

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2022CC003
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Name of Service:	Gra Childcare
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Address of Service:	Roseview, Main Street, Carrignavar, Co. Cork
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Eircode:	T34 RK79
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Name of Registered Provider:	Colm O'Reilly
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Service type:	Part-time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	12/08/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	6	PM	4
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	13 Market Square, Mallow, Cork. P51 DD5Y
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Inspection undertaken by:	E. Friel
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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

Grá childcare is a private early years care and education facility offering a range of provision including part-time and sessional services, accommodating children aged from 1 year to 6 years of age. It has been in operation since 2022 and registered operating hours are from 9.00 am until 2.00 pm, Monday to Friday, 48 weeks of the year. The Early Childhood Care and Education (Scheme) is accommodated between the hours of 9.00 am to 12 noon, term time only.

Grá Childcare is located in the village of Carrignavar, North of Cork city. It is a two-storey purpose built childcare facility consisting of a ground floor and small upper floor. On the ground floor there are four care rooms available, only two of which are currently in use, namely; Jelly Tots and Jelly Beans, there is also a designated sleep room, reception area and five children's toilets (two of which have children's changing units). The small upper floor has a laundry room, staff kitchen and adult toilet. A partially covered outdoor area is directly accessible from the Jelly Beans care room and a car park is available nearby.

Staffing

There are five staff employed in the service. The registered provider is not service based.

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.

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 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.

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

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

Compliance Information

(1)

(a) The registered provider ensured that there was a designated person in charge, deputy and named persons available on the premises. The deputy and a named person were on the premises when the inspector arrived and the manager arrived a short while later.

(b) The staff roster indicated that either the designated person in charge, deputy and/or named persons were on the premises while the early years children were present in the service.

(c) A management structure, with photographs of the staff detailing their roles and responsibilities, was visible in the reception area of the service.

(2) Recruitment records for all six adults, including the registered provider, were reviewed;

(a)(b) There were eight validated references from previous employers and four validated references from sources other than previous employers.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for all six adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) An international police disclosure was available for one adult who had lived outside of the State for a period of six consecutive months or longer as an adult.

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) were carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

- (4) Five adults, working directly with the children, held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications. The registered provider, who is not service based, did not require a childcare qualification.

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) The registered provider ensured that there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children at all times.
- (2) There were two of four care rooms in operation on the day of inspection. The Jelly Tots care room was in use as a care room where children were aged from two years six months to three years two months, and the Jelly Beans room was in use as an additional sleep room. In the Jelly Tots room, there were four part-time children and two sessional children in attendance with four adults in the morning, and four children in attendance with four adults in the afternoon.
- (8)
- (a) The registered provider ensured that there were at least two adults on the premises at all times as demonstrated on the 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:

- Toilet training in the Jelly Tots care room was observed to occur on a frequent basis throughout the day with staff encouraging children to go to the toilet regularly. These interactions were noted to be handled sensitively and positively.
- Older children in the room were observed accessing the sanitary area independently and staff were available to remind children to put paper waste into the pedal operated bin.
- The weather on the day of the inspection was warm and sunny, staff stated sun cream had been applied by the parents/guardians, in line with the service's sun screen policy which stated, "that parents and guardians are to apply sun cream before bringing their child to the service". In addition, individually labelled sun cream was available, and staff stated this is re-applied when required. The children were all observed to have sun hats on when playing outdoors and a covered area was available to play in the shade.
- There was space available for the children to move and play in the care rooms and in the outdoor play area.

SUPPORTING CHILDREN'S RELATIONSHIPS:

- Staff were observed sitting at tables engaged in social conversation with the children at snack time and during tabletop activities.
- In both the indoor and outdoor areas staff were observed supporting children to engage positively with one another in activities which required turn taking and sharing.
- Children's language development was supported through one-to-one discussions and storytelling which was observed during the inspection.
- Staff were observed exchanging information with parents/guardians at collection time.

PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

- The care rooms were laid out in clearly defined areas with resources and equipment which were suitable for the age and stage of development of the children attending the service.
- The open layout of the room allowed staff to supervise children as they moved between areas.
- Equipment was stored on low level shelving in both the Jelly Tots and Jelly Bean care rooms offering choice and promoting independence.
- Suitable age and stage appropriate tables and chairs were available in the care rooms and children in the Jelly Tots.
- The outdoor play area provided an alternative learning environment for the children. A range of developmentally appropriate equipment was provided in the fully enclosed play area. Opportunities were provided for fine and gross motor skills with children observed balancing, steering and pushing themselves on balance bikes, balancing on beams, and climbing and sliding on the slides. A pirate sand trough was available for sensory play and a playhouse and mud kitchen were in use for the children to engage in imaginary play. A small bucket swing was in place for younger children providing opportunities for the children to experience motion and the sensation of swinging in a secure environment.

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 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) With regard to the number of pre-school children, their respective ages and the amount of time they spent on the premises; there was a variety of age and developmentally appropriate materials and equipment in the care rooms and in the outdoor play area. These provided opportunities to enhance the learning needs of the children. Materials and resources were available from drawers placed in low-level shelving which were

easily accessible encouraging independence and offering choice.

The outdoor area was accessible from both the Jelly Beans care room and from a door leading into the reception area, providing an alternative learning environment. The area was covered providing shelter for the children to play in all weathers. Children were observed playing in the outdoor area in the morning and in the afternoon which provided opportunities for challenge and risk taking with equipment such as balance beams along with a climbing frame and slide. A variety of wheeled toys were available which encouraged gross and fine motor skills such as balance bikes and ride-ons helping to improve balance and co-ordination. A wooden kitchen area and a play house provided opportunities for imaginary play and covered pirate and shell sand troughs were available for sensory experiences. Additional toys were available from a toy shed in the outdoor play area.

- (b) There was a designated sleep room with three cots for children under two years to sleep or rest. Each cot was fitted with a waterproof mattress and individual linen was observed in a basket on shelving in the room. There were no children under two years in the service on the day of inspection therefore, no children were observed sleeping in this room.

The Jelly Beans care room was in use as a sleep room on the day of inspection, with two children observed resting at 12.15 pm. Ambient lighting was available in the room, and staff could easily supervise the children. In each of the care rooms children had the opportunity to rest or relax. The rest/quiet areas were fitted with Carpet mats, soft mats, cushions, blankets and soft toys. The Jelly Tots care room had a basket, with age and stage appropriate books, located on the carpet mat where the children had the option of choosing a book while resting/relaxing. Children were observed using the rest/ quiet area for story telling in the Jelly Tots care room on the day.

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

- Children were observed to be offered a snack at 10.30 am which consisted of cheese sandwiches, crackers, yogurt, cheese and fruit. A further snack of fruit and vegetables was served at 11.45 am. All food was provided by the parents/guardians.
- Water was easily accessible, throughout the inspection, from individual water bottles located on a mobile trolley in the Jelly Tots care room.
- Children had access to age and stage appropriate cutlery and crockery at the table.

Non-Compliance Information

- (1) In discussion with the manager and staff they stated that no alternative food was available in the service, if a child did not like what they had or wanted additional food. This was also noted as a non-compliance on the last inspection dated 08/12/2022 in which the manager had stated that alternative food would be available going forwards. It

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The following statement was made by the manager;

- (1) Alternative food has been purchased and a four-week menu plan is available has been given to parents and is displayed in reception.

Supporting documentation submitted

The following photographic and documentation were received in the office of the inspectorate.

- (1) Photographs of the alternative foods on offer and the 4-week menu.

Summary Comment

The actions taken by the manager have addressed the non-compliances under Regulation 22.

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:

- All doors were secured. The main door was operated by a bell which was answered by a staff member present in reception, ensuring that no unauthorised adult could enter the service or that no child could leave the service unsupervised.
- The blind cords in the Jelly Tots and Jelly Beans care rooms were secured with hooks which were inaccessible by the children.
- Window handles in the Art & Movement rooms were located at the top of the windows out of reach of the children.
- Toys and equipment in the indoor and outdoor areas were observed to be in good condition and well maintained.
- Heavy equipment and storage units were anchored to ensure that they did not tip or fall onto a child.
- Storage units, at the children's level, were fitted with safety catches to prevent children from accessing unsafe materials.
- There were no visible trailing flexes or cables in the Jelly Tots and Jelly Beans care rooms.
- Cleaning agents were observed to be stored on high shelving which was out of reach of the children. Electrical items were stored in the kitchen, which was secured with a key, out of reach of the children.
- The outdoor play area perimeter was secured with high concrete block walls and a high wooden gate with a sliding bolt, placed out of reach of the children, ensuring children could not leave the area unsupervised. The ground surface was covered in safety matting providing a cushioned surface for children underfoot.

Infection Control:

- Wash hand basins in use by the adults and the children in the service were noted to be supplied with dispensing foam soap. Paper towels were available for hand drying and pedal operated bins were available in the sanitary area of the Jelly Tots bathroom for the disposal of paper waste.
- Children were observed handwashing before and after food, toileting and on coming in from outdoor play.
- Staff were observed disinfecting tables before and after food being served.

- The changing unit in the Jelly Tots sanitary area was supplied with disposable aprons and gloves. No children were observed having their nappy changed on the day of inspection.
- Fridges were observed in the care rooms for the storage of perishable food.
- Hooks were available outside the Jelly Beans care room to hang personal belongings away from the floor area.

Administration of Medication:

- Anti-febrile medication was available and was observed to be stored in the original container, located out of reach of the children.

Safe Sleep:

- The three cots in the designated sleep room were placed 50 centimetres apart.
- The temperature of the Jelly Tots care room in use on the day for sleep, for the children over 2 years, was recorded at 20.6°C, within the recommended limits of 18°C to 22°C.
- Individual sleep checks were furnished to the inspector which evidenced that sleep checks were being carried out every ten minutes documenting the temperature of the room, colour, position and breathing of each child.
- A staff member was observed to be present in the sleep room at all times.

Fire Safety:

- Emergency fire exit doors were unobstructed, facilitating the quick evacuation of adults and children in the event of an emergency. In addition, the doors were alarmed alerting staff in the event that a child should try to exit the service unsupervised.
- The fire assembly point was visible, on the wall, outside the main entrance of the service.
- Fire extinguishers were noted to be secured on brackets to the walls in the service.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

- (1) The inspector observed that the toilet seat in the sanitary area opposite the reception area was too small for the toilet bowl creating a gap, posing a safety risk should a child's leg get caught in the gap between the seat and the bowl.

Infection Control:

- (2) There was no hot water available for hygienic handwashing. The inspector recorded the water temperature in the wash hand basins in the service between 18.4°C- 21°C. In conversation, staff stated that they cannot isolate the heating from the hot water, and it was not switched on.

- (3) The blue floor mat in the Jelly Tots care room was noted to be frayed at the corners making it difficult to clean effectively.
- (4) A used dish cloth and drying cloth were observed lying in the sink of the Jelly tots care room, staff stated these are removed in the afternoon and washed at 60°C.
- (5) Open boxes which stored children's belongings were located directly beside the toilet in the Jelly Beans sanitary area, which may pose a risk of cross contamination for a pre-school child.
- (6) There was a swing bin in use in the Jelly Tots care room, posing a risk of cross infection from the number of adult and children's hands touching the bin lid when disposing of rubbish on a daily basis.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

The following statements were received from the manager;

General Safety:

- (1) A new toilet seat, which fits the bowl, has been fitted in the sanitary area opposite reception.

Infection Control:

- (2) The heating system has been adapted to allow for the isolation of the hot water system to ensure the children have access to hot water for hygienic handwashing.
- (3) The mat has been removed and replaced with new a new mat.
- (4) Staff have been reminded that cleaning cloths are for single use. A container is now available for the storage of used cloths until they are removed at the end of each day.
- (5) Fitted lids are now in place to ensure there is no cross contamination in the sanitary area.
- (6) A pedal operated bin is now in place in the Jelly Tots care room.

Supporting documentation submitted

The following photographic evidence and statements were received in the office of the inspectorate;

General Safety:

- (1) New toilet seat which fits the bowl, with no gaps.

Infection Control:

- (2) The statement from the manager that the water can now be isolated from the heating has been accepted.
- (3) New mat in the Jelly Tots care room.
- (4) Container for used cleaning cloths at the sink in the care room.
- (5) Fitted lids secured on the storage drawers in the Jelly Beans sanitary area.
- (6) The statement from the manager that a pedal operated bin is now in place in the Jelly Tots care room has been

accepted.

Summary Comment

The actions taken by the registered provider have addressed the non-compliances identified under Regulation 23.

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) Certificates were available to evidence that two adults in the service had First Aid Responder (FAR) training completed. The staff roster indicated that a person trained in first aid was available at all times.

(2) (a) (b) The first aid equipment was available from a secured box in the hallway of the service and from a portable bag on a shelf in a cupboard behind the reception desk in the service area. They were both easily accessible by the adults and available at all times.

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.
- (2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-
- (a) a parent or guardian of a pre-school child attending or proposing to attend the pre-school service,
 - (b) an employee, and
 - (c) an authorised person.
- (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) Written records were available of the monthly fire drills which took place in the service. The date recorded of the most recent fire drill was 19 July 2024.
 - (b) Written records were available detailing number, type and maintenance of firefighting equipment and the smoke alarms in the service. Both certificates were dated 17 August 2023.
- (2)
- (c) Both the firefighting equipment certificate and the smoke alarm certificates were open to review on the day of inspection.
- (4) The fire action notices were located on the notice board in the reception area and in the care rooms.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

A certificate was available to evidence that service is currently insured on a part-time basis for 33 with an expiry date of 27 March 2025.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-

- (a) of sound and stable structure,*
- (b) safe and secure,*
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

Compliance Information

- (a) The service appeared of sound and stable structure.
- (b) The indoor and outdoor areas were safe and secure.
- (e) There were an adequate number of adult and child sanitary facilities with five children's toilets and one adult toilet available. In addition, there are two changing units available for nappy changing.

Non-Compliance Information

- (d)
- (1) The carpet mat in the rest quiet area was stained. In discussion with staff, they stated that the carpet is hoovered daily however the stains are not removed during this process.
 - (2) The inspector noted that three window panes in the service were cracked. There were two cracked window panes in the Jelly Tots care room and one cracked window pane on the upper panel of the fire exit door in the Art and Movement rooms. Staff stated that these had been reported to the registered provider.
 - (3) The air vents in the sanitary areas of the Jelly Beans and Jelly Tots were clogged with dust preventing the removal of stale air and the circulation of fresh air.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (d)
- The following statements were received from the manager;
- (1) The carpet in the rest area of the Jelly Tots care room has been replaced.
 - (2) The windows for the Jelly Tots care room and the glass pane for the fire exit have been ordered.
 - (3) The air vents in the sanitary areas of the Jelly Tots and Jelly Bean have been cleaned and added to the cleaning list.

Supporting documentation submitted

- The following photographic and documentary evidence was received in the office of the inspectorate.
- (1) New carpet in the Jelly Tots care room.
 - (2) The new glass pane in the upper panel of the fire exit door. Documentation from the window company confirming the order for the two custom made windows to be fitted in the Jelly Tots care room when ready.
 - (3) A copy of the cleaning rota with the air vents added. The statement from the manager that the air vents have been cleaned in the Jelly Tots and Jelly Bean sanitary areas has been accepted.

Summary Comment

The actions taken by the registered provider have addressed the non-compliances identified under Regulation 29 (d)