

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015MN010		
Name of Service:	Carrickmacross Childcare Ltd		
Address of Service:	Carrickmacross Workhouse, Shercock Road, Carrickmacross, Co. Monaghan		
Eircode:	A81 E372		
Name of Registered Provider:	Vera Keyes		
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	29/11/2024		
No of pre-school children:	AM	26	PM 22
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Hampton Court, Cootehill Road, Drumalee, Co Cavan. H12 YY84		
Inspection undertaken by:	S. Mc Kenna S. Skinnader		
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

Carrickmacross Childcare Ltd is a private owned service, commenced in 2002. The service caters for children aged 2 years 6 months to 6 years, providing full day care, part time and sessional care types. The service operates 7am to 6.30pm daily for a maximum of 85 children. The service operates from a 2-storey community building on the outskirts of Carrickmacross town Co Monaghan. There are 4 care rooms, 2 nappy changing areas, a sleep room, children's sanitary accommodation, a kitchen and an office. There are 2 outdoor areas to the back and side of the building. Car parking is available outside the building.

Staffing

There are 14 staff employed in the service, 13 staff work directly with the children, which includes the service manager and the registered provider. One staff member is employed as the cook.

Two students were present on the day of inspection.

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, 10, 11, 16, 19, 27 and 32 however, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 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.

Additional Information

The inspection was carried out following receipt of a feedback and concern received to the Early Years Inspectorate on the 22/10/2024.

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

(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;

Compliance Information

(1) (a) The service had a designated person in charge, and a named person to deputise in their absence.

(b) Following review of the staff roster and discussion with the person in charge, it was confirmed when the preschool service was in operation the designated person in charge or the named person in charge were on the premises.

(2) Five files were reviewed upon this inspection, to include three new staff who have been employed since the last inspection and two students in attendance on the day of inspection. Staff files for 11 of 14 staff employed in the service were reviewed upon the service's last inspection (September 2023).

(a)(b) Two written and validated references were available for two staff members.

One staff member had two references available.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for 14 staff. However, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. Please refer to the information outlined under regulation 23 of this report. Garda vetting for the one student was not required.

(d) A review of the employment history for the 3 new staff, demonstrated that 2 staff had lived outside the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months. The required police vetting for the 2 staff was available on file. Police vetting for one staff member was not required.

(4) Documentary evidence was available to confirm that the 2 new staff employed to work with children, held an appropriate childcare qualification at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications.

(7) (a) Upon employment in the service, staff receive a staff handbook, and a formal meeting with the registered provider to discuss duties. New employees are required to review all service policies. Records of regular staff meetings were available, which included discussion and refresher training on policies and procedures.

Non-Compliance Information

(9) (2) (a)(b) Two written references on file for one adult were not validated.

There were no written validated references available for two students.

(d) An 'English translation' was not available for the international police vetting on file for one staff.

(3) Garda vetting for one adult was not completed prior to their start date of working in the service.

(4) There was no evidence on file to confirm if one staff members qualification was deemed to be equivalent to Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(9) (2) (a) (b) Two written references have been validated and are on file. Written and validated references are on file for two students. A staff and student file cover form has been created to keep better control.

(d) English translation received and stored on file. A staff and student file cover form has been created to keep better control.

(3) Going forward staff will not start employment without Garda Vetting. A staff and student file cover form has been created to keep better control.

(4) Evidence on file detailing qualification equivalent to Level 6.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copy of staff and student file cover form.

Copy of English translation of police vetting.

Copy of qualification detailing qualification is equivalent to Level 6.

Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider has addressed the non-compliances in Regulation 9 (2) (a) (b), (d), (3) and (4).

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 registered provider ensured that the following written policies specified in Schedule 5 were comprehensive to ensure the welfare and safety of the children attending the service.

- Statement of Purpose and Function.

- Complaints Policy.
- Managing Behaviour Policy.
- Accidents and Incidents Policy.
- Authorisation to Collect Children Policy.
- Outdoor Play Policy.
- Staff Absences Policy.
- Recruitment Policy.
- Risk Management Policy.
- Settling-In Policy.
- Staff Training Policy.
- Supervision Policy.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels

(1) Subject to this Regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that there is at all times an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.

(2) Subject to paragraphs (4) and (5), a registered provider of a full day care service or a part-time day care service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 1 of Schedule 6 opposite a particular reference number specified in column (1) of that Part in respect of the age range of the children specified in column (2) thereof at that reference number is satisfied.

(8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-

(a) a registered provider of a pre-school service other than a child-minding service or a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that there are at least 2 adults on the premises at all times,

Compliance Information

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

(2) The adult to child ratios were correct in the service when the inspectors arrived unannounced and remained so throughout the inspection. The following adult to child ratios were observed:

Three adults cared for 7 children aged 2 years 7 months to 5 years in the Junior Preschool Room.

Two adults cared for 7 children aged 3 to 4 years in the Senior Preschool Room.

Two adults cared for 6 children aged 3 years 8 months to 4 years 10 months in Naíonra Rois.

Two adults cared for 6 children aged 3 years 4 months to 4 years in Seomra Caoimhín.

In addition to the above, the person in charge was office based and was on cooking duty on the day of inspection, assisting in care rooms if needed outside of scheduled cooking times.

The registered provider was also on site, assisting in care rooms as required.

Two students on work placement were present, one student in Seomra Caoimhín throughout the inspection, and one student attended in the afternoon in the Senior Preschool.

(8) Following review of the staff roster and a discussion with the person in charge it was confirmed that there are at least 2 adults on the premises while the full day care service is in operation.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:

(a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;

(h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;

(i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;

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

Compliance Information

A record was available for review of the following information:

(h) The details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis, which was recorded on a digital application in each room.

(i) A staff roster detailing each staff members hours on a weekly basis.

(k) Written records of accident and incidents were available. Records reviewed were found to be clear and legible, and included parental signatures. When accident/incidents occur, the registered provider and staff advised the

inspectors that the parents are initially informed using the digital application with text and or photos, and then requested to sign the written accident/incident record upon collection of their child.

This practice was also observed on the day of inspection.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) (a) There was no employment record on file for two students, therefore it could not be determined if police vetting was required.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

(1) (a) Student files have been corrected and updated. Student file cover form created to keep better control.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copy of student employment records, which detailed no police vetting was required.

Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider has addressed the non-compliance in Regulation 16 (1) (a).

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

(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

(1)(a) (b)

The following examples demonstrate how the registered provider ensured that the children's learning, development, and well-being was facilitated within the daily life of the service:

Basic Needs

A 2-week menu was in place, the hot meal was provided by an external company and heated and served on site from the service's kitchen, with the remainder of snacks prepared and cooked on site. The menu detailed a morning snack, dinner, and an evening snack. Breakfast options were available if children required breakfast. Food served on the day of the inspection was a morning snack of sandwiches with a choice of chopped fruits and drinks of water. Dinner was lasagne and garlic bread with water. Snack and mealtimes were observed to be relaxed, and adults were observed to sit with children and provide supports where needed. There were options for parents to send in food from home for their children. Drinking cups and water jugs were available in all care rooms on the day of inspection.

Nappy changing times were scheduled in the rooms, with children also changed outside of these times where their routine required it. Names of the children who required nappy changing or toileting were recorded for staff on the white board in the rooms. In the Junior Preschool Room nappy changing facilities and toilets were located within the room. The children were reminded or offered to use the toilets with the adults support and children were observed to have their nappies changed at the scheduled times or as required throughout the inspection.

The adults engaged in conversations with the children throughout nappy changing and toilet times.

The children's nappy changing area and toilets for the three other care rooms were located off the hallways outside the care rooms. When children required nappy changing/use the toilet adults went with the children and remained with them until they returned to the care rooms.

Children's independence was promoted by the adults. The interactions observed when children were getting ready for outdoor play included words of encouragement and praise to the children for trying their best with putting on their own coats.

Children's choices were respected, and this was demonstrated through a discussion in Seomra Caoimhín about painting a post box to post Santa letters. Following discussion with the children, it was decided the box would be painted blue in line with the children's preferences.

Children's appearance was cared for, with clothes observed to be changed when wet or soiled in all care rooms. Each child had spare clothing in individual boxes/shelves within their care rooms. Aprons were available for messy play, and outdoor overalls available for use in inclement weather conditions.

Areas of rest were provided within each care room, to include soft mats with cushions, providing an area for the children to rest during their day. Although not observed in use on the day of inspection a sleep room off the Senior Preschool Room was available for children over two years, with four stackable beds with suitable bed linen. The children from each care room had a change of environment to the outdoor play areas and the children were observed to be dressed appropriately for the weather in the outdoors.

Supporting Relationships

The children were observed to interact well with their peers and the adults who care for them. The adults were observed to speak in warm tones to the children in their care rooms. Interactions were observed to be positive for example *“you are doing such good sharing today”* and *“that’s lovely work”*.

A keyworker system was in place in all rooms and creative scrap books were maintained for each child. Adults were observed to sit and play at the child’s level and provided comfort to children if they appeared upset. Adults demonstrated sensitivity and positive regard for children and their families through respecting cultural, religious and dietary requirements as well as personal choice and preferences. Staff communicate with parents and carers using the digital application and in person at arrival and collection times. Interactions at arrival and collection times were observed on the day of inspection, with the staff and parents engaged in conversations regarding the child’s day in the service.

The staff and management were observed to work well with each other as a team. It was stated by staff that staff meetings occurred each term with, informal one to one meetings with management on a regular basis.

The adults completed a daily routine on a digital application for each child, which is uploaded and shared directly with the parents. The records observed for older children detailed the meals eaten and quantity. The younger children’s record included mealtime and toilet/nappy changes, and sleep where required. Photos of activities and observations were reviewed, which were also communicated to parents via the digital application.

Strategies were in place in the rooms to support children who required additional support or who had additional medical needs.

Non-Compliance Information

1. In the Junior Preschool Room from approximately 10.20 to 11am the transition from morning snack, nappy changing and getting ready to go outside was protracted. During this time a number of behavioural issues occurred, some children became upset and some children in the room walked about or sat in the cosy area on their own while they waited. It is acknowledged that during this time staff provided comfort and support to the children who required it.
2. In the Senior Preschool Room, the dignity and privacy of the children was not always maintained during toileting and nappy changing. For example, it was observed that all 7 children and the 2 staff members present went over to the nappy changing room across the corridor at one of the scheduled nappy changing and toileting times. All 9 were present when nappies were being changed and the toilet was being used. This practice does not protect the dignity and privacy of the children.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

1. Full day routine is on display with visuals for children. Educators are working to ease the transitions. Staff will allow more transition time and more flexibility on routines. Contact has been made with a quality development service to improve the environment in the room.
2. Talked to staff regarding changing room turns, and the privacy of the children, and group management. Placed a poster on display in changing room.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence of visual routine.

Photograph of the poster in the nappy changing area.

Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider has been accepted in relation to Regulation 19 and will be for review at the next inspection.

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 14 staff members. However, two of these vetting disclosures were not dated within the previous three years in adherence to with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.
2. There were sharp unprotected corners on some of the low-level shelving in Junior Preschool Room and in Naíonra Ríos. These are a potential injury hazard.
3. The wooden picnic bench in the outdoor area outside the Junior Preschool Room was in a state of disrepair with tabletop pieces of wood broken, and therefore a potential injury hazard.

Infection Control:

4. During nappy changing procedures in the Junior Preschool Room the following infection control and cross contamination risks were observed:
 - The staff member did not change their apron between three nappy changes observed.
 - The staff member was observed to wash a child's hands with the same gloves on which were used to change the nappy.
 - The staff member was observed to come out into the care room with the apron and gloves on to return a child to the room, record the nappy changing record on the white board and take another child to get their nappy changed.
 - The nappy changing mat was not observed to be cleaned between each nappy change.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. Garda vetting applications have been made. Staff Garda vetting and dates on display in office to help keep track of renewals. Management is aware of new Garda vetting rules.
2. Corner protectors replaced. Extra protectors available, and staff have been instructed to replace them if they fell, or if they are aware of any other furniture that need (i.e. if the change furniture around the room.
3. Wooden picnic bench is now gone. Management will take on board to do a maintenance checklist of outdoor equipment.

Infection Control:

4. Meeting with staff and the nappy policy has been passed on to all staff members. New nappy changing poster on display in both changing rooms.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Photographic evidence of corner cover.

Photograph demonstrating removal of bench from area.

Infection Control:

Photograph of new nappy changing poster on display.

Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider has addressed the non-compliances 2, 3 and 4.

The non-compliance listed at number 1 remains outstanding, as the two updated garda vetting certificates have not been submitted to the inspectorate. This will be reviewed upon the service's next inspection.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.

Compliance Information

On the day of the inspection the inspectors observed the staff members adequately supervising the children both in the indoor environments and outdoor play areas. The children's sanitary accommodation in three of the four care rooms, are located off a hallway outside the care rooms. As the community building is used by other members of the public, when children in Senior Preschool, Naíonra Rois and Seomra Caoimhín needed the toilet, the adults remained with the children while using the designated sanitary areas.

Part VIII - Notifications and Complaints

Regulation 32 – Complaints

- (1) A registered provider shall ensure that the complaints policy of the service specifies-*
- (a) the procedure to be followed by a person for the purposes of making a complaint in relation to the service,*
 - (b) the manner in which such a complaint shall be dealt with, and*
 - (c) the procedures for keeping a person who makes such a complaint informed of the manner in which it is being dealt with.*
- (2) A registered provider shall ensure that-*
- (a) a record in writing is kept of a complaint made to the provider in respect of the pre-school service, and*
 - (b) the complaint is duly dealt with in accordance with the provider's complaints policy.*
- (3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall-*
- (a) include the nature of the complaint and the manner in which the complaint was dealt with, and*
 - (b) be open to inspection on the premises by an authorised person.*

Compliance Information

- (1) (a) (b) and (c) A Complaints Policy was available for the service.
- (2) (a) (b) Written and digital records were available of a complaint made to the registered provider. The registered provider was dealing with the complaint in line with their complaints policy.
- (3) (a) (b) A record available included the nature of the complaint, which was available for review.