

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015MO031
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Name of Service:	Carrakennedy Community Childcare Limited
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Address of Service:	Carrakennedy, Liscarney, Westport, Co. Mayo
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Eircode:	F28 CX70
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Name of Registered Provider:	Martina Mullen
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	22/10/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	6	PM	-
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Year's Inspectorate, TUSLA, Child and Family Agency, 2nd Floor, St. Mary's HQ., Castlebar, Co. Mayo.
Inspection undertaken by:	M Farrell
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

Carrakennedy Community Childcare Limited is a community based childcare service in a rural area in Co Mayo. The service is registered to provide sessional services to children aged from two to six years of age between 09:20-12:20 hours. The premises was previously used as a primary school. There is one playroom and a second activity room in the building in addition to a kitchen and office. An outdoor play area is located to the rear and side of the premises where children have access to outdoor play equipment and planting areas.

Staffing

There are three staff who work directly with children in the service including relief staff. The registered provider does not work directly 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/ safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under sections of regulations 9,11,15, 19, 23, 25 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 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

(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

(2)

Documentation of police vetting for two jurisdictions had remained outstanding for one adult following the most recent inspection of the service on the 18 January 2022. The inspector was informed by staff that this staff member had left the service.

There were three staff members including relief staff employed in the service. The following vetting documentation had been obtained for the staff:

- (a) and (b) two written validated references for two staff members.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all three staff. However, the service did not always 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.
- (d) International police vetting was available for two staff members who had lived outside of the State for more than six months as adults.

(4)

Evidence of the required qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education or equivalent was available on file for the three staff members who worked directly with the children.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)

- (a) There was no evidence of the validation of two written references from past employers for one staff member.
- (d) There was no employment history/experience available for one staff member.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider stated in a written response that:

(2)

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (a) The two references for the staff member have now been validated. The service will make sure that references will be validated in the future.
- (d) An employment history is now in place for staff member. Employment history will be sought for candidates seeking employment.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copies of two validated references and a curriculum vitae.

Summary Comment

The actions taken and evidence submitted by the service have been reviewed by the Inspectorate and found to have addressed the non-compliance found on inspection under this regulation.

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) A review of a sample of attendance records found that there had been an adequate number of adults working with the children in the service. There were two adults working directly with six children when the inspector arrived unannounced to the service.
- (3) The registered provider ensured that the minimum ratio for a sessional service of 1 adult to each 11 children for the age range of children attending the service was adhered to. Two staff worked directly with six children during the session.

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.*

(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.*

Compliance Information

(1) (a) to (i)

The inspector reviewed the records of the seven children enrolled in the service which had records in relation to the required information.

(3) (c)

The children's records were made readily available to the inspector by the designated person in charge on request.

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.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

The staff planned activities throughout the session to support the children's learning, development and well-being. When the inspector arrived at the service the children were playing in the playroom. A wide selection of toys and equipment were stored and displayed at low levels in open storage allowing the children to choose play activities. The staff had set up a painting area at a chalkboard with paper, paints and brushes that the children could paint with. One child wearing a waterproof apron to protect their clothes had decided to play with water at a low-level water table. The staff supervised the child and joined in with the water play. Some children chose to play a card game together at a circular table where other children played with small dolls and clothes. Throughout the session the children moved around the playroom exploring and playing with different toys and games for example with plastic food items in the home corner and with the coloured plastic blocks set out on an activity table by the staff. The children were learning about Halloween and there were organised group activities on the day such as the "potion making" activity where the children made "witches potions". This activity was closely supervised by the staff and involved using small sealable plastic bags to mix coloured glitter of the children's choice, washing up liquid, mini craftwork eyes and tiny pompoms. The staff and children had made a large amount of Halloween art and craft items such as small orange pumpkins from cardboard rolls and wooden broomsticks with little wooden twigs/sticks. The entrance hallway had been attractively decorated in a Halloween theme. The daily routine was flexible to respond to the children's needs for example some children wanted a story read to them and one of the staff members sat with them on the soft couch to read "The Gruffalo". Other children joined the group and more stories were read to them by the staff member who encouraged the children to talk about the story afterwards. Children were encouraged to take part in activities but were supported by the staff to play with other toys of their choice if they did not want to continue with a play activity.

The play materials and toys were suitable for the age and developmental stages of the children using them on the day and supported learning and development such as tabletop activities to support fine motor development and ride on toys outdoors to help gross motor development. Outdoor play was a scheduled

daily activity and the children played outdoors towards the end of the session enjoying running games such as “What time is it Mr. Wolf?”. There was large wooden planting box in the enclosed outdoor area and the staff told the inspector that the children had helped them to plant daffodils, hyacinths, crocuses and tulips in it.

The children’s meal was scheduled midway through the session and they ate food that had been provided from home together at a table supervised by the staff who sat with them. Children’s independence was promoted. The children were observed to be encouraged to use the toilet by themselves where possible with the staff providing help and support to children if needed. When getting ready to play outdoors the staff encouraged the children to put on their wellington boots and coats by themselves as much as possible with help given if needed.

The interactions between the staff and children were positive and warm with positive approaches to behaviour management used by the staff who worked closely with the children. The staff prepared the children for transitions between activities using a “five minute hand” sign to show them that a transition was approaching. Yellow sand timers were available, and the staff said that they used them to assist with sharing of toys between children. Parents/guardians were greeted warmly by the staff at collection time with information shared between them. The staff kept written observations of the children at monthly intervals and showed the inspector samples that had been signed by parents who had been given them to review. The staff were in the process of creating a newsletter update for parents to be given at the end of the term. Electronic messaging systems were also used for interaction between staff and families providing service information updates.

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 entrance doors to the service were secured on the inspector's arrival to the service. The inspector was admitted to the service by the designated person in charge following the production of identification documentation. The internal doors to the playroom had securing mechanisms in place to allow staff to control access to the playroom and prevent children from leaving the playroom unnoticed. A staff member carried out a risk assessment of the outdoor area including checking that gates were secured before the children went outside to play. Cleaning products were stored in the kitchen and were inaccessible by the children during the inspection.

Infection Control:

Warm water, liquid soap and paper towels were provided for handwashing and drying. The staff prompted and supervised the children washing their hands after using the toilet and messy play and before lunch time. The children's lunches including perishable items that were provided from home were stored in a refrigerator in the kitchen. The service was found to be clean and the staff members kept records of the cleaning that they carried out in the service. Cleaning schedules and records were available for review by the inspector. Gloves and aprons were provided for nappy/pull up changes and there was a foot pedal operated lidded bin to dispose waste in.

Administration of Medication:

The staff informed the inspector that none of the children needed medication to be administered to them while in attendance in the service.

Fire Safety:

Emergency exit routes were observed to be free from obstruction during the inspection.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Garda vetting was available for three staff members. However, one of these vetting disclosures was not dated within the previous three years and was not in adherence to the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.
2. There was a newly installed wooden playhouse with slide and swing system in the outdoor area. The children had to climb a ladder to access the playhouse and slide from a wooden platform. There was no

risk assessment available in relation to the newly installed equipment or information regarding the age range of the children the equipment could be used with.

3. A mini-sized trampoline that was not being used as a therapeutic intervention was played with by a number of children during the inspection in the playroom. The mini-sized trampoline was removed by staff once it was highlighted to them by the inspector.

Infection Control:

4. There was a push top bin used for waste in the kitchen instead of the required foot pedal operated bin.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider stated in a written response that:

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. Garda vetting for one staff member has been renewed. Renewal dates for Garda vetting will be placed in a yearly calendar as a reminder.
2. A risk assessment has been carried out in relation to playhouse. In future, research is to be carried out of new equipment ordered including dimensions, age range etc.
3. The mini trampoline was immediately removed. Therapeutic equipment is not to be used unless approved by relevant services.

Infection Control:

4. A foot pedal operated bin is now in place. Equipment will be replaced when broken in future.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Copy of the Garda vetting renewal and copy of the risk assessment for the wooden playhouse with slide and swing system.

Infection Control:

Photograph of replacement bin.

Summary Comment

The Inspectorate has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 23 has been adequately addressed.

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) Two members of staff had undertaken First Aid Response (FAR) training with certificates available for inspection.
- (2) (a) There was a suitably equipped first aid box in the service stored out of reach of the children in the activity room.
- (e) The first aid equipment was readily available if a child required first aid treatment in the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures

- (1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of-
- (a) any fire drill that takes place in the premises, and
 - (b) the number, type and maintenance record of fire fighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.
- (2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-
- (c) an authorised person.
- (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) Written records of the monthly fire drills undertaken in the service were kept by the staff. Records showed that the last fire drill was undertaken on the 18 September 2024.
- (b) Records were available of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms that were last serviced on the 29 August 2024.
- (2) (c) The records were made available to the inspector by the staff on request.
- (4) Notices of the procedures to be followed if a fire occurred in the service were clearly displayed in the service

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service had insurance for sessional service provision in place for a maximum of 22 children per session with an expiry date of the 27 March 2025.