

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015MN018
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Name of Service:	Corcaghan Community Preschool Service by Guarantee
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Address of Service:	Cavanagarvan, Corcaghan, Co. Monaghan
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Eircode:	H18 PK31
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Name of Registered Provider:	Francis Evans
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	30/01/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	15	PM	13
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Hampton Court, Cootehill Road, Drumalee, Co Cavan. H12 YY84
Inspection undertaken by:	S Mc Kenna
Title:	Early Years Inspector

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
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Description of service

Corcaghan Community Preschool Service Ltd by Guarantee was established in 2014 as a not-for-profit service. A full day care, part-time and sessional pre-school service is provided. The service caters for a maximum of 22 pre-school children and is registered to operate from a prefabricated building adjacent to the local primary school from 08:00 - 15:30 Monday - Friday. The service partakes in the ECCE scheme from 9:10 – 12:10. School aged childcare is also provided. There is one care room with adjoining sanitary accommodation, a store room, a kitchen and an office. The children have access to two outdoor play areas. Car parking is available at the front of the premises.

Staffing

There are 5 staff employed in the service. The registered provider does not work in the service.

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 Regulation 9 Management & Recruitment, Regulation 11 Staffing Levels, Regulation 16 Record in relation to Pre-school Service, Regulation 19 Health, Welfare & Development of Child, Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child, Regulation 25

First Aid, Regulation 26 Fire Safety and Regulation 28 Insurance, however, on inspection an additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 8. 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 person in charge, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Part II - Registration and Register

Regulation 8 - Notification of change in circumstances

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a temporary pre-school service shall, subject to paragraph (3), notify the Agency in writing of any proposed change in the details in relation to the pre-school service contained in the register pursuant to section 58C(2) of the Act or Regulation 7(2) at least 60 days before it is proposed that the change would take effect.

Non-Compliance Information

On the day of inspection, the service was found to be operating outside of their registration status. The service was operating 08:00 - 17:00 while the approved registration status is to operate 08:00 - 15:30 daily. The registered provider is required to notify Tusla of any changes to their approved registration status.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

A change of circumstances form was submitted once notified that the service was operating outside the hours registered. Any time there is any change a change in circumstances form will be completed.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copy of change in circumstances form submitted to Tusla, and a copy of the confirmation email from Tusla registration office that the change in hours was accepted.

Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider has adequately addressed the non-compliance in Regulation 8.

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) The service had a designated person in charge, who is the service manager, and a named person in charge available to deputise in their absence.
- (b) Following discussion with the person in charge, and review of the staff roster it was confirmed that when the preschool service was in operation, the designated person in charge or the named person in charge were on the premises.
- (c) A management structure was in place, which was clearly identifiable through review of the staff roster that was on display and from discussion with the staff team.
- (2) The files for 5 staff were reviewed.
- (a) A total of 6 written and validated references from a previous employer were on file.
- (b) A total of 4 written and validated references from a reputable source were on file.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all 5 staff. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years for all employed staff.
- (d) A review of the employment history for the 5 staff, demonstrated that one adult had lived outside the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months. The required police vetting was available on file.
- (4) Documentary evidence was available to confirm that all 5 employed staff, held an appropriate childcare qualification at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications, or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

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, provide assistance to the person in charge in operating the service is, at all times, within close distance of the service and available to attend the service to assist the person in charge in the event of an emergency.

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 inspector arrived unannounced and remained so throughout the inspection. The following adult to child ratios were observed:

Three adults cared for fifteen children aged 3 years 3 months to 5 years.

In addition to the above, the manager was office based and assisted in the care rooms when required.

(8) A review of the staff roster demonstrated that the registered provider ensured that 2 adults were present on the premises at all times

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;

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) The registered provider ensured that the name, position, qualifications and experience of each member of staff was available on file.
- (h) A review of the attendance records detailed arrival and departure times for each child in attendance on a daily basis.
- (i) An up-to-date weekly staff roster was available on the premises.

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

The following examples demonstrated how children's learning, development and well-being was facilitated in the service:

Basic Needs

The preschool room was bright, warm and inviting, with a friendship tree that included children's handprints and names, family photos and a birthday chart on display. The atmosphere was observed to be relaxed, child focused with warm tones used for communication between staff and children. The children were observed to be engaged in activities throughout the inspection, and to actively seek out the staff when supports were needed.

Breakfast, a hot meal and an evening snack is provided by the service, with the morning snack taken in from home by the children. The menu was on display detailing the hot meal and snack options daily. Staff advised the menu is changed on a regular basis depending on the children's likes. The hot meal on the day was mashed potato, gravy, broccoli and chicken goujons, with children given an option of having an apple, orange or banana after their meal. Children's lunches provided from home included a variety of sandwiches, crackers, yogurts and fruits with discussions observed between staff and children about the child's fruit choice on the day. Snack and mealtimes were observed to be calm, and children were provided with adequate time to finish their food. Children's drinking cups were accessible throughout their day on a low-level table within the room.

The children were observed to use the toilet independently with adults close by for help if needed. Nappy changing facilities were provided with nappy changing carried out in line with the children's individual needs.

Aprons were provided for messy play activities, and were observed in use during painting and water play activities. Individual coat hangers with the children's names and photo were provided at a low level where children could access their own items when needed. Spare sets of clothing were available, and the staff were observed to change children's clothing where they became wet or soiled.

A soft seating area was available for children to rest during their day, with sleep mats provided where children required a sleep.

Outdoor time was observed to be highly promoted within the service, staff informed the inspector that the children would go to the outdoor area a few times a day, which was observed in practise on the day of inspection. The children were observed to be dressed appropriately for the weather outdoors.

The staff were observed to promote positive behaviour and interactions by using encouraging comments when positive interactions were observed such as when children took turns when playing and sharing their toys. The quantity and availability of materials at the children's level ensured children could play together in small or larger groups and in turn preventing problems arising.

Supporting Relationships

A key worker system was in place, allowing opportunity for close relationships to be formed between children and staff. A keepsake book was kept for each child which included art work, photos of children at play, observations and comments on children's likes and interests. There is minimal staff change over within the setting, all children appeared familiar with all staff, which provides children with a sense of familiarity through consistency of carers. The staff were observed to demonstrate sensitivity, warmth and positive regard for children and their families, through respecting parental requests and wishes, and acknowledging the child's own individual preferences. The staff were observed to treat each child with respect and addressed each child by name. Discussions between staff and children about the children's home life demonstrated familiarity with the people who are important in the child's life.

Communication with parents is in person upon arrival and collection times, along with the use of text messaging, phone calls and emails. The staff team worked well together during the transitions from each activity or routine, which was observed to be smooth with no interruptions.

Physical And Material Environment

The indoor environment is presented in a spacious and comfortable manner. Materials were freely available and accessible to children on low level shelves. There were many designated interest areas to include sand and water areas, rest area and book corner, a wall mounted explorer board, dress up and home corner, creative area, sensory toys, small world play toys, jigsaws area and shelving with many table-top toys for connecting, building and stacking. A store room located directly off the preschool room had further play equipment and materials used for toy rotation and themed planning.

On the day of the inspection, the most popular play choices observed was playing with playdough in the home corner, being creative with the magnetic building toys and playing on the floor with the garage and cars.

An activity of hairdressers also proved popular, along with a dinosaur sponge painting activity where children were observed to pick what colour sponges to use. The painting activity was set up on two tables allowing children to engage with painting at their own time if they choose too.

The tables and chairs provided were suitable for the age and stage of children in attendance. Suitable seating for the adults was available to allow adults to sit comfortably and engage in play activities with the children.

The designated outdoor play areas are spacious and laid out well to accommodate the needs and interests of the children. Ground surfacing is a variety of concrete, tarmac and soft surfacing. Two areas were available for use by the children to include a covered area with wooden logs, tool sets, ride on tractors and cars, chairs and a table, footballs and push-a-long toys. The second area included a large climbing frame with a slide and swing, a covered sand pit, a mud kitchen, a planting area, a bench, wooden logs and a tunnel.

The children were observed to use both outdoor play areas on the day of inspection.

Programme of Activities

Observations were recorded and documented in children's own individual folders. The child's keyworker recorded regular observations and learning stories documenting the children's interests and likes, which were then incorporated into the weekly curriculum planning. The keepsake books provided a timeline of the child's time in the preschool service

The curriculum was broadly planned with regular seasonal themes such as winter, valentines etc however it also allowed for flexibility, and would change based on the current interests of the children.

Story time was observed to take place where the child that was on "book duty today" picks a book that is read at story time. The children sat on a variety of seats and mats and were careful to ensure their friends around them could see the book. The book chosen included a part about a television not working, and with staff prompts a discussion about the recent storm where the whole country was without electricity took place. This encouraged the children to engage in discussions and comments made by the children included "the telly not working" and "power was out" and "mammy moved the trees away". The children were given adequate time to tell their own stories where they wished. Song time occurred after the story time where children were observed to take part in physical exercise movements during the "wiggle" song.

A strong focus on following the child's lead was observed in practice, where staff facilitated and enhanced many play opportunities. It was observed that where children chose not to take part in the story or circle time, they were facilitated at an activity of their choice which on the day of inspection was a cutting and stamping creative activity. The children were observed to move between activities at a time of their choosing and facilitated to make their own choice's during their play and learning.

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 inspector observed the following safety measures in practice within the service:

- The premises was appropriately secured upon the inspectors arrival, a bell to notify staff or a pin code known to staff is used to enter the premises. The outdoor play areas were secured by fencing and lockable gates.
- The children were observed to be appropriately supervised both indoors and outdoors on the day of inspection.
- The play resources and equipment in use by the children were presented in good condition.
- The kitchen is locked when not in use, and inaccessible to the children.
- Handrails provided for the steps and ramp up into the premises were in good repair.
- Corners of low-level units had been covered with protected coverings.
- Storage areas remained inaccessible to the children, with doors locked and keys stored out of reach of children.
- Cleaning agents were stored on high level shelving, out of the reach of the children.
- Fire exits remained unobstructed during the inspection.

Infection Control:

The inspector observed the following infection control measures in practice within the service:

- Warm running water was available in the children's sanitary areas, along with a supply of liquid soap, paper towels and foot operated bins.
- The children and adults were observed to practise appropriate hand washing procedures throughout their day, with handwashing observed to take place following toilet times, after outdoor play, after messy play and before snack and meal times.
- The sanitary areas were ventilated with openable windows.
- Tables were observed to be cleaned by staff after messy activities, and before and after meal times. The service is currently trying a new colour coded cloth routine with cloths used in designated areas and washed on site daily.

- The children’s lunch boxes taken in from home were stored in the fridge until snack time.
- Cleaning schedules were in place with records maintained up to date. The service was presented in a clean and hygienic manner.
- Waste bins were secured in an area inaccessible to the children.

Administration of Medication:

- Staff outlined the relevant procedures for storing and administering medication to children within their care. A medication record book was available for review.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. One of the three radiators in the preschool room had a temperature reading that exceeded 50°C. It is acknowledged that when the inspector brought this to the attention of the manager the radiator was immediately turned off. Temperatures exceeding 50°C pose a risk of burn to a child.

Infection Control:

2. Following nappy changing procedures, staff were observed to leave the nappy changing area, wearing apron and or gloves, and walk through the care room to the fire exit door to dispose of soiled nappy bags in the external bin. This procedure increases the risk of cross contamination.

Administration of Medication:

3. Medication records reviewed on the day of inspection had been pre populated with a parental signature where medication had not yet been administered. This practise does not ensure that correct daily records are maintained along with appropriate communication with parents on a daily basis following administration of medication.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

The radiator was turned off right away and was put back on after a while and the temperature was changed on it. We are getting a tradesman to come out to service and check all radiators and show the staff how to change the settings. A risk assessment form to be carried out daily by staff to ensure this doesn’t happen again.

Infection Control:

There is now a bin in the sanitary area used for nappy changing. The service has updated this practice in the nappy changing policy. Management spoke to staff about cross contamination and the updated policy was reviewed.

Administration of Medication:

Service manager spoke with the child's parent advising that medication records can only be signed on the day. Management spoke with staff advising that the medication book must be filled in with all information and signed by parents on the day as per the services medication policy.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copy of a completed risk assessment record to include checking radiator temperature.
Photograph of new nappy bin in place.
Photographic evidence of medication forms signed daily.

Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider has adequately addressed the non-compliances within Regulation 23.

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 a person who held in-date First Aid Response (FAR) training was at all times immediately available to the children attending the pre-school service. The manager and three staff members held in-date FAR training certificates.
- (2) (a) & (b) A suitably equipped first aid box was available in the preschool room and was stored in an accessible and conspicuous location out of the reach of 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.
- (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) A record of the fire drills that take place was available. The most recent fire drill was recorded in January 2025.
- (b) The annual maintenance certificate for the fire extinguishers was dated January 2025, and the smoke alarms was dated December 2024.
- (4) The fire evacuation procedures were displayed on the notice board within the preschool room and contained details in relation to the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire.

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 insurance cover in place for 22 pre-school children attending the service on a Full Day Care basis. The policy showed that the service had insurance in place from 28/03/2024 to 27/03/2025.