

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015MO115
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Name of Service:	The Childrens House
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Address of Service:	Cross National School, Cross, Co. Mayo
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Eircode:	F12 KW94
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Name of Registered Provider:	Caroline O'Connor Coleman
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	28/01/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	8	PM	No.
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Year's Inspectorate TUSLA, Child and Family Agency 2 nd Floor, St Mary's HQ Castlebar Co Mayo
Inspection undertaken by:	B Lavin & N Toner
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
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Description of service

The Children's House is a privately operated sessional service, located in the village of Cross in county Mayo. The service is registered to cater for 11 children aged from 2 to 6 years of age between the hours of 09:20 and 12:20 Monday to Friday. The premises is situated in a designated area of a primary school and has one playroom and sanitary facilities. An enclosed outdoor area dedicated for use by the children is located to the front and side of the premises and is directly accessible from the playroom.

Staffing

The registered provider is the sole operator of the service. There is a relief staff member available if needed.

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.

On inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 29. 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 inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider 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) The registered provider is the designated person in charge in the service and a named person is available to deputise as required.

(b) The registered provider was on site for the duration of the inspection.

2) (a) There were three references available and validated from past employers for the registered provider and relief staff member employed in the service.

(b) One reference from another source was on file for one staff member.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for the two staff members. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew garda vetting every three years.

(d) International police vetting was not required for the two staff members.

(4) Documentary evidence was available to demonstrate that both staff members had obtained a major award in Early childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Qualifications Framework.

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.

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

(c) a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that, where the person in charge operates the service single-handedly, a second person familiar with the operation of the service and in a position to 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. During the period of inspection there was an adequate number of adults working with the pre-school children attending the service. There were eight children present on a sessional basis aged between two and four years old with one staff member caring for the children.

3. The registered provider ensured that the minimum ratio of a single-handed operated service of 1 adult to a maximum of 11 sessional children was adhered to in the service on the day of inspection.
8. (c) A second person familiar with the service and who was within close proximity of the service was available to provide assistance in the event of an emergency.

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 eight children's records registered with the service. The records contained the required details as laid out under the Regulation.

(c) The required information was made readily available for inspection in the service by the registered provider 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, and

Compliance Information

Basic needs:

- Drinking water was available to all children in individual beakers throughout the morning session.
- Children were observed eating their snack which consisted of fruit, yogurt, cheese and sandwiches which was provided by their parents/guardians. Children were supported during mealtimes with opening food items when needed. Independence was encouraged with self-help skills. Pleasant social conversation took place between the staff member and children during snack time.
- Children sat at tables and chairs which were appropriate for their height and/or stage of development.
- The privacy and dignity of each child was respected during toileting.
- Appropriate rest facilities were available in the care room and children were observed spending time in this area for short periods of rest throughout the morning.
- Children had easy access to the outside areas throughout the morning. Children moved freely between both indoors and outdoors.
- The adult working with the children was sensitive and responsive in promoting positive behaviours and supported children to find positive solutions to sharing toys, equipment and turn taking.

Supporting relationships

- The service supported the children in forming and sustaining positive relationships with staff.
- The staff were actively involved in children's play, where appropriate initiating games and joining in when invited to by children.
- The staff behaved in a way that created a positive atmosphere, having frequent social conversations, joint laughter and showing affection.
- The staff listened to the voice of the child as they communicated their needs, thoughts and experiences both verbally and non-verbally, by reading children's cues, gestures and body language.

- Soft tones were used with the children, along with the child's individual name, getting down to their level and making eye contact.
- Staff communicated with parents and guardians by sharing knowledge and observations of the child's interests, strengths, developmental and care needs, approaches to learning, changes in their life and any other concerns at drop off and collection times, by phone and by text and through the sharing of the children's learning journal.
- Staff guided and supported children who needed more help. Using specialised equipment and an individual care plan, a child's experience within the service was enhanced.

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 gate was secured on arrival at the service.
- Documented and recorded daily records of attendance were observed to be kept for all of children attending the service.
- The outdoor area was secured.
- Internal doors were appropriately secured to prevent children from accessing unsafe areas and to prevent unauthorised access to the preschool room.

Infection Control:

- Foot-operated pedal bins were available throughout the service and observed to be used appropriately by the children and adults.
- Hand hygiene was observed to be practiced frequently by the adult and the children for example after outdoor play, toileting and before snack time.
- Perishable food items in the children's lunches were stored in the service fridge.

Administration of Medication:

- No child was given medication on the day of inspection. Through discussion with the inspector the adult demonstrated that they were aware of the correct procedures for the storage and administration of medicines.

Fire Safety:

- The emergency exit route was observed to be free from obstruction during the inspection

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-
(c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated

Non-Compliance Information

(29)(c) Room temperatures throughout the service were not maintained between the required care room temperatures of 18°C to 22°C. The temperatures ranged from 14.7°C to 15.5°C during the preschool session. This poses a risk to the children's comfort levels within the room.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

A temporary heater has been placed in the cloakroom to increase the room temperature. A mains operated heating unit will be installed to provide an additional heat source within the preschool room. The daily room temperature of the preschool room will be monitored and recorded.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copy of the receipt for the new heating unit has been submitted to the office of the inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider adequately addressed the non-compliance found on inspection.