

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015MO096
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Name of Service:	Neale Community Childcare Service
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Address of Service:	The Neale, Ballyshingadaun, Ballinrobe, county Mayo
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Eircode:	F31 X766
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Name of Registered Provider:	Mary Joyce
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	12 th May 2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	14	PM	No.
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Child & Family Agency, Early Years Inspectorate, Quality and Regulations Directorate, Clinical & Administration Building, Block A - (1st Floor- Green Corridor), Merlin Park, Galway.
Inspection undertaken by:	F. Duffy and F. Joyce
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

Description of service

Neale Community Childcare Services CLG is a non-profit, community-based childcare facility located in the Neale village in south county Mayo. The service is registered to provide sessional services for pre-school children aged between two and six years of age. It is situated in a purpose-built facility constructed in 2008. At present the service provides a morning session between 9:00-12:00 with an afternoon session provided from 12:30-15:30. There is a school age service provided in the afternoon in a separate room in the same facility.

Staffing

There are seven staff employed in the pre-school service, including a nominated person in charge, an administrator, and four early childhood educators. The registered provider, who does not work in the facility daily, was not present during the inspection. On the morning of the inspection, the person in charge and two early childhood educators were working in the service. The administrator was not on duty but came in to assist with the administrative aspects of the 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, safety and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 15, a random sample of ten records were examined.

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

(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,

(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) There was a designated person in charge and there was a named person who was able to deputise as required.

(b) During the period of inspection, the person in charge was on the premises and facilitated the inspection.

(2) Following a review of the service files and discussion with the person in charge, it was confirmed that there were five adults who worked with children employed in the service. The five staff files were reviewed on the day of inspection, and the file of the registered provider was also reviewed.

(a) There were 12 of the required 12 written and appropriately validated references available from a previous employer.

(b) All required references were available from a previous employer.

(c) Garda Vetting disclosures were available for all six staff working in the service. The service did adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Police vetting was available for one staff member who had lived outside of the state for more than six consecutive months as an adult

(4) Five adults who were working directly with the children, had evidence of an award in Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) at a Level 5 on the National Framework of Qualifications in Early Childhood Care and Education 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,

Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider ensured that there were an adequate number of adults working with the children at all times.

(2) The adult child ratios were met. There were 3 adults working with and caring for 14 pre-school children during the session.

(8)

(a) The staff roster indicated that there were two adults on the premises while the early years children were present in the service.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:

- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;
- (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;
- (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;
- (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;
- (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;
- (f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;
- (g) the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner;
- (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;
- (i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.

(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) The 10 records of a pre-school child examined contained all the information required in sections (a) to (g) and section (j).

(3)

(c) The children's pre-school records were reviewed by the inspector on the premises on the morning of inspection.

Non-Compliance Information

(h) Three of the ten records examined did not contain the information required under this section.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The following statement from the provider was received from the provider on the 4th June 2025.

All three families in question have been spoken to and again asked to produce evidence of vaccination status, we are currently waiting on same but have documented the dates of the conversations.

We will insist that all immunisation records are completed in full going forward before the beginning of the school year.

Supporting documentation submitted

No supporting documentation was received by the inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the statement submitted by the provider. The non-compliance identified under regulation 15 have been adequately addressed.

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

Basic Needs:

- Food provided by the parents/guardians was observed to be healthy and nutritious. Examples included fruit pieces, filled sandwiches/wraps, crackers, cheese and rice cakes. Additional food was available in the event a child was hungry or did not like their snack.
- Staff sat with children during snack time and made it a social event, encouraging conversation while allowing children time to eat and drink in a relaxed atmosphere. Staff provided help and assistance as required but encouraged the children to be self-sufficient.
- Individual water bottles were accessible from a basket which the children could easily reach. They were observed in use in the indoor and outdoor play areas.
- Child friendly posters of handwashing were displayed in the children's sanitary area which demonstrated the steps for hygienic hand washing.
- Children were observed relaxing in the cosy rest/quiet area, which was located away from noisy activities. Furniture was thoughtfully arranged so the area was clearly defined and easily accessible but allowed staff to observe children using that area from all other parts of the playroom.

Supporting children's relationships:

- Staff stated a key-person system was in place in the service with named a staff member assigned the responsibility for creating close relationships with a designated group of children and their parents.
- Interactions between the staff and the children were warm and caring. Staff were observed getting down to the children's level, listening to their questions and comments, and responding appropriately.
- Staff showed interest in the children. Time was designated for children to sit in groups with their keyworker and share their news with the group, for example children spoke about the activities that had participated over the weekend with their families.
- Staff stated they use various methods of communication with parents/guardians including verbally at drop off and collection, phone in the event of an emergency and a term time newsletter, an example of which was furnished to the inspector.
- The service maintained relationships with the local community. There were photos of children going on walks around their area and there was a community wall displaying images of points of interest for children in the locality.
- Transitions between activities were well managed. Children were given advance notice of transitions from one activity to the next. A bell was used to signify the end of an activity and staff and children tidied away materials and toys being used and prepared the tables for the next activity. A pictorial programme of activities was displayed so children knew what activity was coming next.

Physical and material environment:

- The care room was laid out in clearly defined areas which enhanced the learning needs of children across all developmental areas. Examples included a home corner, dressing up area, puzzle area, arts and crafts, a messy play trough, construction area, library area and family area.
- Equipment and toys were laid out in baskets on low-level shelving which encouraged choice and promoted independence, which the children were observed exercising throughout the morning. Examples included play figures, dinosaurs, vehicles, dolls/prams/teddies, musical instruments and natural materials.
- A print rich environment was visible with materials, resources and children's belongings labelled with corresponding photographs.

- The outdoor play area offered an alternative change of environment for the children. A range of developmentally appropriate equipment was provided in the fully enclosed area which provided opportunities for the children to practice their gross motor skills of swinging, climbing, sliding and running. Additional equipment was available from a storage shed with scooters, trikes and bikes.

Programme of activities:

- Ongoing observations, linked to Aistear and Siolta, were documented for each child which helped create a complete, well-rounded picture of each child's progress and development.
- Children's language development was supported through one to one and group discussions which were observed during the inspection.

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 made sure that an adult with first aid responder training was available while the pre-school children were in the service. Certificates were on file to evidence that all five adults working directly with the children were trained as First Aid Responders (FAR).

(2)

(a) (b) The well stocked first aid box was stored within easy reach of the adults in the care room. It was available while the pre-school children were present 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 was insured. Written records were available in the reception area of the service which included the following details:

- The name, address and contact details of the insurance company
- The name and address of the service
- The number of Pre-school children for whom the service is insured: 55
- The type of service: Full day care
- Expiry date: 27 March 2026.