

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015RN012
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Cuddles & Care Crèche
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Cloonfad, Ballyhaunis, Co. Roscommon
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<b>Eircode:</b>	F35 N288
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<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	26/07/2024
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	32	PM	30
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	TUSLA, Child and Family Agency, Government Buildings, Convent Road, Roscommon, Co. Roscommon.
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	A. Kennedy
<b>Title:</b>	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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not applicable
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### Description of service

This full day care service is located in the village of Cloonfad in County Roscommon. The service is registered to provide childcare service for children aged from 1 -6 years of age between the hours of 07:30-18:00 hrs. A registered school age service is also provided. The premises is a two-storey purpose-built building with the ground floor dedicated to the provision of childcare and a private dwelling on the first floor. There are four playrooms for use by the preschool children, a dedicated sleep room, office, kitchen, staff room and sanitary accommodation provided. It was advised during the inspection that the preschool room is not in operation over the summer months and is due to reopen in September 2024. An enclosed outdoor play area is provided to the side of the building.

### Staffing

There are nine staff working in the service which included the registered provider, childcare staff and a cook.

### 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.

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 registered provider, 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, 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) There was a named person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.
- (b) A sample of staff attendance records reviewed found that the person in charge or deputy person in charge were available at all times.
- (2) Through discussion with the designated person in charge and review of documentation that there were no new staff employed in the service since the most recent focused inspection of the 21st of July 2022.
- (a) &(b)
- Eighteen of the eighteen written validated references, on file for the nine staff were from a past employer or from a source other than the past employer.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for nine staff members. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years for nine of the staff.
- (d) One of the staff had worked outside the jurisdiction, for six months or more, while over the age of 18 years of age and had the required police vetting on file.
- (4) The nine staff who were working directly with children, held a Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI), at a Level 5 to 7 in Early Childhood Care and Education. Copies of qualifications were on file for the nine staff.

### 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) On the morning of the unannounced inspection there were seven staff working directly with the thirty-four children in attendance in the service. A relief staff member and the cook also provided relief cover for breaks.

(2) The following adult to child ratios were provided during the unannounced inspection in line with the required ratios taking into consideration the ages of the children and the length of time each child spent in the service as follows:

In the baby room: 2 adults cared for eight children aged from 1 to 2 years of age in the morning and 2 adults cared for six children aged 1 to 2 years in the afternoon,

Junior playschool room: 2 adults cared twelve children aged from 2 to 3 years of age in the morning and 2 adults cared for ten children aged from 2-3 years in the afternoon.

Senior Montessori room: 2 adults cared for 10 children aged from 3 to 6 years of age and 4 school aged were also cared for in this room during the inspection.

(8)(a)

There were at least 2 adults present at all times during the unannounced inspection. A review of a sample of the written and electronic staff attendance records found that at least 2 adults were present in the service at all times.

### 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

(a) The service used a child-centred approach to organising activities in the service to accommodate children's needs for eating, sleeping, toileting and playing depending on their age and developmental stage. Mealtimes were observed to be appropriately spaced out over the day. The older children in the junior playroom and senior Montessori room sat on age-appropriate chairs in a group at low-level tables to eat their meals and the younger children in the baby room sat in highchairs with a five-point harness and at the low-level table and chairs.

The children were closely supervised by staff during meals and encouraged to feed themselves where possible. Bibs were put on the younger children where appropriate to protect their clothing from spillages.

The individual sleep needs of the children in the baby room were catered for in partnership with parents. Children were placed in standard cots in the dedicated sleep room by the staff when they showed signs of tiredness during the day. Individual clean linen was provided, and the sleep room lighting was dimmed to create a restful atmosphere. There were also scheduled rest/sleep times for some of the children in the junior playschool room that needed sleep. Stackable beds were provided for older children to rest on accommodating their individual needs. Soft seating was provided in the playrooms for children to rest/relax on throughout the day if they wished to.

Children's nappies were observed to be changed when children's individual needs dictated by staff who were observed to chat and engage with the children during the nappy changes. Older children who were able to use the toilet independently were supported by the staff to do so but were within earshot of staff if they needed help. Boxes of tissues were available in the playrooms for children to clean their noses as needed. The children were encouraged and reminded to wash their hands, supervised and helped by staff as needed at appropriate times for example after using the toilet and nappy changes and after outdoor play.

All children spent substantial amounts of time playing outdoors on the day. There was an enclosed outdoor play area to the side of the premises directly accessible from the junior playschool room and the senior Montessori room. The outdoor area had ground covering of soft pore and artificial grass with a varied selection of outdoor play equipment including a selection of playhouses, a mud kitchen, picnic benches, a slide and climbing frame, sand play, prams and buggies, a selection of ride on toys and balance bikes to support physical activity and gross motor development.

The playrooms were laid out to allow children access ranges of toys and play materials at low levels allowing them to choose and replace toys. Equipment used on the day was appropriate for the age and developmental stages of the children using them such as the wooden train set and large amount of wooden building blocks that older children in the senior Montessori room and junior playschool room chose to play with. The baby room had toys and equipment for younger children including insert, music making and stacking toys. There was a soft rest area. The other section of the Creche playroom had tabletop activities including magnets and puzzles, dolls and accessories, a small kitchen, construction toys and transport toys including toy tractors reflecting the rural location of the service.

The children from the junior playschool room and the senior Montessori room were observed at free play, drawing, at construction, playing with puzzles, jigsaws, and insets, at mix and match, playing with animals

and transport vehicles, playing kitchen and house. At circle time, the older children gave their views, news, and stories. The staff read books and the children chatted about same. The staff used visual aids and probed with questions such as ‘who is this?’, ‘how many are there?’, ‘where is that?’ and ‘tell me what this is?’.

The staff were positive when communicating with children providing them with praise and encouragement. Children were soothed and comforted by staff if upset. A staff member was observed to use positive methods to encourage children to share toys when playing outdoors where a child became upset. The staff informed the inspector that communication notebooks were used for communicating with parents of younger children and children new to the service. There were verbal handovers of information given to older children’s parents/guardians Staff kept written records of the children’s activities and progress in individual “My Learning Journals”.

The staff supported children in forming and sustaining positive relationships by having a key person system for each child, showing respect for each unique child and developing their trust, listening to the voice of the child as they communicate their needs, thoughts, and experiences both verbally and non-verbally, by reading children’s cues, gestures, and body language, using soft tones, the child’s individual name, and getting down to their level and making eye contact, providing opportunities for individual and small group activities and play, leading to increased social awareness, co-operation, collaboration, teamwork, and a sense of belonging, and providing opportunities for children to learn from each other and with each other, to work together, join in and contribute to projects and tasks.

### 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 main entrance door to the service and the external play areas to the side of the premises were secure so that children could not leave the area unsupervised and unauthorised persons could not enter. The inspector was admitted by staff following production of identification documents. Cleaning products were stored out of reach of

children. The kitchen was inaccessible to the children. Toys and play equipment were in good condition and suitable for the age and developmental stages of the children using them on the day. Fire doors throughout the building were unobstructed. Leads, cables, and flexes were wall mounted and secured to prevent any trip or strangulation hazard. The heating system was thermostatically controlled, to ensure the temperature was maintained between 18°C to 22°C.

### **Infection Control:**

The service was found to be very clean, and staff were observed to clean down surfaces such as tables after use. Staff kept written records of cleaning procedures carried out in the service. Warm water, liquid soap and paper towels were provided for handwashing and drying purposes with children and staff cleaning their hands regularly. Aprons and gloves were used appropriately by staff when changing children's nappies with changing mats cleaned down after use. Appropriate bins were used for the disposal of nappies. There was separate storage of children's personal items such as nappies and cleansing wipes. Individual storage containers were provided for children's soothers. Boxes of tissues were available in the playrooms and a staff member was observed to prompt a child to clean his nose and dispose of the tissue safely. Windows were opened by staff at times to ventilate the playrooms.

### **Administration of Medication:**

The staff showed awareness of the correct procedures for the administration and storage of medication. No child was required to have medication given to them during the inspection. Medicines were found to be appropriately stored and within their expiry dates.

### **Safe Sleep:**

Standard wooden cots were provided in a separate sleep room and used by the young children in the service. The cot mattresses had wipeable coverings and were cleaned appropriately with individual bed linen provided. The air temperature of the sleep room where a child under one year was sleeping was recorded at 19.7°C within the required range of 16-20 °C for a child of this age. Adequate space was available in the sleep room to allow 50cm of space between each cot. The staff were observed to preform regular checks on a sleeping child at least every ten minutes recording observations of their colour, breathing and position. Staff demonstrated an awareness of sudden infant death prevention guidance placing children down to sleep on their backs and monitoring sleep room temperature's regularly.

### **Fire Safety:**

The emergency exits were observed to be unobstructed during the inspection.

## Non-Compliance Information

### General Safety:

1. On the day of inspection at 14.58hrs, there was a temperature reading of 57.6°C, from the warm water tap at the wash hand basin, used by children in the baby nappy changing area. At 14.59hrs, there was a temperature reading of 58.2°C. These water temperatures were above the recommended 43°C upper safety limit to prevent potential risk of scalding.

It is acknowledged that the registered provider addressed this immediately on the day of the inspection and a temperature reading of 39.4°C was taken at 16.44hrs. which was within the recommended 43°C upper safety limit to prevent potential risk of scalding.

2. There were three storage boxes in the junior playschool room which were broken with sharp edges exposed which could prove a potential safety concern.

### Infection Control:

3. There were three picnic tables in the outdoor play area which were worn and required repainting to enable effective cleaning.
4. The surfaces of three tables, the surface of a section of the play kitchen and a low-level play table had the medium-density fibreboard (MDF) absent in the junior playschool room and were worn proving difficult to effectively clean.

### Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective & Preventive Action

##### General Safety:

The person in charge submitted a written response to advise

1. A blending/mixing valve temperature controller was fitted to the tap and set to control the temperature within the recommended temperature of 43 degrees or below and all taps are fitted with the blending/mixing valves to control the temperature- This will be checked as part of the overall risk assessment of the service and monitored to ensure correct water temperatures within the service.
2. The old boxes were removed and disposed of, and new storage boxes have been purchased for the storage of equipment and a risk assessment of equipment & furniture will be added to service cleaning sheets. This will allow for storage boxes, equipment and furniture to be checked regularly and reported on when replacement or repair is required.

### Infection Control:

3. The tables have been repainted and as part of the service outdoor risk assessment, outdoor equipment checks will be added and reported on. The outdoor tables will be maintained as required and highlighted on the risk assessment for repairs if required.
4. The play table and kitchen were removed from the service. A new kitchen has been purchased for the environment. The tables were removed and have been repaired and resurfaced where applicable. New tables have also been purchased. The updated outdoor risk assessment will include checks on -furniture to include -surfaces of tables and all wooden equipment. This will allow for the equipment to be checked & reported on and to be removed, replaced or resurfaced where necessary.

### **Supporting documentation submitted**

#### **General Safety:**

The person in charge submitted photographic evidence of:

2. The replaced storage boxes

#### **Infection Control:**

3. and 4. The repainted tables and the newly purchased tables.

### **Summary Comment**

The Early Years Inspectorate has assessed the actions stated and evidence submitted and deems it to meet the regulatory requirements under 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) Eight staff working in the pre-school service had evidence of a current first aid responder qualification, thereby ensuring a person trained was immediately available.

(2)(a) The first aid boxes were stored on a high shelf in each of the playrooms in an easily accessible conspicuous position for the staff and inaccessible to the children.

(b) The first aid boxes had content items within date.

## 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) Arrangements were in place to record monthly fire drills. The last documented fire drill was dated 28<sup>th</sup> of June 2024.
- (b) A record of the number, type, and maintenance of firefighting equipment in the service was on file. Records indicated that the last annual maintenance for the firefighting equipment was dated 13<sup>th</sup> of September 2023. Records indicated that the last maintenance for the fire detection system was dated January 2024.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in each room.

## 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 certification of adequate insurance which had an expiry date 27<sup>th</sup> of March 2025. The insurance for 63 children was for full day care service, included the following: -
- public liability insurance,
  - insurance against fire and theft,
  - buildings insurance,
  - insurance for outings undertaken as part of the service provision.