

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2020CN002
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Name of Service:	Circle of Friends Childcare Service
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Address of Service:	Killeshandra Community Hall, Railway Road, Killeshandra, Co. Cavan
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Eircode:	H12 RY23
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Name of Registered Provider:	Nicola Clail
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date(s) of Inspection:	20/04/2023
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No of pre-school children:	AM	21	PM	8
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Family Resource Centre, Common's Road, Navan, Co. Meath
Inspection undertaken by:	C Tunney
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).

Conditions if applicable	Not Applicable
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Description of service

Circle of Friend's childcare service was established in 2020. The service provides full day care to children aged from 2 years to 6 years. The service operates from 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education scheme (ECCE) from 09:30 am to 12:30pm daily. The service is located in the Killeshandra community hall in the village of Killeshandra, Co Cavan. The service has sole use of two ground floor rooms in the hall namely Preschool room 1 and Preschool room 2. There are 2 enclosed outdoor areas in the service one is located to the side of the building and one to the rear of the building.

Staffing

The service employs five staff members including the registered provider, deputy person in charge and 3 staff members, all of whom work directly with the children attending the service. One staff member is employed under the Access and Inclusion Model.

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. The inspections may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on the area of governance/ health, welfare and development of child and safety under regulations 9, 11, 15, 16, 19, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 27 and 28. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report. The scope of the inspection included both Pre-school 1 and Pre-school 2. 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 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*
- (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 registered provider was the designated person in charge of the service and a named person was appointed to deputise as required.

(b) The registered provider was present when the inspector arrived unannounced and remained on the premises for the duration of the inspection.

(c) There was a clear management structure in the service that identifies the lines of authority and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee. The management structure was displayed on the wall at the main entrance.

Following a review of the previous inspection records and in discussion with the registered provider, the inspector was informed that 1 staff member had commenced working in the service since the last inspection on the 24/06/2022. This file was reviewed.

(2) (a) and (b) Two written and verified references were available.

(c) Garda Vetting Disclosures were available for the staff member.

(d) International police vetting was not required as the staff member had not resided outside of the Irish jurisdiction for longer than 6 months as an adult.

(4) The staff member held a childcare qualification deemed to be appropriate.

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) On the day of inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the service.

(2) The adult to child ratios were correct when the inspectors arrived unannounced to the service and remained so throughout the inspection.

The following adult to child ratios were observed:

- In **Pre-school Room 1** there were 10 pre-school children aged between 3 years 1 month to 4 years 2 months of which 4 children were attending for full day care, being cared for by 2 adults.
- In **Pre-school Room 2** there were 11 pre-school children aged 4 years 3 months to 5 years 3 months, of which 4 children were attending for full day care, being cared for by 2 adult and 1 adult employed under the inclusion and access scheme.

(8) The registered provider ensured there was at least 2 adults on the premises at all times, evidence by staff sign in records and the staff roster.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:

- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;*
- (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;*
- (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;*
- (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;*
- (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;*
- (f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;*
- (g) the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner;*
- (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;*
- (i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.*

(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-

- (c) an authorised person.*

Compliance Information

- (1) Eleven registration forms were reviewed and found to be appropriately completed with the required information as specified in sub-sections (a) to (i) of this regulation.
- (3) (c) The records referred to above were open to inspection by an authorised person.

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:

- (a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;*
- (b) details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services;*
- (c) details of the adult: child ratios in the service;*
- (d) the type of care or programme provided in the service;*
- (e) the facilities available;*
- (f) the opening hours and fees;*
- (g) the policies, procedures and statements the service is required to maintain in accordance with Regulation 10;*
- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (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.*

(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.

Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider ensured that a record in writing was kept of the information as prescribed under Regulation 16 (a) to (k).

(3) The records were open to inspection by an authorised person.

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

(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.

(2) A registered provider shall ensure that no corporal punishment is inflicted on a pre-school child whilst attending the service.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that no practices that are disrespectful, degrading, exploitive, intimidating, emotionally or physically harmful or neglectful are carried out in respect of a pre-school child whilst attending the service.

Compliance Information

(1)(a) The following examples demonstrate how children's learning, development and well-being was facilitated in the service:

Basic needs:

- The staff members were observed to be caring and attentive to the children and were responsive to the children's individual needs and preferences.
- The children brought their snacks from home and included sandwiches, crackers, cheese, yogurts and a variety of fruit. The children were observed enjoying their snack in a relaxed manner. Children who were finished their snack went to the book area where they enjoyed looking at books, until their peers were finished eating, and the next activity commenced.
- Staff members were predictable and informed the children in advance of the next activity, which allowed the children time for transitions, behaviour problems were not noted on the day of inspection. The children were observed engaged in play, in resourced interest areas of their choice such as home corner areas, arts and crafts area and construction areas.
- Outdoor play was facilitated for the children and the children were observed playing happily in one of the two outdoors areas available.

Supporting relationships around children:

- The staff members were observed to engage in respectful and supportive interactions with the children in their care. The staff members used warm tones of voice and addressed the children by their name. The children were observed to interact comfortably with the staff members present and sought out staff for assistance and support when necessary.

Planning and Assessment

- There was evidence that staff members engage in planning and assessment. An emerging interest board was noted in each room and a key worker system was in place. The staff were engaging in continued professional development which supported the service learning practice and environment. Additionally, each child had a learning journal which demonstrated regular themes and the children's work completed throughout the year.

(2) Corporal punishment was not inflicted on a pre-school child whilst attending the service on the day of inspection.

(3) No practices that are disrespectful, degrading, exploitive, intimidating, emotionally or physically harmful or neglectful are carried out in respect of a pre-school child whilst attending the service. On the day of inspection, the staff members were kind to the children, they addressed the children by name and were familiar with the children's individual preferences. Children were relaxed and appeared happy.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

There was adequate and suitable furniture in both pre-school rooms which were appropriate for the age range of children attending. There was a variety of play materials which were in good condition and free from hazards. The play materials were laid out in designated resourced areas such as home corner areas, construction areas, book areas, tabletop activities, sensory areas, and arts and crafts.

Materials were well organised, available, and accessible at low level within children’s reach. Additionally, there was an adequate supply of outdoor play material in both outdoor areas allocated to each pre-school room included a balancing beam, small climbing frame, small slides and planting areas.

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 children enjoyed a healthy snack which had been prepared by their parents/ guardians and served at approximately 10.30am. Snacks consisted of a mixture of small sandwiches and fruit pieces. A four-week menu plan was available and displayed for parents’ attention. Parents/Guardians have also been provided with a copy of the menu. Dinner was provided by an outside company which was served around 1pm and consisted of pasta bake with vegetables. An additional snack is served in the evening time.

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 registered provider ensured all reasonable measures were put in place to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of children attending such as:

- The premises were appropriately secured to prevent pre-school children from exiting unsupervised and restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the pre-school.
- Cleaning agents were stored out of reach of children.
- Children's attendance was recorded correctly, a staff roster was available and displayed outside each pre-school room, and staff recorded their attendance on a daily basis in a record book held in the lobby.
- The staff members supervised the children appropriately when accessing both outdoor play areas which were not attached to the community centre building, as they were situated across from and to the side of the building.

Infection Control:

- The premises, its play equipment and materials were maintained in a satisfactory state.
- Warm running water was available in the children's sanitary areas, along with a supply of liquid soap, paper towels and foot operated bins.
- Prior to the children's snack, tables were cleaned.
- Cleaning agents were noted in each room and the records were up to date.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) no person other than-

(i) pre-school child attending the service,

(ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,

(iii) an employee, or

(iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and

(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.

Compliance Information

(1) A record was kept of each child's time of arrival and departure on a daily basis by the staff members.

(3) A system was in place to ensure that no person other than the children's parents / guardians, employees or authorised visitors can enter the pre-school. A visitor's book was maintained, there was evidence that visitors were requested to record their attendance, the inspector was requested to record her attendance and departure time.

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) The registered provider ensured that a person who held in-date First Aid Response (FAR) training was at all times immediately available to the children attending the pre-school service. The registered provider and two staff members held in-date FAR training.
- (2)(a) and (b) The first aid box was suitably equipped and safely stored in readily accessible positions in the care rooms out of the reach of children identified by clear signage.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.

Compliance Information

On the day of inspection pre-school children attending the service were always supervised.

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 that the service was adequately insured for 63 children at any one time. The expiry date on the insurance certificate was 27/03/24.