

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WX036
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Name of Service:	Crossabeg Community Childcare Centre
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Address of Service:	Sion, Crossabeg, Co. Wexford
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Eircode:	Y33 KH27
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Name of Registered Provider:	Alice O'Connor
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection: Day 1:	06/11/2025
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Day 2:	07/11/2025
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No of pre-school children: Day 1:	AM	54	PM	42
Day 2:	AM	50	PM	NA

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Ely Hospital, Ferrybank, Wexford.
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Inspection undertaken by:	C. Ryan
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Title:	Early Years Inspector
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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

Crossabeg Community Childcare Centre is a community based early years service which is managed by a voluntary committee. The service operates a play based full day care service from 8.30am to 6pm and can accommodate up to 54 children aged from 6 months to 6 years. Additionally, the service offers a before and after-school service to school aged children.

The service operates from a purpose-built premises. It consists of four playrooms, two sleep rooms, a kitchen, office, staff facilities and sanitary accommodation. A large outdoor garden and play area is available to the rear of the property.

Staffing

The service employs 21 staff in total including the registered provider. The registered provider is the designated person in charge, and a second-named staff member was available to deputise as required. The staff working directly with children in the service hold the minimum QQI Quality Qualifications Ireland level 5, 6 and 8 qualifications in Childcare and Early Childhood Care and Education on the National Qualifications Framework. The service employs a caretaker and cleaner. There were also childcare students present on placements.

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.

Regulation 9 Management and Recruitment (1) (2) (a) (b) (c) (d) (4),
Regulation 11 Staffing levels (1) (2),
Regulation 19 - Regulation 19 Health, Welfare and Development of the Child,
Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety, and Welfare of the Child,
Regulation 25 First aid (1) (2) (a) (b),
Regulation 26 Fire Safety (1) (a) (b) (4),
Regulation 28 Insurance and
Regulation 29 – Premises.

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

An immediate action notice was issued on 6 November 2025 due to safety concerns. Refer to Regulation 23. The registered provider took actions and submitted a response to address the immediate action notice.

A referral was made to the HSE Environmental Health Service on the 7 November 2025.

A referral made to the Chief Fire Officer on the 7 November 2025.

Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that-

- (a) the service has a designated person in charge and a named person who is able to deputise as required,*
- (b) at all times during the period when the pre-school service is being carried on, the designated person in charge or the named person referred to in subparagraph (a) is on the premises, and*

(2) A registered provider shall ensure that each employee, unpaid worker and contractor is suitable and competent taking into consideration the nature of the needs of children, including by-

- (a) consideration of references from the person's past employers, if any, and in particular the most recent employer, if any,*
- (b) consideration of references from reputable sources in the case of a person who has no past employers,*
- (c) consideration of the vetting disclosure received from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána in accordance with the Act of 2012 in respect of the person, and*
- (d) ensuring, insofar as is practicable, that where a person has lived in a state other than the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months, he or she provides police vetting from the police authorities in that state.*

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

Compliance Information

(1)(a)(b)

The manager was the person in charge on both days of the inspection. There was a person available to deputise when the manager was absent.

(2)(a)(b)

Following a discussion with the manager and on review of documentation, it was established that there were 21 staff employed in the service. All written and validated references were available on file for staff working in the service.

(c)

There was Garda vetting available on file in the service for all staff members including students. The service demonstrated partial compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice to renew Garda vetting every 3 years. See Regulation 23.

(d)

Police vetting was available on file for a staff member who had lived in a state other than Ireland for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

(4)

There were qualifications on file for 12 staff working directly with the children. These staff held an award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 and above on the National Qualifications Framework.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a)(b)

The registered provider did not demonstrate that they had completed adequate steps in the consideration of references for staff. There were insufficient references available for four staff.

(d)

Police vetting was not available on file for a staff member who had lived in a state other than Ireland for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

(4)

There was no evidence available on file for 5 staff to demonstrate that they met the minimum Level 5 and above on the National Qualifications Framework.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The following response was submitted to address the non-compliances:

Corrective and Preventive Action

2(a)(b)

Following the inspection and a review of staff files the references required for all 4 staff members in question were sourced, validated and submitted. They have been added to the staff members' files.

A staff file checklist has been devised and will be used to ensure all staff records are kept up to date and new staff members will have all required documents on file prior to commencing.

(d)

The staff member in question has begun the process of obtaining police vetting from her time spent overseas. Garda and police vetting details will be kept on the staff file checklist and the date that it is required to be renewed if applicable will also be noted to ensure vetting will be renewed before expiration.

(4)

Confirmation that the staff members qualifications identified during the inspection met the requirement to work in an early years' service was obtained and have been added to the staff members files. For staff members who are currently studying, letters of eligibility will be recorded on the staff file checklist.

Supporting documentation submitted

Validated references, staff file checklist, evidence of minimum qualification requirements.

Summary Comment

The response was satisfactory to meet the requirements of the regulation under part (1)(a)(b), (2)(a)(b)(c) and 4.

The process for staff requiring police vetting is currently underway. Police vetting will be submitted to the office of the Early Years Inspectorate once obtained.

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)(2)

There was an adequate number of staff working with the children for the duration of the inspection.

Day 1:

During the morning, there were 54 children being directly cared for by 11 staff.

During the afternoon, there were 42 children being directly cared for by 9 staff.

Day 2:

During the morning, there were 50 children being directly cared for by 14 staff.

A student was present on placement and was supernumerary to the adult to child ratios.

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

The following observations and discussions with staff reflected the children's experience within the service over the two days of inspection:

1(a)

The inspector observed staff members across each room treating the children with respect and positive regard. They sat with children in small groups or individually, engaged in play, in conversation with and listening attentively to the children as they spoke.

Parents spoke to staff during drop off and collection times, providing an opportunity for staff to share information with parents.

The service consisted of four playrooms, all with easy access to the outdoor play area. The rooms were equipped with a wide variety of play materials, which were suitable for the age and stage of development of the children. Open shelving had boxes of materials such as puzzles and jigsaws which allowed children to access materials independently during free play. Each of the rooms were individually resourced and designed to meet the needs and interests of the age group using them. For example, the baby and toddler rooms had areas suitable to meet the needs of crawling and early walking children. Books, dress up material, nature tables, construction toys, small world and home areas were available for the children.

Children's identity and belonging was fostered through the display of their works of art and their recent learning, birthday walls, family photographs and labelled hooks for their coats and bags,

Parents supplied the food and snacks for their children, and these were stored in fridges. Over the course of the inspection a large variety of foods, dinners and snacks were observed served to the children. The children's drinks were freely accessible to them in each room throughout the day.

Mealtimes observed were unhurried social experiences in all rooms, staff sat with children and engaged in conversation. The children were encouraged to feed themselves appropriate to their stage of development and were assisted as required. Younger children were placed in feeding chairs when foods were ready to be served and removed promptly when they were finished.

Regular nappy changing took place throughout the day and staff were observed to engage attentively with children during the process. Toilet training was facilitated and carried out in partnership with parents. Children who were toilet trained were encouraged to use the toilet independently.

Sleep was child led, and staff worked in partnership with parents to ensure consistency between home and service routines. Children were placed to sleep when signs of tiredness were recognised by staff, this was observed in the baby room when young children were placed to sleep as required during the day.

Children were observed in the outdoor area throughout the day. Appropriate clothing was available for all children to access the outdoor area in all weathers which included wellies and wet suits. Children from the baby room were observed in buggies outside walking around the large garden. The outdoor garden was large with a variety of surfaces and areas. There was a concreted area for ride on toys, gravel pathways and large grassy areas. The children had access to climbing frames, mud kitchens, sandpits, digging and planting areas. Natural hedges defined the spaces, and two covered play areas provided additional space to two of the playrooms.

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 leading into the service was appropriately secured to prevent children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the premises. The outdoor garden and play area located to the rear of the premises was fully enclosed.

A sample of accident and incident forms were reviewed on inspection and were fully completed.

Infection Control:

There was warm water, liquid soap, and paper towels available to facilitate hygienic handwashing.

Premade formula bottles were brought to the service and stored in the fridges in line with safe food practices.

Administration of Medication:

Staff detailed the procedures for administering medication if required during discussions with the inspector. The staff showed the inspector individual care plan for the safe administration of medication. A sample of medication administration records reviewed on the day were fully completed.

Safe Sleep:

Staff who spoke with the inspector were aware of safe sleep practices and knowledgeable in the importance of adhering to safe sleep guidelines. For example, they were aware of how often a sleeping child is physically checked, recording the observations such as colour, position and breathing rate. Staff were observed checking on the sleeping children's colour, position and breathing every 10 minutes and recording the sleep checks. Staff were observed to supervise the children who slept on sleep beds in the room. Sleep rooms were sufficiently dark and quiet to promote a restful sleep.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. There was a leak over the door coming from the ceiling in the toddler sleep room. The sleep room had 10 sleep beds in the room. There was water on the floor; a black substance was visible on the wall and door. There was a strong damp musty smell evident in the room. A bed sheet on the bed beside the door was wet. Sleeping in a damp environment poses a risk to the health of children sleeping in the room.
2. Firefighting equipment and some room doors were partially obstructed by equipment.
3. Four large containers of cleaning product were left at the front desk which was potentially accessible to the children when the desk area was unsecured.

Infection Control:

A number of inconsistencies in practice were observed and at variance with the service's infection control policy and good hand hygiene practices:

1. Children were not observed to have their hands washed after nappy changing.
2. Staff members were observed to wash their hands in the sink in the playroom after nappy changing and not in the sink in the toilet area which posed a risk of cross contamination.
3. A staff member was observed not to wash their hands after individual nappy changing.
4. Aprons were not changed between individual nappy changing.
5. Staff were observed to use their hands to put soiled items in the bin and not use the foot pedal mechanism.
6. Two fridges used for the storage of children's food were over packed. Surfaces where food was prepped were not cleared. The kitchen was not adequately cleaned.

Safe Sleep:

1. There were no thermometers available in the sleep rooms for the monitoring of sleep room temperatures.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The following response was submitted to address the non-compliances:

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1.

Work had been carried out on the roof in the toddler room sleep area in the previous weeks to fix a leak identified. A follow up visit was carried out when staff noticed the problem was not fully rectified. The company was contacted on the day of inspection and visited the centre the following morning and carried out work on the roof again. Until the staff members are happy that the roof no longer leaks and it safe for children to be placed to sleep in the sleep room again, children were placed to sleep in the main toddler room on low beds.

A yearly maintenance contract has been put in place with the roofing company to ensure the roof will be kept in good repair to prevent future leaks occurring.

2.

Following the inspection items that were blocking firefighting equipment and doors were immediately removed. The Fire Officer visited the centre on 28th November. He discussed our current fire safety procedures and gave advice on things to change. It was agreed that a more suitable area for our fire assembly point would be to the rear of the property rather than to the front. Staff were made aware of this change and shown the new exit routes to the assembly point. Staff then relayed this change to the children in an age-appropriate manner.

3.

All cleaning products have been removed and stored in the correct place. Staff have been reminded to ensure deliveries are correctly stored and not accessible to children.

Infection Control:

1,2,3,4,5.

A more detailed nappy changing policy has been devised and circulated to all staff to ensure everyone is aware of all the steps involved in the procedure. Attention was drawn to the importance of children and adult handwashing in appropriate sinks and the wearing and changing of disposable aprons and gloves during nappy changing.

The updated nappy changing policy has been explained to all staff members and it has been placed in a prominent area in all nappy changing areas for staff to refer to if necessary.

6.

A second fridge has been placed in the preschool room so that children's lunches can be stored among the fridges to prevent overpacking. Space will be monitored to ensure fridges are not becoming overpacked with lunches.

Safe Sleep:

1. New thermometers have been purchased for both sleep rooms and are in place. Staff have been made aware that the temperature of the sleep rooms must be recorded on sleep checks.

Supporting documentation submitted

Invoice from roofing company, nappy changing policy. Photograph of new fridge and cleared fire exits. Receipts for purchase of sleep room thermometers. Confirmation of visit from EHO.

Summary Comment

The response was satisfactory to meet the requirements of the regulation. This regulation will be reviewed on next inspection.

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)

There were five staff trained in FAR (first aid responder) available to the children attending the preschool service.

(2)(a)(b)

There was a suitably equipped first aid box stored in an easily accessible position available for use.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures

- (1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of-
- (a) any fire drill that takes place in the premises, and
 - (b) the number, type and maintenance record of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire shall be displayed in a conspicuous position in the premises.

Compliance Information

- (b)
A record was maintained when the firefighting equipment and smoke alarm system were serviced in July 2025.
- (4)
There was a notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire displayed in a conspicuous position in the hallway of the service.

Non-Compliance Information

- (1)(a)
Fire drills were not completed monthly. Through discussion with four staff, it was established that fire drills are not carried out monthly demonstrating that records reviewed were inaccurate.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The following response was submitted to address the non-compliance:

Corrective and Preventive Action

Fire drills will be carried out monthly going forward with a date for the next drill being set by management after the current drill has been documented.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copy of fire drills completed. Letter from fire officer.

Summary Comment

The response was satisfactory to meet the requirements of the regulation. This regulation will be reviewed on next inspection.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider had a valid certificate of insurance for full day care for 95 children.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-
(d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required,

Non-Compliance Information

There was a general lack of maintenance and cleaning within the service. For example:

The entrance hallway, communal hallway and lobby areas were cluttered with excess storage, unused toys and equipment.

There was general appearance of wear and tear observed throughout the premises which required cleaning and painting.

The floors and skirting boards showed a build-up of dirt and dust.

Walls were marked and dirty throughout the premises.

The toilets needed deep cleaning and repainting.

Work tops/spaces were very dusty, cluttered and untidy.

An area in preschool room one was used for storage and not fully utilised for the children.

Floor covering at the front desk was worn and lifting from the floor.

Broken equipment was left on the premises.

Clothes hangers for drying clothes were left in the hallway.

Carpets were not adequately cleaned on a regular basis.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The following response was submitted to address the non-compliance:

Corrective and Preventive Action

It was agreed on the day of the inspection that signs of wear and tear and unused items were evident throughout the building. A deep clean of all rooms has been booked in. This deep clean will be repeated as needed in addition

to the daily evening cleaning carried out. New flooring has been ordered and has begun to be fitted in some rooms. A declutter of all rooms, hallways and corridors has been carried out to dispose of any unnecessary items. Staff have been instructed to store any items that are not currently needed in the storage press provided. Items that are broken are to be disposed of immediately rather than being left to dispose of later.

Supporting documentation submitted

Invoice for cleaning of premises. Invoice for skip and new flooring. Photographs of rooms and hallways.

Summary Comment

The response was satisfactory to meet the requirements of the regulation. This regulation will be reviewed on next inspection.