

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015TY094		
Name of Service:	Cahir Bears Childcare Centre		
Address of Service:	Duneske, Farranlahassery, Cahir, Co Tipperary		
Eircode:	E21 NH96		
Name of Registered Provider:	Geraldine Byron		
Service type:	Full Day, Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	13/10/2025		
No of pre-school children:	AM	47	PM 47
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	13 Market Square Mallow Co Cork P51DD5Y		
Inspection undertaken by:	B Fraher and D Cotter		
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	N/A
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Description of service

This full day care service operates from a single storey, detached purpose built premises. It consists of five care rooms, sanitary accommodations, a reception area, staff room, kitchen, storage room and a large outdoor play area. It is located in a residential area in the town of Cahir in south Tipperary. The service is registered to provide care to children aged 0-6 years and currently caters for children from 1-6 years. It is opened from 8:30 to 17:00. The service runs the early childhood and education scheme (ECCE) from 9:00 to 12:00, 38 weeks of the year.

Staffing

The service currently has 22 adults in the service, 17 of whom were employed in the service and working directly with the children, 2 Community Employment CE workers, a receptionist, a housekeeper and the registered provider.

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 and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under Regulation 9 management and recruitment, Regulation 10 policies, procedures of pre-school service, Regulation 11 staffing levels, Regulation 16 records in relation to a pre-school service, Regulation 19 health, welfare and development of child, Regulation 23

safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child, however, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 20 facilities for rest and play and Regulation 27 supervision. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulation within this report.

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.

Additional Information

A referral was made to the fire officer to assess fire safety in the service. Further information is available under Regulation 23 of the report.

Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the children, person in charge and staff 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.

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that, without prejudice to the generality of paragraph (2) and subject to paragraphs (5) and (6), each employee working directly with children attending the service holds at least a major award in Early childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) The service had a designated person in charge on the day of inspection and a named deputy in the service that could deputise as required.
 - (b) The person in charge and the deputy was on duty at the service when the inspector arrived. The staff roster indicated that either the person in charge or the deputy were on duty at all times during the hours of operation.

(c) There was clear evidence on inspection of the management structure in place and the specific roles of each staff member. This was on display on the notice board.

(2) The recruitment records in relation to 22 adults, 17 of whom were employed in the service and working directly with the children, 2 CE workers, a receptionist and the registered provider were the subject of inspection.

(a) Of the 44 required references, 24 were from previous employers with required records of validation on file.

(b) Of the 44 required references, 20 were from a source other than a past employer with required records of validation on file.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were obtained and were on file for the 22 staff. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Police vetting was required for 1 of the 22 adults as they lived outside of the state for longer than 6 consecutive months.

(4) The 17 adults who worked directly with the children held a relevant qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education from level 5 to level 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.

Compliance Information

The following policies were reviewed:

- Policy on administration of medication
- Policy on infection control
- Policy on safe sleep

The policies contained the information required to guide staff in their care practices for the children.

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) At the time of inspection, there was an adequate number of adults responsible for the direct care of the children in attendance at all times.

(2) The adult to child ratio were observed to meet the minimum requirement over the duration of the inspection.

The ratio was as follows:

- The Preschool 1 room had 13 children being cared for by 3 staff members in the morning and 14 children being cared for by 3 staff members in the afternoon.
- The Preschool 2 room had 15 children being cared for by 3 staff members in the morning and 14 children being cared for by 2 staff members in the afternoon.
- The Baby room was not in use for the duration of the inspection.
- The Toddler room had eight children being cared for by three staff members in the morning and eight children being cared for by two staff members in the afternoon.
- The Playschool room had 11 children being cared for by 4 staff members in the morning and 11 children being cared for by 3 staff members in the afternoon.

(8)

(a) The service operated with at least two adults present at all times. This was observed on the day of inspection and was evident through examination of the roster.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:

- (f) the opening hours and fees;
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;
- (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.

Compliance Information

(1) The following records in writing were reviewed on inspection:

- (f) The opening hours and fees were displayed in reception.
- (i) The staff roster for the week of inspection was available for assessment. A copy of the roster was received; the roster was in keeping with the staff working in the service on the day of inspection.
- (k) The accident and incident record books were reviewed, and 10 records were assessed. All 10 records were completed, signed and dated by both staff and parents/ guardians.

Non-Compliance Information

(j) There were 11 records of medication administration reviewed. No parental signature was obtained on four of the forms. Without parental signature, there was no evidence parents were aware of the medication being administered in the service. This posed a safety risk to the children.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The following statement was received from the registered provider:

Corrective and Preventive Action

Parents have now signed the consent forms, and a staff meeting was held to discuss the medication administration policy and procedures to be followed. The lead educator will check medication administration books to ensure they are signed in the future.

Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of the signed medication administration forms were received.

Summary Comment

The action taken by the registered provider has addressed the non-compliance identified under Regulation 16.

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

On the day of inspection, the following information was obtained through direct observation and discussion with the staff and examination of the relevant documents.

Basic needs:

- Drinking water was accessible to the children throughout the day in all the care rooms.
- Children in the Toddler room had the opportunity to feed themselves appropriate to their age and stage of development and staff sat at the children's level and assisted if needed and encouraged conversation.
- Nappy changing in the service was observed to be carried out on a regular basis and as and when required. Each child's dignity and privacy were observed to be respected with one child being changed at a time.
- The older children were observed to access the sanitary area independently with the staff available to assist if required.
- Children's need for mobility was met with both indoor and outdoor play areas being used on the day of inspection.
- Outdoor play was promoted and observed at the time of inspection with staff observing and assisting children during play. The inspector observed children playing with bikes, wheelbarrows, slides, with sand and toy tools. Children dressed appropriately wearing overalls and coats.

Supporting relationships:

- The adults were observed to show positive regard for the children in all the care rooms on the day of inspection. The children were encouraged and praised during tasks in a warm and caring manner for example

when children played with toy tools, used the slide, coloured and built items. The inspector observed nurturing and enthusiastic interactions in all the care rooms.

- Staff informed the inspector that the service operated in partnership with the parent, communicating in person with parents or guardians at collection or drop off, sending photographs to parents and contacting via telephone or email if needed. Parents are also given a handbook about the service.
- The atmosphere was observed to be relaxed in the care rooms at all times during the inspection and teamwork was evident between the staff and the children.
- The inspector observed an upset child to be comforted by a staff member who responded positively to the child in the Playschool room.
- Family photos and birthday calendars were displayed on the walls or in a booklet in the care rooms which promoted a sense of belonging for the children.
- Staff engaged with the children in both group and individual activities by getting down to their level and maintaining eye contact while discussing, questioning and helping children with their chosen task. This was observed on numerous occasions for example with staff building and colouring with children and also playing tools and sand in the outdoor area.
- A staff member was observed to sing with the children in the outdoor area which supported positive relationships with the children.
- Staff were observed encouraging positive behaviour. This was observed when staff encouraged children to take turns when children were using toys in the outdoor area.
- Staff encouraged communication and language development through discussing topics of interest with children and staff welcomed children to expand on their discussions. This was observed in all care rooms.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

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

- (a) having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child 19 to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day, and
- (b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.

Compliance Information

(1)

(a) The indoor environment of the care rooms was child friendly and bright. The care rooms were laid out with defined interest areas, including a home corner area, construction area, reading area and dress up area. The layout allowed staff to easily supervise the children as they moved from area to area. There was open shelving with play materials and items laid out so that the children could identify and access them easily and independently. There was a variety of materials and defined interest areas in the outdoor area, including balance toys, slides, ride on toys, wheelbarrows and sand areas. The environment created a challenging, creative and enriched experience for the children.

Non-Compliance Information

(b) One child under the age of two was observed to be sleeping on a stackable bed in the Toddler room. The services sleep policy states all children under two years have access to a cot. Tusla 'Guidance for the Early Learning and care sector on sleep position for children under 24 months' states that the use of floor mats or stackable beds for children aged under 24 months are not sufficiently conducive to sleep.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The following statement was received from the registered provider:

Corrective and Preventive Action

The children under 24 months will sleep in cots in line with the sleep policy.

Supporting documentation submitted

The statement from the registered provider was accepted.

Summary Comment

The corrective action submitted by the registered provider has addressed the non-compliance identified under Regulation 20.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

A registered provider shall ensure that all reasonable measures are taken to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of a pre-school child attending the service and that the environment of the service is safe.

Compliance Information

General safety:

- The entrance door was secured appropriately. This restricted unauthorised access to the building and prevent the risk of children exiting unsupervised.
- The windows in the care rooms were adequately secured to ensure the safety of the children.
- Cleaning agents were stored out of reach of the children.
- The toys and play equipment assessed were in good condition.
- The outdoor area was a safe and secure space for the children with metal and timber fencing. This prevented children gaining unsupervised access to an unsafe area.
- The equipment used in the outdoor area was in good condition and was able to be stored under a roofed area or in a shed when not in use.
- The first aid box was stored out of reach of the children.
- There were no cables or trailing flexes accessible to the children on the day of inspection.

Infection control:

- Handwashing facilities were accessible to the children with warm running water, liquid soap and paper towels.
- Children were observed to wash their hands before meals and after using the sanitary facilities.
- Children's coats and bags were stored off the ground.
- A refrigerator was available in the kitchen for the storage of perishable foods.
- The children's nappies, wipes and barrier creams were maintained in clearly labelled storage area.

Safe sleep:

- The air temperature of the two designated sleep rooms were recorded between 21.3°C and 21.8°C while children were sleeping at the time. The room temperatures were maintained at the required temperature of between 18°C and 22°C for children above 12 months.
- Staff were noted to maintain sleep records in relation to children's, colour, breathing and position at 10-minute intervals. The inspector reviewed 10 sleep records, and these were recorded to be carried out correctly.

Fire safety:

- Fire exits were noted to be free from obstruction.
- Fire extinguishers were secured to the walls.
- The locking mechanism on the fire exit doors to the outdoor play area were key locked but were maintained unlocked on a daily basis. A referral was made to the fire officer to assess fire safety in the service.

Non-Compliance Information

General safety:

1. One child was prescribed emergency medication with no care plan in place and the person in charge informed the inspector that no staff member had been trained in the administration of this medication if it was needed. This posed a risk to the safety of the child, should it be required and was not in line with the services medication administration policy.
2. No visibility stickers were noted to be available on the glass panels at the children's height in the Toddler and the preschool rooms. This posed a risk to the children of injury.
3. The inspector observed children in Preschool 2 room using shaving foam as a play material. This poses a safety risk to the children.
4. The temperature of the hot water was recorded above the appropriate range of 43°C in two areas. Water temperatures of 45.2°C were recorded in the nappy changing room between the Toddler and Playschool room and water temperature of 46°C were recorded in Preschool 1 room. This posed a risk of scalding to a child.

Infection control:

5. During three observed nappy changing procedures, the following practices were noted in one or more of the changes which posed a risk of contamination and cross infection and was not in line with the services nappy changing policy.

- The child's or adult's hands were not washed after nappy change.
 - A staff member touched the lid of the bin with gloves during a nappy change and proceeded to continue with the nappy change with the same gloves in place.
6. On the day of inspection, 19 children in Toddler room and Playschool room shared one nappy changing unit. One nappy changing unit is required for every 11 children. This overuse of a nappy changing unit increases the risk of cross infection.
7. The inspector noted that bins used in the service were not pedal operated. This increased the risk of cross infection and contamination.
8. The inspector noted three outdoor sand pits had no covers available and remained open when the service was closed. This posed a risk of contamination and infection to the children.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The following statement was received from the registered provider:

Corrective & Preventive Action

General safety:

1. Staff have been trained in the use of this emergency medication and a care plan has been completed with information received from the GP. The services admission policy has been reviewed. The service will ensure that when future children are prescribed medication, Staff will be trained, a care plan completed and information is received from the GP.
2. Visibility stickers were purchased and were placed on the windows. The service will ensure that visibility stickers are kept on all low windows.
3. Staff meeting was held, and staff were advised that shaving foam is no longer used as a play material.
4. Management in the service contacted a plumber the day of inspection and the temperature was lowered the following morning. Water temperatures will be checked on a daily basis.

Infection control:

5. A staff meeting was held. The nappy changing policy was discussed and staff were reminded of the importance of hand washing.
6. Children from the Toddler room are now using the nappy changing area in the baby room until such time as toilet training is completed.
7. Pedal operated bins have been purchased for all the care rooms and management will ensure that pedal operated bins are used in the service.

8. The sandpits have been removed and replaced with small tabletop sandpits. The larger sandpit has a cover in place and will be covered when the service is not in operation.

Supporting documentation submitted

General safety:

1. A copy of the child's care plan was received.
2. A photograph of the visibility stickers on the windows were received.
3. The response from the registered provider is accepted.
4. The response from the registered provider is accepted.

Infection control:

5. The response from the registered provider is accepted.
6. The response from the registered provider is accepted.
7. Receipts for purchasing of bins were received.
8. Photographic evidence received of the sand pits cleaned out and covered.

Summary Comment

The corrective action submitted by the registered provider has addressed the non-compliance identified under Regulation 23.

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

On entering the Sleep room at 13:27, it was noted by the inspector that nine children were sleeping on floor bed unsupervised. It is acknowledged that a monitor was in place and staff entered the room every 10 minutes to perform sleep checks. This level of supervision is inadequate and posed a risk to children of having access to the room and other children unsupervised.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The following statement was received from the registered provider:

Corrective and Preventive Action

The services sleep policy is revised and staff have been advised to remain in the sleep room at all times while children are asleep on stackable beds.

Supporting documentation submitted:

The response from the registered provider is accepted.

Summary Comment

The action taken by the registered provider has addressed the non-compliance identified under Regulation 27.