

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier: TU2023SO002

Name of Service: Cre8ive Corner Creche Farmhill Manor

Address of Service: Farmhill Manor, Strandhill Road, Sligo, Co. Sligo

Eircode:

Name of Registered Provider: Michael Gillen

Service type: Full Day, Part Time, Sessional

Date of Inspection: 06/03/2026

No of pre-school children:	AM	79	PM	62
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, TUSLA Child & Family Agency, Markievicz House, Barrack St, Sligo, F91 XC84
Inspection undertaken by:	L Costello and S Killeen.
Title:	Early Years Inspectors

Authority to Inspect

The Tusla Early Years Inspectorate carries out inspections of Early Years Services under Section 58(J) of the Child Care Act 1991 (as inserted by Section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013).

Conditions if applicable

Not Applicable.

Description of service

Cre8ive Corner Creche Farmhill Manor, is new purpose-built service, based in a housing development in Sligo town. The service provides a full day care and part time service from 8.00hrs to 18.00hrs, from Monday to Friday, for 50 weeks a year. The service caters for children aged between 0 to 6 years. The pre-school service is registered for a maximum number of 112 pre-school children attending the service at any one time. This two-storey facility consist of six playrooms. The Wobbler room, Toddler room 1, and Toddler room 2 are on the ground floor. The playrooms named the Preschool room 1, Pre-school room 2 and Pre-school room 3 (ECCE only / School aged room) are on the first floor. A designated sleep room is located on the ground floor. The premises has its own kitchen and office administration.

Staffing

On the day there was 26 adults employed in the service. This included 22 adults working directly with children and one cook. The person in charge worked in the office, however was available to work directly with children if required. The registered provider does not work in the service.

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.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 16,19,23, 25, 26 and 28 however, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 29. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 16 Records.

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 inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the person in charge, 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)

There was person in charge and a named deputy person to deputise as required.

(1) (b)

The person in charge and the named deputy person in charge were present throughout the inspection.

(1) (c)

There is a clear line of governance within the service with room leaders and childcare workers identified. On discussion with staff members, they were aware of their roles and responsibilities and the lines of governance within the service.

(2) (a) (b)

Following a review of previous inspection information, information available on inspection and discussion with the person in charge it was determined that 20 new staff members had been employed since the previous inspection. On the day of inspection, 4 students were present on an educational work placement programme. In addition, Garda vetting for 2 staff members whose disclosures were identified as due for renewal were requested for review.

Forty four written and verified past employer references and four written and verified references from another source was available in respect of the 24 adults.

(c)

Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for 26 adults.

The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d)

International police vetting was available in respect of three adults who had resided outside the state for a period of six months or more as an adult.

(4)

Evidence of completion of a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent was on file for 15 staff members and two staff members held a letter of qualification recognition from the Department of Children, Disability and Equality.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)

(d)

Two adults did not have the required international child protection certificate available. It is acknowledged a basic disclosure was available for the two staff members.

(3)

A review of the documentation evidenced that the requirements of Regulation 9 (2) had not been completed prior to two staff members being appointed. Assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the preschool service.

(4)

Two adults did not have the required certification that they held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent. It is acknowledged that statement of results were provided.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

In a written response the registered provider stated:

(2)(d)

Both staff members have successfully applied for and obtained an International Child Protection Certificate. We have since revised and updated our recruitment policy to include an International Child Protection Certificate for any potential employees who have lived outside of Ireland for more than six months as an adult.

(3)

We have since revised and updated our recruitment policy to include an International Child Protection Certificate for any potential employees who have lived outside of Ireland for more than six months as an adult.

(4)

The two staff members have since received their official certificates. One staff member has received a replacement certificate, and one staff member has received an eligibility to practice. We will no longer accept statement of results of proof going forward.

Supporting documentation submitted

- International child protection certificates submitted to the inspectorate.
- Updated recruitment policy submitted to the inspectorate.
- Certificate of qualification submitted to the inspectorate.
- Letter of eligibility to practice submitted to the inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventative actions submitted by the registered provider adequately addressed the non-compliance found on inspection this regulation is now compliant.

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)

There were 15 adults working directly with 79 children on the inspectors' unannounced arrival to the service. Four adult students were also present in the playrooms but not included in the adult child ratios.

(2)

The minimum adult to child ratios were provided on the morning of the unannounced inspection in accordance with the required ratios considering the ages of the children and the length of time each child spent in the service as outlined below:

- Toddler Room: Four adults cared for 18 children aged from 2 years to 3 years of age.
- Wobbler Room: Two adults cared for 7 children aged from 1 year to 2 years of age.
- Preschool 1: Two adults cared for 17 children aged from 4 years to 5 years of age.
- Preschool 2: Two adults cared for 14 children aged from 3 years to 5 years of age.
- Preschool 3: Three adults cared for 17 children aged from 3 years to 4 years of age.
- Preschool 4: Two adults cared for 6 children aged from 3 years to 5 years of age.

At approximately 14:00hrs in the afternoon the following ratios were observed:

- Toddler Room: Four adults cared for 17 children aged from 2 years to 3 years of age.

- Wobbler Room: Two adults cared for 8 children aged from 1 year to 2 years of age.
- Preschool 1: Two adults cared for 11 children aged from 4 years to 5 years of age.
- Preschool 2: Two adults cared for 11 children aged from 3 years to 5 years of age.
- Preschool 3: Three adults cared for 15 children aged from 3 years to 4 years of age.
- Preschool 4: Closed

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.*

(2) A registered provider shall ensure that-

- (a) all documents and records relating to references and Garda and police vetting obtained under Regulation 9(2) are retained for a period of 5 years from the date on which the person to whom the document or record relates commences working in the service, and*

(b) a record referred to in subparagraph (h), (j) or (k) of paragraph (1) is retained for a period of 2 years from the date on which the child to whom it relates ceases to attend the service, or in the case of a preschool service in a drop-in centre or of a temporary pre-school service, for a period of 2 years from the date on which the child attends 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.

(4) A record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection on the premises by a parent or guardian of a child but only in respect of information concerning that child.

Compliance Information

(1)

The person in charge demonstrated that written records (a-k) were maintained within the service.

(2) (a)

The person in charge is aware of the statutory requirement to maintain the records outlined in Regulation 9 (2) for a period of five years.

(b)

The person in charge is aware of the statutory requirement to maintain children's attendance records, medication administration records and accident and incident records for a minimum of two years from the date in which the child attends the service.

(3)

These records were made available to the inspector on the day of inspection.

(4)

These records were made available to the parent/guardian of the child as evidenced by the parent signature.

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

(1) A registered provider shall, in providing a pre-school service, ensure that-

(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.

Compliance Information

(1) (a) (b)

Basic Needs:

- The person in charge described how they provide balanced meals and snack each day. This was further evidenced by a review of the menu plan, a discussion with the cook and staff members and observation of morning snack and dinner in the Toddler and wobbler room. Morning snack included fresh melon, apples and crackers. The main meal of the day was a creamy chicken dish and rice. Water stations were provided in all rooms and children had access to water at all times including mealtimes.
- Sleep and rest in the wobbler room was based on the needs of the young children. Children were observed to be put down to sleep as required in consultation with the parents of the child. The children in the toddler room had a structured sleep time, where all children availed of rest or sleep after lunch time.
- The young children had their nappies attended to in a timely manner. Nappy changes were observed to be in line with the service policy. Staff members were observed to use this time as an opportunity for one-to-one interaction with the child, singing songs and engaging in a positive manner. The older children were encouraged to use the bathroom independently and staff members were in ear shot to prompt or assist as required. A number of children in the toddler room were in the process of toileting training with the encouragement and support of the staff members.
- The adults working with the children were sensitive and responsive in promoting positive behaviours, when children were seen becoming frustrated about having to wait their turn for the ride on bikes, staff were seen getting down to their eye level and explaining about being nice to our friends. This supported the children to find positive solutions when they experienced challenge in sharing play equipment and materials.

- Individual inclusion plans were implemented in line with the child’s own needs. The plan detailed the current developmental stage of the child, the interventions needed by the staff to always ensure the child’s learning and development in the service across all developmental areas. The plans were individual to each child who required one with supporting documentation from different services that were involved with the children.

Programme of Activities:

- Ongoing observations and assessments were documented which helped create a well-rounded picture of each child and their learnings. Observations were individual to the child and recorded tasks completed and goals for the future. The children’s scrape books contained images from first day at pre-school, my portrait, all about me, home, feelings, friend week, space week, kindness day, my journey through pre-school.
- Children’s language development was observed to be supported through one to one and group discussions, songs and storytelling. Children were observed on the day to count in Irish and Spanish. Circle time was observed in all rooms on the day where all children’s participation was encouraged. Children were observed to count in Irish and Spanish
- The inspector found through review of service policies and discussion with staff that the children spent time outside daily and outdoor play is promoted. Children spent time outside during the inspection in line with the outdoor roster which was on display in the care rooms.

Supporting Relationships:

- Staff members were observed to be respectful, gentle, and kind in their interactions towards the children in their care. During mealtimes the staff members sat at the table and engaged in social conversation with children promoting a relaxed atmosphere. The younger children were held and cuddled promoting a warm and welcoming environment.
- The service took measures to support the children’s relationships including keeping parents and guardians fully informed of the daily activities. This was completed through the use of a communication sheet where parents received information in relation to the children’s eating, sleeping and nappy changing. A messaging system is also used in the service providing a two-way communication tool.
- Pictures of the children’s families displayed on the walls in the care rooms ensured children’s connection to home was maintained.

Physical and material Environment:

- The indoor areas were laid out to facilitate sensory experiences through arts and crafts and with play doh trays. Fine motor development was supported with the use of jigsaws, shape sorters, crayons, and paper to

draw on. Gross motor development was supported with ride on toys and climbing equipment and an area to play ball outside.

- The pre-school rooms 1,2,4 had a range of play-based materials that offered stimulation, exploration, and imagination. These were positioned at an accessible level on open shelving which nurtured independence, facilitated choice, and encouraged curiosity, spontaneous play, and movement. Interest areas were spacious, uncluttered, and sufficiently resourced offering an adequate range of toys and materials.
- The defined interest areas included in the rooms were a role play kitchen, which included child size, wooden kitchen, sink, oven and fridge which child size plates pots and pans. Dress up areas with lots of costumes to encourage imaginary play. A range of books were available in the reading area which supported children's language and development. Construction area with lots of small cars and trucks.
- The outdoor play area provided an alternative change of environment for the children. A range of developmentally appropriate equipment was provided in the fully enclosed outdoor play area. The outdoor area was divided into four defined interest areas based on age and development of the children. The flooring included artificial grass and concrete. For the younger children the following equipment was available. Climbing frame, wooden doll house, swings, tent and six ride on bikes were also available. The next defined area consisted of a construction mud area, where the children could dig and balance on wooden trunks. A chalk board was available and a table where the children were observed drawing pictures. The remaining two outdoor areas had large climbing frames, with slides and tree house, child size picnic tables and benches basketball hoop, footballs and a variety of ride on bikes for the children.

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 service was secure on the inspectors unannounced arrival to the service. A bell entry system is in place, alerting all visitors to the service.
- All cleaning products in the care rooms were stored on high level shelving out of the reach of children.
- Materials and resources were maintained in a good state of repair.
- The kitchen had a key coded locked door to ensure no unauthorised entry.
- Highchairs were provided with harness safety straps fitted in good condition.
- The outdoor perimeter was secure with waste bins stored out of reach of children.

Infection Control:

- There were adequate handwashing facilities provided throughout the service with warm water, liquid soap and paper towels.
- Tables were observed to be cleaned prior to mealtimes and after messy play and snack times in the care rooms.
- The materials and resources throughout the service were visually clean, with cleaning schedules displayed and up to date in each care room.
- Children were observed to wash their hands regularly including before snacks and meals.

Administration of Medication:

- Staff described how they were familiar with the administration of medicines policy. The inspector reviewed a sample of administration of medication records and found that these had been completed in adherence to the service policy.

Safe Sleep:

- Seven standard cots with the appropriate safety mattress was provided for the young children.
- Sleep room temperatures were maintained within the recommended guidance for safe sleep.

Fire Safety:

- Fire doors and evacuation routes were observed to be free from obstruction.

- Staff described to the inspector that emergency fire evacuation drills are scheduled monthly and all children are familiar with the evacuation drills. This was further evidence by a review of the documented fire evacuation drills in the service.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

- (1) In preschool room 4 there was a Bait box accessible to the pre-school children which posed a risk of safety to the preschool child.
- (2) The Nappy changing room beside preschool room 4 was being used to store cleaning materials which were accessible to the preschool children being changed.
- (3) There were no visibility strips on windows at the children's eye level in preschool room 2, posing a risk of safety if the preschool children ran into them.

Infection Control:

- (4) There was no waterproof covering on all 7 cot mattresses, therefore the cot mattress could not be cleaned efficiently after using posing a risk of contamination.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

In a written response the registered provider stated:

- (1) The bait box has been moved where the children can not gain access to it. A memo has been sent to staff.
- (2) A new lockable storage cupboard has been built in this room to store all cleaning materials all the cleaning materials will be stored in the new lockable cupboard.
- (3) We have turned the windows into display boards due to the children consistently removing the visibility strips. This makes it more noticeable.

Infection Control:

- (4) We have purchased 14 new waterproof cot mattress covers. All educators in the room have been reminded to report any need for new mattress protectors due to wear and tear, or failure to be returned by our laundry provider.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

- (1) Photographic evidence submitted to the inspectorate.
- (2) Photographic evidence submitted to the inspectorate.
- (3) Photographic evidence submitted to the inspectorate.

Infection Control:

- (4) Copy of invoice submitted to the inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the inspector adequately address the non-compliance found on inspection. This regulation is now compliant.

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 person in charge demonstrated by way of certification that there was a sufficient number of staff members trained in first aid for children available to respond as required during the operating hours of the service.

(2)(a) (b)

The person in charge demonstrated that a first aid box with sufficient resources is accessible to the children throughout the day. First aid boxes are stored on both floors of the service.

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.
- (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.
- (3) A registered provider shall ensure that a record referred to in paragraph (2) is retained for a period of 5 years after its creation
- (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)
The person in charge demonstrated that all fire drills are recorded and documented in the service fire book on a monthly basis. The most recent fire evacuation drill recorded as the 6 February 2026.
- (1)(b)
A record of the number and type of firefighting equipment is maintained. The most recent maintenance of this equipment is dated 26/08/2025.
- (2)(c)
These records were made available to the inspector on the day.
- (3)
The person in charge is aware of the statutory requirement to maintain these records for a period of five years after their creation.

(4)

Fire evacuation plans are clearly displayed in all care rooms. The emergency evacuation assembly point is clearly displayed in the outdoor area of the premises.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The person in charge provided certification of adequate insurance for a full day care service for 116 children up until the 27 March 2026.

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, and

Non-Compliance Information

(e) There was evidence of a black substance on the walls of preschool 4 which required to be removed.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

In a written response the registered provider stated:

Supporting documentation submitted

(e) The area has been cleaned and will be include on regular maintenance checks.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions that have been submitted to the inspectorate have been reviewed and deemed that they adequately address the non-compliance found on inspection. This regulation is now compliant.