

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

**TUSLA Identifier:** TU2015SO002

**Name of Service:** Anne Carton Creche

**Address of Service:** The Hawthorns, Carraroe, Co. Sligo

**Eircode:** F91 PW96

**Name of Registered Provider:** Anne Carton

**Service type:** Full Day

**Date of Inspection:** 11/04/2025

<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	<b>AM</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>PM</b>	<b>37</b>

<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate, TUSLA Child & Family Agency, Markievicz House, Barrack St, Sligo, F91 XC84
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	L. Costello
<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).

**Conditions if applicable** Not applicable

### Description of service

Anne Cartons Crèche is a private full day care early years' service. It is located in a housing development on the edge of Sligo Town. The service caters for a maximum of 61 preschool children ranging in age from 18 months to 6 years. The operating hours are 7:30am to 6pm. School aged children are also catered for in the service. The service operates from a purpose-built building. There are four care rooms available to the children including a Toddler room and three Preschool rooms. There is an office, a kitchen and a separate sleep room located off the main corridor. There are two nappy changing rooms for younger children and sanitary facilities for older children accessible off the care rooms. There is a large outdoor play area and one smaller covered area to the left of the building. A larger grassed area is accessible to the rear of the building

### Staffing

The registered provider is the owner of the service and is involved in the daily operations of the service. There are twenty adults employed in the service, which include two office admin, one cook, the registered provider and sixteen adults working directly with preschool children.

### 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.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 19, 22, 23, 26,28 and 29 however, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 27. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 19. As a result, the scope of the inspection included Toddler room, Preschool One and preschool Four.

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*

*(c) there is a clear management structure in the service that identifies the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and unpaid worker.*

*(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.*

*(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.*

*(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) (b)

There was a person in charge and a named person able to deputise as required.

(1) (c)

There is a clear management structure within the service as demonstrated with room leaders and childcare workers.

2) (a) (b).

It was confirmed with the Registered provider that one adult had been employed since the services most recent inspection on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of September 2024. Therefore, this record was reviewed.

Two written and verified past employer references were available for this adult.

(c)

A garda vetting disclosure was available for the 20 adults employed in the service. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years

(d)

International police vetting was available for the recently employed adult as they had lived outside the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

(3)

These vetting procedures were carried out prior to the adult having access to preschool children.

(4)

The adult had attained a major award in Early childhood care and education at level 5 or above on the national framework of qualifications, or qualifications deemed by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) 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.*

#### Compliance Information

(1) There were nine adults working directly with 53 children on the inspectors' unannounced arrival to the service.

The Registered Provider and an adult working in administration were available to cover breaks throughout the day.

(2) The minimum adult to child ratios were provided on the morning of the unannounced inspection in accordance with the required ratios considering the ages of the children and the length of time each child spent in the service as outlined below:

- Preschool One: Three adults provided care to 17 children aged between 4 years to 5 years of age.
- Preschool Two: Two adults provided care to 15 children aged from 3 years to 4 years of age.
- Preschool Four: Two adults provided care to 14 children aged from 2.8 years to 4 years of age.
- Toddler Room: Two adults provided care to 7 children aged from 2 years to 3 years of age.

In the afternoon at approximately 13:25 the following ratios were observed:

- Preschool One: Two adults provided care to 10 children aged between 4 years to 5 years of age.

- Preschool Two: One adult provided care to 8 children aged from 3 years to 4 years of age.
- Preschool Four: Two adults provided care to 11 children aged from 2.8 years to 4 years of age.
- Toddler Room: Two adults provided care to 8 children aged from 2 years to 3 years of age.

### 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

- Snacks were provided from home in line with the service healthy eating policy. Mealtimes were observed to be an inclusive experience where children and adults sat together engaged in conversation.
- Rooms were decorated to stimulate the interest of the preschool child. The older preschool rooms were equipped with a wide variety of educational activities that were age and stage appropriate. The toddler room focussed on play and resources were laid out to promote interest and aid movement.
- Evidence of the curriculum was displayed on the care rooms wall with children's completed art activities.
- The children in all rooms had their own individual journal, which included observations of their learning while in the service. Individual pictures demonstrated the child's accomplishments in the service.
- A library area was provided in all care rooms to facilitate learning and language development.
- Communication with parents was evidenced with a communication book provided for the children in the younger rooms. This communication book documented the child's sleep, nappy changes and food intake. Other information such as medication administered was also recorded. There was evidence of good communication with families at collection, where a brief handover between childcare workers and parents would occur.
- A notice board on entry to the service displayed the children's learnings of the week, keeping parents informed of what activities were occurring in the service.
- Nappy changing was carried out at regular intervals in the service and as required. The older children were encouraged to use the toilet independently and staff members prompted if required.
- The outdoor area was equipped with a large variety of resources to promote gross motor skill activity with the provision of climbing frames, slides, ride on cars, goal posts and footballs.

- The staff members were observed to be kind and attentive in their interactions with the preschool children. The younger children were held and cuddled as required. Praise and encouragement was used with older children where they were attempting to sing songs or complete a task, for example 'well done' 'good job' 'great work'.
- On the day of inspection an easter egg hunt was provided where the children enjoyed looking around the outdoor area in the hope of finding an egg. All children received an egg to bring home.

### Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

#### Regulation 22 – Food and drink

*A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.*

#### Compliance Information

The service has a healthy eating policy in place. On the day the registered provider informed the inspector that there had been a lot of communication with parents to ensure healthy snacks are provided for the preschool children. This was evidenced on the day with a memo to parents and information leaflet about the importance of eating healthy. The snacks provided from home included sandwiches with a variety of fillings such as ham and cheese, chopped fruit and vegetables, yoghurts and crackers.

The chef on site operates a three-week menu plan and provides a hot lunch. On the day a dinner of roast chicken, potato mash and broccoli and carrots were provided. Extra portions were readily available as required. The service ensures that all tolerances and special requirements are catered for with dairy free and gluten free options provided.

Portable drinking water is available in all care rooms that children have access to throughout the day and at meal times.

### 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 preschool was secure on the inspectors unannounced arrival to the service. A bell entry system was in place ensuring no unauthorised access to the service.
- The perimeter of the service consists of high block fencing and high metal gates which were locked on the day of inspection.
- Waste is inaccessible to the preschool children.
- The gas tank and boiler is fenced securely inaccessible to the preschool children.
- The kitchen remained secure and inaccessible to the preschool children on the day of inspection.

##### Infection Control:

- Children were observed to wash their hands prior to snack and mealtimes.
- The older children were prompted to wash their hands after using the toilet.
- The materials and resources appeared cleaned and in a good state of repair.
- Tables were observed to be cleaned prior to mealtimes and after messy play.

##### Administration of Medication:

- On discussion staff members were aware of the medication policy in place and how to be administered medication if required.

##### Safe Sleep:

- A dedicated sleep room was available in the service. Four standard cots with waterproof protectors were in place.
- Two toddler beds were available for older children if required.
- Sleep checks were observed to be completed every ten minutes and a record kept of observations.

##### Fire Safety:

- Fire doors remained unobstructed on the day of inspection.

## Non-Compliance Information

### General Safety:

1. The radiator in the toddler room had missing regulator covers, resulting in two exposed spikes which posed a risk of injury to the preschool child.
2. In preschool One, two blind chords were loose and not secure to the wall. A temporary measure of positioning the chord out of reach of the preschool child was observed on the day

### Infection Control:

3. The nappy changing procedure in the toddler room on the morning of the inspection observed the following practises which could pose a risk of safety to the preschool child:
  - Children's hands were not routinely washed after nappy changes.
  - The adult did not wash hands between four nappy changes.

It is acknowledged that later nappy changes observed the room included hand hygiene for both adult and Child.

4. The water temperature recorded in a number of sinks on the day of inspection measured 15.6°C which is not warm enough for adequate hand hygiene.

## Action submitted by the Registered Provider

### Corrective & Preventive Action

In a written response the registered provider stated:

### General Safety:

1. The radiator in the toddler room now has the exposed spikes covered and a wooden radiator guard has been secured to the wall. This will be checked regularly.
2. In pre-school 1 the two blinds observed have been removed and are not being replaced.

### Infection Control:

3. All staff have been reminded of the creche's nappy changing policy and have been retrained in the nappy changing procedure.
4. The Plumber was contacted to investigate the issue of the water temperature. The thermostatic mixing valves was replaced.

### Supporting documentation submitted

#### General Safety:

1. Photographic evidence submitted.
2. Photographic evidence submitted.

#### Infection Control:

3. Documentary evidence submitted.
4. Documentary evidence submitted.

### Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider adequately address the non-compliance found on inspection. This regulation is now compliant.

## 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-*
- (a) a parent or guardian of a pre-school child attending or proposing to attend the pre-school service,*
  - (b) an employee, and*
  - (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)

The service provided evidence that emergency evacuation fire drills take place on a monthly basis within the service. The most recent fire drill was recorded on the 20<sup>th</sup> of March 2025.

(1) (b)

A record of all firefighting equipment was available with an annual maintenance date of the 8<sup>th</sup> of January 2025.

(2) (c)

These records were available to the authorised person on the day.

(4)

Emergency evacuation procedures were clearly displayed in all care rooms.

### Part VI - Safety

#### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

#### Compliance Information

The service demonstrated adequate insurance for 75 children in a full day care service up until the 27<sup>th</sup> of March 2026.

### Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

#### Regulation 29 - Premises

*A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-*

- (a) of sound and stable structure,*
- (b) safe and secure,*
- (c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated*
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

#### Compliance Information

(a)

On a visual walk around and confirmed with the registered provider the building appeared to be of a sound and stable structure.

(b)

The main entrance to the service was secure with locked metal gates and high fencing securing the perimeter.

(c)

The service was adequately lit with a mix of natural and artificial lighting throughout. Central heating was provided throughout, and adequate ventilation was provided in the form of openable windows and extraction fans.

(d)

The service appeared adequately cleaned and maintained.

(e)  
The number and type of sanitary accommodation provided in the service was adequate to meet the needs of the children and adults attending the service.

### Part VI - Safety

#### Regulation 27 – Supervision

*A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.*

#### Non-Compliance Information

The service did not ensure that the children were supervised at all times as observed on the day as follows:  
In preschool one at approx. 12.06hrs a unplanned trip to the outdoor area for an easter egg hunt resulted in the three adults bringing 16 children to the outdoor area. The inspector had observed one child not lining up to go outdoors and observed the child making their way to the bathroom that was adjacent to the preschool room. This appeared not to be observed by the three adults. The 16 children and three adults left the room at 12:07hrs. The inspector remained in the care room. The child remained in the bathroom area. At approx. 12:09hrs the adults and children returned to the care room and began an activity. At 12:12hrs one of the adults completed a visual check in the room. The adult then checked the bathrooms and located the child.

#### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

##### Corrective and Preventive Action

In a written response the registered provider stated:

All staff have been reminded to carry out a head count of all children before any trip to the outdoor play area and on return to the Pre-school Room. Staff are advised that they must check all bathrooms before leaving the room. The Room Leader will carry out a sweep of the room and bathrooms before allowing any children and other staff to proceed to the outdoor play area.

In Future the Outdoor check list, which is in place, with all the children's names on it will be used for all planned and unplanned trips to the outdoor play area.

##### Supporting documentation submitted

Documentary evidence submitted.

#### Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider adequately address the non-compliance found on inspection. This regulation is now compliant.