

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015OY040
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Name of Service:	Clever Clogs
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Address of Service:	Kilcavan, Geashill, Geashill, Co. Offaly
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Eircode:	R35 Y670
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Name of Registered Provider:	Caroline O'Donoghue
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	26/11/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	34	PM	29
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla, Child and Family Agency, Primary Care Centre, Church Avenue, Tullamore, Co. Offaly.
Inspection undertaken by:	K. Murphy and C. O'Connor Hughes
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	Click or tap here to enter text.
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Description of service

The service is registered as a full day care service. The age range of children that can be enrolled in the service is 1 to 6 years of age. The service is operated by an independent provider. A school aged childcare facility is provided. The Early Years' Service consists of two separate single storey purpose-built premises located on the grounds of the home of the registered provider. Over the two buildings the service provides three pre-school rooms, one sleep room and a kitchen. A staff room and a school age childcare room are located in two separate prefabricated buildings. Onsite parking and set down facilities are available. An outdoor play area is attached to the rear of the service.

Staffing

The registered provider and seven adults were working directly with children on the 26 November 2024. A cook and an administrator were working 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/ premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

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 co-operation of the registered provider, 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.

Compliance Information

The registered provider submitted a change in circumstance to TUSLA registration office in respect of an increase of the number of the children attending the service. This change in circumstance was accepted by the registration office after a fit for purpose inspection was carried out on the 6 March 2023.

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.*

(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 designated person in charge and a named person to deputise were available as required.

(b)

The registered provider was present for the duration of the inspection.

Thirteen staff files including the registered provider were reviewed and the following was noted:

(2)(a)(b)

Two written validated references were available from past employers or from a source other than a past employer in respect of the staff members. There were two written references available in respect of the registered provider.

(c)

A Garda Vetting disclosure was available in respect of the files reviewed. In respect of twelve of the thirteen files reviewed the service demonstrated compliance with 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)

Police vetting was available in respect of one staff member who had lived outside the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

(4)

Staff members working directly with children attending the service held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Levels 5 to 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(d)

Police vetting was not available in respect of one staff member who had lived outside the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(d)

The registered provider stated in the response that:

Garda vetting (Irish) was in place for the staff member before they began their employment within the service. International police vetting application was in process at time of inspection relating to a period within 2008/2009. International police vetting was received on 03/12/24 on behalf of staff member. Significant delay in issuing same was due to typing error on application, with initial application dated 09/10/24. (Police vetting included)

Going forward all staff must have international police vetting in place before commencing their employment within service regardless of its practicality.

Strengthening of staff recruitment and retention procedures for staff, by ensuring recruitment procedures are followed and re-checked by Deputy Manager. A step-by-step process will be strictly adhered to and verified at each stage. (Recruitment checklist included)

Introduction of checklist system for staff file to record dates of issue of vetting clearance and dates of expiry. (Staff vetting checklist included)

Summary Comment

In respect of the corrective action taken documentary evidence was submitted to the office of the Early Years Inspectorate, reviewed by the Early Years Inspector and deemed to meet the regulatory requirement.

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 minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained during the inspection.

(2)

There were thirty-four children attending the service supervised directly by eight adults including the registered provider.

(8)(a)

The staff roster indicated that two adults are 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;*
- (b) details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services;*
- (c) details of the adult: child ratios in the service;*
- (d) the type of care or programme provided in the service;*
- (e) the facilities available;*
- (f) the opening hours and fees;*
- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*
- (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

Compliance Information

(1)

The service kept and maintained written records of information in relation to the service in accordance with Regulation 16 (1)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(h)(i)(j) and (k).

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 17 – Information for parents

A registered provider shall ensure that a parent or guardian of a child proposing to attend the service is provided with the information referred to in subparagraphs (a) to (g) of Regulation 16(1).

Compliance Information

A parent information handbook detailing information in respect of 16 (1)(a) to (g) is given to parents of children at the start of the new pre-school term.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 18 – Copy of Act etc.

A registered provider shall ensure that a copy of Part VIIA (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013)) of the Act and of these Regulations is kept on the premises and the said copies shall be open to inspection on the premises by-

- (a) a parent or guardian of a child attending or proposing to attend the service,*
- (b) an employee, unpaid worker or contractor, and*
- (c) an authorised person.*

Compliance Information

The registered provider presented a copy of the of Part V11A (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No.40 of 2013) of the Act and Regulations for review.

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 children were supported to be self-caring, suitable to their age and stage of development including self-feeding, using the toilet independently and caring for their belongings.

Meals and snacks were freshly prepared on site for children attending on a part time or full day care basis.

The main meal which consisted of a pasta bolognaise with grated cheese was served to the children. Milk and water were available to drink.

There was good communication observed between the adults and children during nappy changing. Children enjoyed moving freely in their designated pre-school rooms and in the outdoor play areas supported by the adults.

The children were encouraged to be independent, and their choices were supported. Staff were observed to offer support and praise to each child for their involvement in activities. Sleeping and nappy changing logs formed part of the information provided to parents during the verbal handover at collection time. Children under the age of two child used a communication diary between the service and home. Communication to parents for the older children was via a short messaging system (SMS).

Children were engaged in the various play opportunities available to them in the pre-school rooms and in the outdoor play area supported by staff. Children were observed at free play, tabletop activities and extended outdoor play time. Younger children were observed to crawl and explore their environment.

Staff were positive towards children using individual names, maintaining eye contact and giving positive praise on the completion of activities. Access and inclusion plans were available for children requiring extra assistance and support.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

(1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day.

(3) A registered provider of a full day care service, a part-time day care service or a childminding service, other than such a service to which paragraph (2) applies, shall ensure that-

(a) a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the pre-school children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

Suitable play equipment was provided indoors and outdoors which included toys and equipment for construction, tabletop activities, arts and crafts, sensory play and home corners.

(b)

A separate sleep room equipped with four cots was available in the service. Nine low level beds were available for children over 2 years of age to sleep on. Soft furnishings were provided in the pre-school rooms for children to rest and relax.

(3)(a)

The outdoor play areas provided play opportunities for children. Toys and equipment included climbing frames, large wooden boats, a mud kitchen, slides, bikes and trikes.

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 to the service was secure to ensure the safety of the children within.

The service met the necessary safety requirements in respect of the indoor environment, toys and equipment and the safe storage of cleaning agents. The inspectors signed the visitors book on arrival.

Infection Control:

Children were observed to wash their hands before snacks and after using the toilet. The nappy changing practice observed was carried out as per the displayed procedure.

Soothers were stored in individually labelled containers.

Warm running water, paper hand towel and liquid soap were available in the sanitary accommodation. The water temperature recorded at wash hand basins was 35.7 degrees Celsius.

Natural ventilation was available through openable windows in the pre-school rooms and in the sanitary accommodation.

All toys and materials were easily cleanable. Cleaning schedules were available and reviewed.

Administration of Medication:

Temperature reducing medication was available in the service if a child presented with a high temperature and stored safely in the service.

Safe Sleep:

A record of the colour, position and breathing of sleeping children was noted in a written sleep log.

Sleeping children were monitored every ten minutes by a staff member. The sleep room temperature noted was 19 °Celsius.

Fire Safety:

Fire exit routes were unobstructed. A fire assembly point was noted to the front of the premises.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. The most recent Garda vetting disclosure presented in respect of one staff member was not dated within the previous three years in adherence with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.
2. In the outdoor play area, the mat under the slide required replacement to provide a safe landing to children when using the slide.
3. In the outdoor play area, the protective rubbers on the handlebars of two balance bicycles were worn with exposed metal handlebars protruding which posed a potential injury risk to children.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1

Vetting application for staff member was in the process of re application in the week of inspection. Vetting application documents were issued to all staff for block processing on Monday 25th November, due for review on Tuesday 26th November before forwarding to the nominated vetting agency.

Going forward, block vetting applications will be issued at least a month before expiry date of vetting disclosure. A checklist has been formulated as an addition to staff records to record vetting applications, disclosure receipt and expiry date of disclosure. Block applications will ensure consistent review of vetting process within service, as instigated in November 2024. (Garda vetting application receipt included)

2

Area at base of slide has had old matting removed. It has been re padded with fresh bark chip and new mat added to area. (Photograph included)

Strengthening of regular daily checks carried out in outdoor area. Addition of each area of equipment now highlighted, with direct transfer of damages to maintenance list. Both documents now stored together in lobby, for ease of transfer of information. (Photograph included)

Recently acquired independent maintenance services, to provide regular system of repairs to equipment and environment both indoors and outdoors. This system will ensure that fortnightly maintenance will occur, with arrangement made for serious matters to be dealt with quickly on an emergency basis.

3

Removed damaged balance bikes from garden. Replaced bikes with extra tractors to ensure adequate numbers of wheeled toys in outdoor space. (Photograph and receipt included)

Outdoor wheeled toys now identified numerically, with addition to outdoor checklist to record damaged or broken items by number. (Playground checklist included)

Broken toy recording system to be stored with both outdoor checklist and maintenance list in lobby for ease of transfer of relevant information.

Summary Comment

In respect of the corrective action taken documentary evidence was submitted to the office of the Early Years Inspectorate, reviewed by the Early Years Inspector and deemed to meet the regulatory requirement.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) no person other than-

(i) pre-school child attending the service,

(ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,

(iii) an employee, or

(iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and

(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (3)(b) is retained for a period of one year from the date to which it relates.

Compliance Information

(1)

The records of arrival and departure reviewed verified that each child attending the service was checked in and out of the service by a staff member.

(3)(a)(b)

All entry to the service with the exception of (i), (ii), (iii) and (iv) was approved by a staff member.

(4)

The visitor log is retained throughout the annual operation of the service.

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)

Three adults were qualified in First Aid response (FAR) and available on the premises during the hours of operation. Five adults held a paediatric first aid qualification.

(2)(a)

A first aid box was available in the pre-school rooms.

(b)

A first aid box was accessible to children in the pre-school 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 firefighting 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 written record for the completed monthly fire drills was available on the premises. The last fire drill was recorded as taking place on the 30 October 2024.

(b)

A record was available demonstrating the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises. The firefighting equipment was serviced on the 14 August 2024.

The smoke alarms in the premises were serviced on the 22 April 2024.

(4)

A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in a conspicuous position in the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

There was evidence of current insurance cover for the number of children attending the service. The expiry date noted was 27 March 2025.

Part VIII - Notifications and Complaints

Regulation 31 - Notification of incidents

A registered provider shall notify the Agency in writing within 3 working days of becoming aware of any of the following incidents occurring in the preschool service:

(b) the diagnosis of a pre-school child attending the service, an employee, unpaid worker, contractor or other person working in the service as suffering from an infectious disease within the meaning of the Infectious Diseases Regulations 1981 (S.I. No. 390 of 1981);

Compliance Information

The service submitted a notification in respect of (b) to TUSLA on the 22 February 2022.