

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2020CC008
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Name of Service:	Classes Childcare
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Address of Service:	2 Maryville, Friars Walk, Co. Cork
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Eircode:	P12TX9D
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Name of Registered Provider:	Frances Cunningham
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date of Inspection:	25/06/24
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No of pre-school children:	AM	23	PM	21
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Admin Building, St Marys Health Campus, Cork, T23X440.
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Inspection undertaken by:	M.O' Reilly
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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	N/A
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Description of service

Classes Childcare is a privately owned early years service in operation since 2020. It is a registered full day care service, catering for children aged from 2 years 6 months to 6 years and registered to operate from 07:30 to 18:00 hours each day Monday to Friday.

The premise is a town house that has been converted into a childcare facility. The service is located in an urban setting within walking distance of Cork city. There are two playrooms: one playroom, adult and children's toilet and nappy changing facilities, are located on the ground floor. The second playroom is located on the first floor with one children's toilet facility located beside the playroom. There is also a fully fitted kitchen, storeroom for sleep equipment, and administration office on the ground floor. The children have access to a designated secure outdoor play area located to the rear side of the facility.

Staffing

The centre manager informed the Inspectorate there was a total of four core staff assigned to this service: the centre manager, and two childcare staff and there was one adult assigned as a chef and cleaning duties. The chef works part time in this facility and the three-childcare staff, including the centre manager work full time. The registered provider is not serviced based. The other two adults present on day of inspection were from the sister service. The company manager who is based in a sister service came to relieve staff at lunch time. The company manager informed the Inspectorate if the centre manager is not present, the company manager who is the named deputy is present in the service. There were two other named staff from the sister service, not present at time of inspection, they are the other named staff who come to relieve staff for their lunch breaks. The adults who work directly with the early years children all hold a recognised qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education or hold a letter of qualification recognition from the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY)

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.

Inspection findings are documented in the inspection report which is first issued in draft format to the service with an opportunity to respond to any findings. Where statutory requirements are identified as not being met, the registered provider must demonstrate how they have rectified the non-compliance and will prevent any non-compliance from re-occurring. The Corrective Action and Preventive Action plan (CAPA) will be used to inform decisions about compliance with regulatory requirements. Where the registered provider fails to meet the statutory requirements an escalation process may be commenced.

The inspectorate reserves the right to edit responses received for reasons including clarity, completeness and compliance with administrative and legal processes.

The contents of the report are compiled by the inspectorate body.

Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the centre manager, company manager/deputy, 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.*

(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 is a named person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.

(b) The person in charge was present when the inspector arrived at the premise on the day of the unannounced inspection and was available throughout the inspection process.

(2)

Nine staff files were reviewed, this included the registered provider and chef. Five of the seven childcare staff associated with the service including the company and centre managers were all observed in the direct care of the children on day of inspection.

(a) There were thirteen validated references on file from past employers in respect of the adults.

(b) There were five validated references from sources other than past employers in respect of the adults.

(c) A Garda vetting disclosure was available on file in respect of each of the nine adults. The service did adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Six police vetting records were available on file for the six adults who had lived outside the jurisdiction for a period of six months or more, while over the age of eighteen years.

(4)

The adults who worked directly with the children hold a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education or hold a letter of qualification recognition from the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY).

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.

Non-Compliance Information

The following policies were examined and deemed not to meet the requirements of the policies:

Complaints Policy

- In the service complaints policy, it did not state clearly how complaints are responded to managed, progressed, recorded and closed.
- In the service complaints policy, it did not state the procedure for keeping a complainant informed about how it is being dealt with.
- In the service complaints policy, it is recorded that “a complaint should be made by email to the management team”. The management team email address was not recorded on the complaints policy.
- In the service complaints policy, it did not state the process for the storage of complaint records and the timeframe for the retention of records.

Sleep Policy

- Recorded throughout the sleep policy, was the policy and procedure for catering for sleeping children under 2 years. The service is registered to cater for children between 2 years 6 months and 5 years only and not for children under 2 years.

Accident and Incident Policy

- No reference in the Accident and Incident Policy to submitting a Notification of Incident form to Tusla when a child requires medical attention following an accident or incident that occurs in the service. We recommend that you review your policy to include this reference.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

In the corrective and preventative response (CAPA) received from the company manager the following was stated:

Corrective and Preventive Action

Management have reviewed the service policies in relation to complaints, sleep, accidents and incidents and the necessary changes and amendments have been made. The service aims to increase the frequency of policy review.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copies of the amended policies were forwarded, reviewed by the inspectorate and deemed satisfactory.

Summary Comment

The managements response and evidence submitted was assessed.

The service was deemed to meet the regulatory requirement of this regulation.

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)
The person in charge ensured that there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children in each room on day of the inspection.

(2)
During the period of inspection, the ratio of staff to children was maintained as per the regulations and an adequate number of adults were working directly with the children in each playroom. It was observed that the the company manager relieved staff for lunch at time of inspection.

Playroom located on the ground floor.

There were 15 children in attendance in the morning and 13 children in the afternoon with two adults in attendance: The children were aged between two years six months and five years.

Playroom located on the first floor.

There were eight children in attendance in the morning and in the afternoon. The children were aged between three and five years with one adult in attendance.

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:

- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis.*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis.*

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (h) There was a record on file that indicated the arrival and departure time of each child, on a daily basis in the service.
- (i) On review of the staff roster for the service for the last three weeks including the week the inspection took place. The weekly staff roster indicated, the time the staff commenced and finished in the service each day. The names of the staff rostered in each room and the named person who relieved the staff while on their break was recorded on the weekly staff roster.

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

Basic needs:

- The children appeared to enjoy the food provided by the service and were afforded ample time to eat and drink at a relaxed pace. Staff members were readily available to provide assistance as required.
- Drinking water was accessible to the children within the care rooms outside of allocated mealtimes.
- Shortly after eating lunch, there was a scheduled rest period for the children in both playrooms.
- Child height hooks for the children's coats were available in the playrooms to encourage independent dressing.
- There was adequate space in the playrooms to accommodate a variety of play activities. Outdoor play was also observed during the inspection.

Supporting relationships around children:

- The staff members were observed to be kind, patient and caring to each child as observed during caring duties, facilitating play and one-to-one engagement.
- The staff advised the inspector that the service operated in partnership with parents, and staff verbally informed parents and guardians of the details of their child's day while in the service for example meals/snacks, activities and sleep, at arrival and collection times. Key observations on the children were included in each child's journal in both rooms. Phone calls, a text messaging application were also incorporated.
- The adults were observed to demonstrate patience and kindness in their interactions with the children, as was noted when the children's efforts were readily acknowledged and when children were calmly assisted to resolve minor conflicts.

Physical and Material Environment

- Both rooms in operation were child friendly, bright and laid out with interest areas with materials largely accessible to the children.

- The playrooms had interest areas that included, a range of tabletop activities and games to encourage companionable interaction, there were cars and trucks, a fine motor skills area, a home corner suitably furnished with dolls, buggies, and small utensils to prompt imagination and pretend play.
- There were an adequate number of child sized tables and chairs available in each room.
- Walls of the care rooms were decorated with numbers, letters of the alphabet and posters. In the playroom on the first floor there were recent arts and crafts work the children had completed on display of an octopus as part of the theme of the month for June was, Under the sea.
- Both care rooms had access to a secured partially covered outdoor play area beside the playroom on the ground floor. The cabin installed in the outdoor play area is now a staff room area only that children have no access to.
- On the wall in the outdoor play area, there was a wall mounted board for the children to draw, another board had a push bolt, door lock and chain to master and another board had open pipe shoots attached, where the children were observed pouring and collecting water and watching the water flow down the pipes.

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

- All food and snacks consumed on the premise are provided by the service. The chef prepared and cooked the food in the onsite catering kitchen. The food was served to the children by the adults in the service They were served adequate portions of chicken with mashed potato and water to drink at the dinner meal. The children were served oats soaked overnight with chopped apple, pear and raisins and a drink for the mid-morning snack.
- It was observed that children were provided with appropriate cutlery and crockery at snack and mealtimes.
- A fridge was available for the storage of perishable items located in the service kitchen.

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:

- Upon the inspectors' arrival at the service, the entrance door was found to have been adequately secured and was maintained secured when not in use.
- Cleaning agents were stored out of the children's reach.
- First aid boxes were appropriately stored and inaccessible to children.
- No cables were visibly within reach of children on the day of inspection.
- The outdoor area was noted to be fully enclosed and secured.

Infection Control:

The following infection control measures were observed at time of inspection.

- There was liquid soap and paper towels, or wall mounted electric hand dryers in the hand washing facilities in the service.
- The tables in both playrooms were sanitised prior to lunch and snack mealtimes.
- Handwashing by the children was observed before, lunch and snack time and after toileting and outdoor play.
- Within the nappy changing room, there was neat and tidy individually labelled storage for the children's toiletries.
- Pedal operated bins were in place for the disposal of paper towels.
- Non-contact bins were available for the storage of used nappies.

Safe Sleep:

- The children's sleep and rest needs were met during a planned sleeping period after lunch in both playrooms.
- There were a sufficient number of suitable individual floor mats available with an individual sleeping bag for each child attending the service. There was an adequate distance maintained between each floor mat.

- The centre manager informed the Inspectorate that the child size sleeping bags were laundered each day after use.
- The air temperature reading of the two playrooms converted into sleep rooms where the children were observed sleeping and resting after lunch was maintained within the normal temperature range of between 18°C and 19°C. Accepted air temperature range is between 16°C and 20°C for rooms where children are sleeping. There was an electric operated air conditioning unit located in the ceiling of both playrooms that was turned on after lunch and successfully maintained the air temperature of the converted playrooms into sleep rooms within the normal range. The air conditioning provided a suitable air temperature inside while the children were sleeping, as it was warm and humid on day of inspection with air temperatures outside ranging between 22°C and 23°C.

Outing:

- Not applicable, as an outing was not observed.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. In the outdoor area, the ground surface where the tree is located, had very little of the soft wood fibre play grade surface covering the hard ground surface underneath the tree. The ground surface was irregular therefore considered a hazard in its present state if a child had a fall, had the potential to cause injury to a child.

Infection Control:

2. There was no thermostatically controlled hot water in the wash hand basin in the nappy changing room on day of inspection increasing the potential risk of cross infection.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

In the corrective and preventative response (CAPA) received from the company manager the following was stated:

General Safety:

Corrective and Preventive Action

In the outdoor area, the ground surface where the tree is located is now closed. The service plan on undertaking works in this area. The service is removing the bark mulch and resurfacing this area with new play grade bark mulch. Photographic evidence will be forwarded once the work has been completed. The work will be carried out on days when the center will be closed. The service will not operate when works are taking place. Management will forward an invoice once they receive it, and work will be completed at the latest 17th August 24.

Infection Control:

Daily inspection by manager to ensure the water in the wash hand basin in the nappy changing area is thermostatically controlled, that the water is reaching the desired temperature, and that the water temperature is recorded on a daily basis.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

The statement from the company manager was accepted as evidence

Infection Control:

Photographic evidence of the recording of the water temperature in the wash hand basin were submitted and deemed satisfactory.

Summary Comment

The managements response and evidence submitted was assessed.

Under infection control, the service was deemed to meet the regulatory requirement of this regulation. Under general safety, the work had not been completed when on finalising this inspection report therefore will be reviewed on the 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 one staff working in the morning and two in the afternoon on day of inspection that had a current certified First Aid Responder certificate (FAR).

(2)

(a) The first aid boxes were safely stored out of children's reach in the service.

(b) The first aid box was available at all times to adults if in the event that a child may require treatment.

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.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire shall be displayed in a conspicuous position in the premises.

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) A record of monthly fire drills carried out was available and indicated that the last fire drill took place on the 20th June 2024
 - (b) A record of the number, type and maintenance record of the fire equipment and the emergency fire alarm system was last tested and serviced on the 27th March 2024.
- (4)
- The fire evacuation procedure for the service which contained details in relation to the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured the service was insured, with insurance for 26 children until 27/03/2025. The records detailed the category of service covered which was full day care, the name and address of the premises and details regarding public liability cover, fire, theft, buildings, and outings cover.