire safety measures were observed:

- Fire drills were conducted on a monthly basis.
- The emergency exit doors were unobstructed.

Administration of Medication:

- The medication administration forms maintained for children who had received medication in the service were accurately completed, demonstrating safe practice. The forms were reviewed on the electronic device used by staff in the service to communicate with parents. The forms included signed parental consent.

Outings:

- The assistant managers and staff members demonstrated knowledge of the relevant safety issues associated with the preparation and safe management of outings which included the completion of a documented risk assessment beforehand. On the day of inspection, the children from the Red Room were taken on an outing to a pet farm and staff members in this room informed the inspector that the completed risk assessment did not identify any hazards that would impact the health, safety, or welfare of the children on the trip. The staff members brought relevant supplies including a first aid kit, roll book, charged mobile phone and sun cream on the outing.

Non-Compliance Information

General safety:

1. One of the blind cords at the door leading from the Toddler room to the outdoor play area was loose and not completely secured to the wall, which potentially a child could get caught in.

Infection Control:

2. The paper hand towels in the nappy changing area located between the Toddler room and the Explorers room not hygienically dispensed. The rolls of paper were stored on worktops and were subjected to repeated handling; this was inadequate for infection control purposes.
3. During sleep time in the Toddler room the recommended distance of 50cm was not maintained between the floor mats. This is inadequate for infection control purposes.

Corrective & Protective Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The blind cord is attached the wall and no longer hanging down.

Infection Control:

2. New batteries have been put in the hand towel dispensers and the blue/white roll is placed in them to avoid multiple people handling it.
3. Children are distanced 50cm apart at sleep time.

Staff are aware to report any safety issues to management who in turn will ask maintenance team to fix.

We have put up a notice to ensure staff are aware of the distance required between bed.

Summary Comment

The registered provider has provided evidence of the non-compliance's addressed, the blind cord no longer hanging down, the hand towel dispenser working and the sleeping children 50cms apart. The non-compliances in Regulation 23 have been addressed.

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) Records demonstrated that the date and time of attendance and departure in respect of each pre-school child were recorded on a daily basis.

- (3)(a) All persons were approved by an employee prior to entry to the pre-school service.
- (b) Visitors were announced and approved by an authorised staff member on arrival, the visitors' details were entered into the visitors' book.

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 service provided evidence that a person had up to date First Aid Responders training and was available at all times to the children attending the pre-school service.
- (2)(a) and (b) A suitably equipped first aid box was available and safely stored in the premises.

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) Records are available to show that fire drills were carried out on a monthly basis.
- (b) A record of the number, type and maintenance of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms were available on the premises. The firefighting equipment were serviced on 10/07/2023. The smoke alarms were last serviced in August 2023.
- (4) The fire evacuation procedures were displayed in conspicuous positions on the premises.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider had a valid insurance certificate for 180 pre-school children with an expiry date of 27th March 2025.