

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015SO008
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Name of Service:	Cre8ive Corner Creche
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Address of Service:	Brooklawns, Sea Road, Sligo, Co. Sligo
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Eircode:	N/A
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Name of Registered Provider:	Michael Gillen
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date of Inspection:	24/04/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	55	PM	52
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, TUSLA Child & Family Agency, Markievicz House, Barrack St, Sligo, F91 XC84
Inspection undertaken by:	L. Costello and M. Farrell
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

Cre8ive Corner Creche is a privately owned full day care service located in an urban setting in Sligo. The service is registered to cater for children from 0 to 6 years of age between the hours of 8.30am to 5:30pm. At present the service is catering for children over one year of age. The premises is a two-storey building purpose built to provide childcare services. There are six playrooms in the service, two sleep rooms, a kitchen, sanitary accommodation, a staff room and an office. The children have access to outdoor play areas located to the rear and side of the building.

Staffing

At the time of the inspection there were twenty-three staff employed in the service including management, childcare and a chef. One person on student placement was also present in the service during the time 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/ 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, 23, 25 and 26. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 19 and 23. As a result, the scope of the inspection included rooms Preschool 1, Preschool 3, Toddler 1 and 2 care-rooms and did not include the Wobbler care-room.

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

(c)

A clear management structure outlining lines of accountability was displayed on the notice board in the service. In each of the care rooms, the roles of staff members including childcare leaders and childcare workers were easily identifiable.

(2) (a) (b)

The records of six adults employed in the service since the last focused inspection on the 31st of March 2023 were reviewed.

Twelve written and verified past employer references were available in respect of all six adults employed in the service.

(c)

A garda vetting disclosure was available for 23 adults 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 two adults employed in the service that had lived outside the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

(4)

Four of the adults new to the service that worked directly with the children had attained major awards 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.

Non-Compliance Information

(3)

The procedures specified in paragraph (2) were not carried out prior to an adult commencing employment in respect to one adult in the service where an international police vetting was dated the 11.04.2024 and employment began in November 2023.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The service advised in a written response:

We will ensure all vetting documents are in our creche office as well as our HQ office.

Management has taken this on board, and it won't happen again.

Supporting documentation submitted

No supporting evidence submitted.

Summary Comment

The actions submitted by the person acting on behalf of the registered provider to address the non-compliance found on inspection has been reviewed. This regulation is now compliant and will be reviewed on next inspection.

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 16 adults working directly with 55 children on the inspectors' unannounced arrival to the service.

A review of a sample of attendance records showed that an adequate number of adults worked directly with the children during service hours of operation. One student was also present in a playroom.

(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:

Wobbler- Rose playroom: 2 adults cared for 8 children aged 1 and 1 aged 2 years of age.

Toddler- Daisy playroom: 2 adults cared for 5 children aged 2 years of age.

Toddler 2- Lily playroom: 2 adults cared for 9 children aged 2 to 3 years, an additional child arrived at 10.15.

Preschool 1 playroom: 5 adults cared for 19 children aged from 4 years to 5 years of age.

Preschool 3 playroom: 4 adults cared for 13 children aged from 3 years to 5 years of age.

In the afternoon the adult: child ratios were found to be as follows:

Wobbler- Rose playroom: 2 adults cared for 9 children aged from 1 to 2 years of age.

Toddler- Daisy playroom: 2 adults cared for 5 children aged from 2 to 3 years of age.

Toddler 2- Lily playroom: 2 adults cared for 9 children aged 2 to 3 years.

Preschool 1 playroom: 2 adults cared for 11 children aged from 4 years to 5 years of age.

Preschool 3 playroom: 2 adults cared for 11 children aged from 3 years to 5 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

(1) A registered provider shall, in providing a pre-school service, ensure that-

(b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.

Compliance Information

(1) (a)

The service operated out of five care rooms, decorated, and resourced to meet the needs of the child's learning and development that is age and stage appropriate. The ground floor accommodated three care rooms dedicated to the needs of the younger preschool child. The Toddler 1 and 2 care-rooms were well equipped with a range of toys and play equipment that were accessible to children at low levels facilitating children's choice of play. Art supplies, construction toys, transport vehicles and tabletop games/activities were provided in the care-rooms in addition to toys for imaginative play. Photographs of children and families were displayed on the walls linking the service with home.

The second floor consists of two preschool care rooms aimed to support the developmental needs of the older preschool child aged 3-6 years. Preschool one accommodates 20 children aged 4-5 years. This room was resourced with age-appropriate play resources including tabletop activities, puzzles and jig saws. Interest areas include construction areas, home corners and arts and crafts. All resources are displayed in open low-level shelving which facilitates a child led environment. Preschool three accommodates children aged 3-4 years. The room is large and spacious decorated with the children's artwork, family corner and birthday wall. Interest areas include a home corner and dress up to stimulate the child's imagination and role play. A construction area with age-appropriate resources. A rest area with a library supported the preschools child language development. Circle time was observed on the day where children's language was supported with the singing of songs and number counting in various languages including English, Romanian and Irish ensuring that all cultures were included.

The outdoor area was divided into separate areas. A large area to the side of the property allowed for the older children to play with various resources such as bikes, trikes, footballs, hula hoops all developing gross motor skills. Mud kitchens and dolls facilitated imaginative play. The younger children from the Toddler care-rooms spent large amounts of time playing outside during the inspection in one of the enclosed outdoor areas. The staff from Toddler 2 care-room organised a bubble blowing activity that the children enjoyed, giggling and shouting to each other during it. This activity was used by staff as an opportunity to develop the children’s sharing and turn-taking skills. A range of play equipment was played with by the children in the area including fixed climbing equipment and ride on toys that develop gross motor skills and encourage physical activity. Some children played imaginary games in the playhouse and at the bark area. At one stage the staff brought out coloured chalk that the children used to draw on a chalkboard. This activity was led by the children and progressed to drawing pictures on the concrete paths.

Weather on the day of inspection was warm, sun cream was applied as needed and the staff ensured that the children wore sun hats as required throughout the day. The children were encouraged by the staff to drink frequent drinks of water when playing outdoors.

Ongoing observations and assessments were documented for the preschool children, which helped create a well-rounded picture of each individual child. These observations were individual to each child and provided goals to work on for the future. The staff recorded information regarding the younger children including meals and nappy changes in communication books that were sent home daily for parents. Toddler 1 care-room had an electronic application system for parents giving information such as a celebration of “Super-hero day” by the children.

(1) (b)

The main meals were provided by the service and morning snack was provided by the home in line with the service healthy eating policy. On the day of inspection snacks provided from home included yoghurts, sandwiches, various fruits, crackers and cheese. The main meal of the day consisted of pork stew with carrots and mash potato. Dinner time was observed to be relaxed with staff members sitting with children engaged in social conversation and assisting with cutting of food as required.

Independence in toileting was promoted for those children who were toilet trained. Children were encouraged to use the bathroom independently with prompts from staff if required. Children nappies were observed to be changed at regular intervals and more frequently if needed depending on the children’s individual needs. The staff spoke with the children during nappy changes letting them know what was happening and involving them in the process.

Standard cots were provided for the younger children in both sleep rooms located on the ground floor. Older children who needed to sleep/rest had stackable beds that were set up in the Toddler 2 and Wobbler care-rooms. The room lighting was darkened during the scheduled sleep times facilitating sleep but allowing the staff to make physical observations of the children.

Staff members were observed to be kind in their interactions with the preschool children. Staff members were observed to be understanding of the children's needs, supporting the child in their choices resulting in a calm low arousal environment allowing the children to learn and develop at their pace. In the outdoor area, staff members were observed to be playful in their interactions, ensuring all the children were having fun and enjoying their time in the outdoors. Children were comforted warmly by staff if upset.

Non-Compliance Information

Two children in the Wobbler care-room were provided with stackable beds that did not have bed sheets on them. It is acknowledged that new sheets were sourced by the service on the day.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The service advised in a written response:

Sheets will be always on the beds when children are on them regardless of wipeable beds or not.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence submitted

Summary Comment

The actions submitted by the person acting on behalf of the registered provider to address the non-compliance found on inspection has been reviewed. This regulation is now compliant.

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 into the service was found to be secured upon the inspectors' unannounced arrival to the service. A buzz entry system was provided allowing staff to control access preventing persons entering unauthorised and children from leaving the building unsupervised.
- All cleaning products in the care rooms were stored on high level shelving out of the reach of children.
- Materials and resources were maintained in a good state of repair.
- The kitchen was inaccessible to the preschool children.
- Leads and flexes were secure and inaccessible to the preschool children

Infection Control:

- There were adequate handwashing facilities provided throughout the service with warm water, liquid soap and paper towels.
- Children were observed to wash their hands regularly including before snacks and meals and after using the toilet. Child friendly hand wash posters with picture instructions were placed above the wash basins.
- Tables were observed to be cleaned prior to mealtimes and after messy play and snack times in all care rooms.
- The materials and resources throughout the service were visually clean throughout and cleaning schedules were in place.

Administration of Medication:

- The service had a medication policy in place, and in discussion staff were knowledgeable about the process for administering medication.
- A medication administration of an antibiotic was observed by the inspector, staff members took the necessary precautions, ensuring the right amount, double checked by the second staff member was administered at the right time to the right child and recorded the information correctly.

Safe Sleep:

- The staff undertook physical observations of sleeping children and recorded information on their colour, position and breathing at 10-minute intervals.

Fire Safety:

- Emergency escape routes were free from obstruction during the inspection.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. The outdoor metal gate was difficult to close, and the inspectors had difficulty on the day closing the gate on two occasions. This gate required attention as the risk of not being able to close would pose a risk of unauthorised entry or unsupervised egress from the service.
2. A wooden car in the bark area of the outdoor space used by the children from the Toddler care-rooms was damaged with splinters protruding from it posing a risk of injury to children.

Infection Control:

3. The foot operated pedal bin in the second bathroom in the second sanitary area was broken and foot operated pedal bin in preschool 3 was not working, resulting in a risk of contamination.

Safe Sleep:

4. There were a number of issues with cot mattresses in the sleep room used by the children attending the Wobbler care-room as follows:
 - One cot had a mattress that did not correctly fit the cot with a gap of 13cm between the cot and mattress frame.
 - A second cot had a mattress that had no safety mark or mattress cover in place.
 - A third cot had a mattress with no safety mark and the sheet covering the mattress had a hole in it.
 - A fourth cot had a mattress with no waterproof cover on it.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The service advised in a written response that:

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. Our maintenance man had a look at the gate, and it is now easier to open. The gate is metal and expands with heat. The service will monitor this on hot days, and sort an alternative if needed as security is our priority.
2. The wooden car handle has been removed from the back area.

Infection Control:

- The two pedal bins that needed to be replaced have being replaced. These bins will be checked regularly to ensure they are working.

Safe Sleep:

- The cot mattress that there were issues with have being changed and all replaced so they fit to size and have warning signs on them, and mattress covers were applied. Mattress will be monitored for correct sizing going forward.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

- Documentary evidence submitted.
- Photographic evidence submitted

Infection Control:

- Photographic evidence submitted

Safe Sleep:

- Photographic evidence submitted

Summary Comment

The actions submitted by the person acting on behalf of the registered provider to address the non-compliance found on inspection has been reviewed. This regulation is now compliant.

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) On the day of inspection four of the staff members on duty were trained in first aider response (FAR) training and were available to children attending the preschool service.

(2) (a) (b).

Fully stocked first aid boxes are available on each floor of the service and are available to children at all times.

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-

(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)
(b) Written records of the number, type and maintenance record of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises were available for inspection. Records showed the fire-fighting equipment had been last maintained in September 2023 and the smoke/fire alarms on the 24 November 2023.

- (2)
- (c) The records were made available to the inspectors by the designated person in charge on request.
- (4) Notices of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire were on display in prominent positions in the premises.

Non-Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) Written records of the fire drills were kept by the staff with the last fire drill dated as having been carried out on the 7 March 2024 however the fire drills were carried out every second month and not on a monthly basis as required.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The service advised in a written response

Corrective and Preventive Action

Drills will be completed and recorded monthly.

Supporting documentation submitted

No evidence submitted

Summary Comment

The actions submitted by the person acting on behalf of the registered provider to address the non-compliance found on inspection has been reviewed. This regulation is now compliant and will be reviewed on next 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.

Non-Compliance Information

- (1)
- The registered provider did not notify the agency of a change in the times of operation of the preschool service from 08:30 to 17:30 to the current operating times of 08:00 to 18:00 as outlined in section 58C(2) of the Act.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The service advised in a written response.

Corrective and Preventive Action

A change in circumstances form has been submitted to the department.

Supporting documentation submitted

Documentary evidence submitted.

Summary Comment

The actions submitted by the person acting on behalf of the registered provider to address the non-compliance found on inspection has been reviewed. This regulation is now compliant.