

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015SO056
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Name of Service:	Ballymote Community Childcare
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Address of Service:	Ballymote Community Childcare Co, Pearse Road, Ballymote, Co. Sligo
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Eircode:	F56 D439
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Name of Registered Provider:	Margaret Cryan
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	16/04/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	60	PM	43
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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, S Killeen.
Title:	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).

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Description of service

Spraoi is a not for profit full day care service which was established in 2007. The service is located in a rural area within the village of Ballymote County Sligo. Care and Education are provided to the children aged between 0-6 years. The service operates Monday to Friday from 07.30 to 18.00. The service operates from a purpose-built building consisting of four playrooms. On the day of inspection only three rooms were in operation. To the rear of the property is four interconnecting outdoor areas.

Staffing

There are 21 adults employed in the service of which 15 are working directly with the preschool children. Three staff work in the kitchen, two staff member work in administration and the operational manager. The registered provider does not work 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.

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The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 16(k)(j), 19, 22, 23, and 25 however, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 31. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 16(k) accidents and incidents and 16 (j) medication records.

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.

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Statutory Notices

Notice	Date Served	Detail
Immediate Action Notice IAN1521	16/04/2026	Evidence of International police vetting was not available for one adult who had resided outside the state for a period of more than six consecutive months and had direct access to children.
Status	Action was taken by the registered provider immediately following service of the notice and the provider submitted a written response with detailed corrective and preventive actions which were accepted by the inspectorate.	

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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)

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

(b)

The person in charge or deputy person remained on the premises for the duration of the inspection.

(c)

There was a clear governance structure in place with room leaders and child care workers identified.

(2) (a) (b).

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The records of all 21 adult files were reviewed.

Twenty-one written and verified past employer reference and thirteen written and verified references from an other source was available in respect of the 21 adults.

(c)

Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all 21 staff members.

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 three adults who had resided outside the state for a period of six months or more as an adult.

(4)

Evidence of completion of a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent was on file for Fifteen staff members.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a)(b)

Written and verified references from a past employer were not available in respect of four adults.

(d)

See Statutory notice section in relation to Immediate Action Notice IAN1521 served.

(d)

International police vetting was not available for one adult who had resided outside the state for a period of six months and was not working directly with the preschool children on the day of inspection.

(3)

A review of documentation evidenced that the requirements of Regulation 9(2) had not been completed prior to 4 staff members being appointed, assigned, or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the preschool service as outlined above under point 2(a)(b) and (2) (d).

(4)

Certification of qualification available for one adult who was working directly with the preschool children required to be deemed equivalent by the minister to a level 5 or above on the national framework of qualifications.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

In a written response the person acting on behalf of the registered provider stated:

(2)(a)(b)

The manager will ensure that all the employees references match the employees Curriculum Vieta and are verified.

(2)(d)

International police vetting applied for and received. The service will ensure that all employees that have lived outside of the republic of Ireland get international police vetting from the country where they had lived and ensure that this person does not work with children of any age until they receive the garda vetting.

(3)

The manager will ensure that the above (2) (a) (b) are adhered to at all times when recruiting new staff

The manager will check with the recruit who their referees are on their curriculum vitea while attending interview. The manager will get the employee to sign a headed page with the dates they were not employed for and the reason for the gap in employment in the timeframe.

(4)

The staff member has sent all information to the Department to certify the qualification.

The manager to ensure that this is checked before employing new staff and ensuring to check the qualification under the early years framework

Supporting documentation submitted

(2)(a)(b) References submitted.

(2)(d) International police vetting submitted.

(4) Certification application submitted.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider were reviewed and accepted.

Regulation 9 is now complaint.

Part III – Management and Staff

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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.

(3) Subject to paragraph (5), a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 2 of Schedule 6 opposite a particular reference number specified in column (1) of that Part in respect of the age range of the children specified in column (2) therefore at that reference number is satisfied.

Compliance Information

(1)

There were 10 adults working directly with 60 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. The person in charge was also available to cover breaks if required.

(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:

- Baby Room: 2 adults supported 5 children aged between 1 to 2.5 years of age.
- Toddler Room: 3 adults supported 13 children aged between 2 to 3 years of age.
- Downstairs Preschool: 3 adults supported 20 children aged from 3 to 4 years of age.
- Upstairs preschool: 2 adults supported 22 children aged from 4 to 5 years of age.

In the afternoon the following ratios were observed:

- Baby Room: 1 adult supported 3 children aged between 1 to 2.5 years of age.
- Toddler Room: 2 adults supported 12 children aged between 2 to 3 years of age.
- Downstairs Preschool: 2 adults supported 12 children aged from 3 to 4 years of age.
- Upstairs preschool: 2 adults supported 16 children aged from 4 to 5 years of age.

Part IV – Information and Records

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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:

- (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.*

(2) A registered provider shall ensure that-

- (a) all documents and records relating to references and Garda and police vetting obtained under Regulation 9(2) are retained for a period of 5 years from the date on which the person to whom the document or record relates commences working in the service, and*
- (b) a record referred to in subparagraph (h), (j) or (k) of paragraph (1) is retained for a period of 2 years from the date on which the child to whom it relates ceases to attend the service, or in the case of a preschool service in a drop-in centre or of a temporary pre-school service, for a period of 2 years from the date on which the child attends the service.*

(3) A record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection on the premises, and the documents and records referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall be open to inspection whether on the premises or elsewhere, by an authorised person.

(4) A record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection on the premises by a parent or guardian of a child but only in respect of information concerning that child.

Compliance Information

(1)(k)

A sample of twelve accident and incidents from January 2026 were reviewed. All accidents and incidents had the required information and confirmation of first aid administered if required, risk assessment completed and parents or guardians informed.

(1)(j)

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A random sample of 11 medication administration records were reviewed. All records had evidence of administration, the dose, route, signature of administrator, witness and parental consent.

(2)(a)(b)

The person in charge demonstrated their knowledge of retention of records in line with the statutory guidelines with evidence of records in relation to 9(2) available for five years from creation. Records in relation to subparagraph (h), (j) or (k) of paragraph (1) were retained for two years.

(3)

These records were made available to the inspector on the day of inspection.

(4)

Records in relation to paragraph (1) were made available to the parent or guardian of the child as evidenced by parents signature.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(i)

On the day of inspection, inspectors observed that a person trained in first aid for children was available during the hours of operation. However, the record of the staff roster was incorrect and did not highlight the availability of staff members trained in first aid for children for the duration of the operation of the service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)(i)

The roster has been amended to ensure there is someone available with first aid training at all times. Training has been arranged for six staff members.

Supporting documentation submitted

Roster submitted with evidence of first aid cover.

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 V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

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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)(b)

Basic Needs:

- The person in charge described how they provide balanced meals and snack each day. This was further evidenced by a review of the menu plan, a discussion with the chef and staff members and observation of meals in the baby and toddler room. Morning snack served was pancakes and fresh fruit, lunch home made soup and mashed potato, evening snack of ham sandwiches and fruit.
- Drinking water was freely available throughout the day and stored on shelving easily accessible to children in all care rooms.
- Nappy changing was observed to be a positive engagement with the young children. The staff members responded to the needs of the children and provided regular nappy changes. The older children who were toileting independently were prompted to do so and supervised from a distance.
- The sleep needs of the younger children were met, this was observed on the day by children sleeping at a structured time of 12:30 to 14:00. One sleep room was in use in the service and the main care room was also used for sleep and rest by darkening the room. Sleep was monitored by physical checks from staff a minimum of every ten minutes.
- Older children who required sleep were provided with stackable floor beds in the care room. Similarly to the bay room the room was darkened and soft music played to create a relaxed environment.

Programme of Activities:

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- Ongoing observations and assessments were documented which helped create a well-rounded picture of each child and their learnings. Observations were individual to the child and recorded tasks completed and goals for the future.
- Children's language development was observed to be supported through one to one and group discussions, songs and storytelling.
- On the day of inspection, the children were facilitated to make their own choice in selecting play equipment and activities that they wished to engage with.
- Turn taking and sharing was promoted; this was evidenced in all rooms on the day, where staff members supervised children and encouraged inclusion of all.

Supporting Relationships:

- Staff members were observed to be respectful, gentle, and kind in their interactions towards the children in their care. During mealtimes the staff members sat at the table and engaged in social conversation with children promoting a relaxed atmosphere. The staff members sat at the children's level when feeding the younger children or when assisting the children to feed themselves.
- The younger child were held and cuddled as needed throughout the day. There was evidence of familiarity between the staff and children as conversations included activities about home and family.
- The service took measures to support the children's relationships including keeping parents and guardians fully informed of the daily activities. This was completed through the use of an book in the younger children's rooms where parents received information in relation to the children's eating, sleeping and nappy changing.
- Pictures of families displayed on the walls in the care rooms ensured children's connection to home was maintained.
- All children had a designated keyworker in place who maintained the communication with home. This included recording individual observations, working towards agreed goals and ensuring parents are kept fully informed of the child's progress and development.

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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 registered provider ensured that adequate and suitable nutritious meals were available for each preschool child attending the service.

The chef confirmed that the service provided balanced and nutritious meals in line with the service healthy eating policy. A two-week menu plan is in place based on the children's food preferences and likes. Breakfast, morning snack, dinner and afternoon snack is provided by the service for full day care children. The service caters for allergies, food preferences and culture choices. The kitchen staff ensure any allergies are served in different colour dish ware to ensure safety and communicate same with care staff.

Children in the preschool room bring in their lunches from home in line with the healthy eating policy.

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 service was secure on the inspectors unannounced arrival to the service.
- The outdoor area consisted of high block fencing and secure metal gates ensuring that no child exited the service unsupervised or any adult gained access unauthorised.
- Suitable handrails had been provided to ensure the safety of children going up and down stairs.
- High chairs were fitted with harnesses and were in a good condition.
- Toys and play equipment were suitable for the age and stage of the children using them.

Infection Control:

- Warm water, liquid soap and paper towels were provided for effective hand hygiene.
- Children were observed to wash their hands prior to snack times, after messy play and using the toilet.
- Tables were observed to be cleaned prior to mealtimes.

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- Staff members serving meals had the appropriate PPE including hair net, gloves and aprons.
- Nappy changing was observed to be carried out in line with the service nappy changing policy.

Administration of Medication:

- No medication was administered on the day of inspection. However, on discussion with staff members they were knowledgeable about the administration of medication policy and what to do should a child require medication.

Safe Sleep:

- Four standard cots were provided in the service. For children under two years of age. Stackable floor beds were available for children aged over two years requiring rest or sleep.
- Room temperatures were maintained within the required safe sleep limit range.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Detergents and a bait box were stored in an unsecure cupboard accessible to preschool children in the toddler sanitary area posing a risk of harm if accessed by preschool children.
2. Flexes and chords from air conditioning unit was loose and accessible to the preschool children in the toddler room.
3. The radiator cover in the upstairs preschool room was not secured to the wall, posing a risk to the preschool child if it fell.
4. A large wooden toy car in the outdoor play area had worn in spots resulting in exposed sharp edges that could cause injury to a child.

Infection Control:

5. The service had a system of storing soothers in individual containers, however inspectors observed on the day that a number of soothers were not in the individual containers and posed a risk of cross contamination.
6. Two mattresses in the baby sleep room were torn with exposed foam. These mattresses are unable to be cleaned effectively and pose an infection control risk.
7. Perishable food items were stored in the children's lunch boxes on the shelf in the upstairs preschool room.
8. The walls in the downstairs preschool room were flaking making them unable to be cleaned efficiently.

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Administration of Medication:

- Medication was stored in an unlocked fridge in the upstairs pre-school room, which was accessible to the preschool children which posed a risk of overdose if ingested.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

- The door has been secured.
- Flexes and chords have been secured
- A new radiator cover has been bought and secured to the wall.
- The seating on the toy has been replaced.

Infection Control:

- Staff have been spoken to about using the individual storage containers.
- Two new mattresses have been purchased.
- All children's lunches are now stored in fridge and staff members have been informed of same.
- Walls have been painted

Administration of Medication:

- Medication will now be stored in a locked box out of reach of children.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

- Photographic evidence submitted.
- Photographic evidence submitted.
- Photographic evidence submitted.
- Photographic evidence submitted.

Infection Control:

- Memo to staff submitted.
- Photographic evidence submitted.
- Photographic evidence submitted.
- Photographic evidence submitted.

Administration of Medication:

- Photographic evidence submitted.

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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 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, a person trained in first aid for children was available to preschool children during the hours of operation as required.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a)(b)
The first aid boxes available to the preschool children were insufficiently stocked with out of date equipment which could pose a risk to the preschool child.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action:

In a written response the registered provider stated:

(2)(a)(b)

The first aid boxes have been restocked, and checklists are now in place.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence submitted.

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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 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:

(d) a serious injury to a pre-school child while attending the service that requires immediate medical treatment by a registered medical practitioner whether in a hospital or otherwise;

Non-Compliance Information

(d)

The registered provider failed to notify the agency in writing within three working days of a serious injury to a child that resulted in the child requiring immediate medical treatment by a medical practitioner or hospital.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

In a written response the registered provider stated.

(d)

A notification was submitted to the inspectorate after the inspection. These notification will be completed in the time frame required in the future.

Supporting documentation submitted

Notification 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.