

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.				
Name of Registered Provider:	Michael Gillen				
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional				
Date of Inspection:	19/12/2023				
No of pre-school children:	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>AM</td> <td>62</td> <td>PM</td> <td>54</td> </tr> </table>	AM	62	PM	54
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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 M. Farrell
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
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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 area.

Staffing

On the day there was 24 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.

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 announced and focused on the area of governance/ health, welfare and development of child.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11 and 19; however, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 23.

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) (b)

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

(2)

The records of all 24 adults employed in the service were reviewed.

(a) Two written validated references from past employers in particular their most recent employer in respect of 21 adults. One written validated reference from a past employer for one adult.

(b) One written and validated reference from a source other than a past employer were available in respect of one adult employed in the service.

(c) A garda vetting disclosure was available for all 24 staff in the service.

(4)

Evidence was available that 20 staff had attained major awards in Early childhood care and education at level 5 or above on the national framework of qualifications, or qualifications deemed by the minister to meet the regulatory requirement.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) (d)

It could not be determined if the international police vetting for four staff members was sufficient as there were no official translations for them available. From review of vetting documentation, it was evident that one staff member had lived outside of the State for a period of six consecutive months or longer and international police vetting was not available from this state.

- (4) There was no evidence to show that a qualification on file for one of the staff members met the regulatory requirements.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (1) (d) All 4 staff members have received official translations of their international police vetting.
One staff member has given us a copy of her UK police vetting as she lived outside the state for more than 6 months. We will ensure all international police vetting in the future is officially translated. We will ensure that all persons who have lived out of the state for more than 6 months have received vetting for that state.
- (4) Our staff member has emailed her Children's Studies degree manuscripts to DCEDIY for Qualifications Recognition. All certificates will be checked against DCEDIY approved list from now on.

Supporting documentation submitted

Documentary evidence submitted.

Summary Comment

The information provided by the person in charge on behalf of the registered provider in the CAPA form has been reviewed by the inspectorate and the non-compliances found on inspection in relation to regulation 9 have been corrected. 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.*

(3) Subject to paragraph (5), a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 2 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) therefore at that reference number is satisfied.

Compliance Information

(1) On the inspectors' announced arrival to the service there were fourteen staff members working directly with the sixty-two children present.

A review of a sample of the children's attendance and staff working hours recorded in the attendance books for all care rooms, evidenced that there was always an adequate number of adults working in the service. An adult student on educational placement was present on the morning of the inspection.

(2) On the day, the minimum ratios of adults to children were maintained as follows;

In the Wobbler room two adults cared for eight children aged between one and two years of age.

In Toddler one room, three adults cared for fifteen children aged between 18 months and 36 months of age.

In Toddler two room, three adults cared for eleven children aged between 2 years and 3 years of age in the morning and three adults cared for thirteen children in the afternoon.

In the Preschool one room, three adults cared for 17 children aged between 3 years and 4 years of age in the morning and two adults cared for 8 children in the afternoon.

In the Preschool two room, three adults cared for 17 children aged from 2 years 11 months to 3 years of age and two adults cared for 10 children in the afternoon.

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

The service operated a four-week meal plan that was as on display for parents information in the lobby area, providing breakfast, dinner and snacks to all children availing of full or part time childcare. Some children who attend the sessional service choose to bring their snack from home in line with the service guide on healthy eating. On the day of inspection, the main meal provided to the children was 'salmon bake' with mash potato, sweetcorn and peas. One child who was dairy intolerant was provided with a meal that did not contain any dairy and served in a different colour bowl to ensure staff were aware of the difference. Snacks provided on the day included fruit and vegetable platters, crackers and sandwiches.

Nappy changes were observed to be in line with the service policy. Staff members used this time as an opportunity for one-to-one interaction with the child engaging in conversation and singing songs. The older children who were toilet trained were encouraged to use the toilet independently with prompting given by staff from a distance. The staff were observed to encourage independence when older children were putting on coats and going outside to play. Children in the preschool care rooms had individually labelled baskets for personal items and some children were observed to retrieve and replace items such as their drink container in them during the inspection.

The service had one designated sleep room with seven standard cots provided. The younger children's sleep needs were met individually where staff members responded to the cues of the child and the children slept at various intervals throughout the day. The older children in the toddlers' rooms had scheduled sleep times after lunch. Three cot beds were available for children between 18 months and 24 months while stackable floor beds were available for those over two years of age. Rest areas were provided for older children in the care rooms with soft seating and furnishings provided for children to rest on when they wished to.

The service took measures to support the children's relationships with family pictures displayed in the care rooms. Communication books were used by staff in the junior rooms and for some children in the senior rooms to provide daily information to the parents on the child's activity routine, sleep patterns, dietary intake and toileting. The staff were observed to speak with parents/guardians at arrival and collection times and provide information on the children's day in the service.

All rooms within the service were equipped with a variety of materials and resources to suit the age and stage of development of the children attending the individual room. The wobbler room was laid out with various interest areas including home corners, construction areas and sensory areas, with musical instruments, mirror wall and age-appropriate toys. The toddler rooms, similarly had a variety of interest areas and resources suitable to the age and stage of the younger preschool child. The toys and play equipment in the Preschool 1 and 2 care rooms were displayed in similar defined interest areas including home corners with mock Christmas fireplaces, small world, dress up areas with viewing mirrors and tabletop play and book areas. The children were observed to select play activities and replace toys and equipment after use promoting their independence skills. Children were observed in the Preschool care rooms to enjoy playing with playdough that had been made in the service that day with scents such as ginger added to it as Christmas was being celebrated in the service. The staff advised the inspectors that there had been a visit from Santa Claus the previous day that they children had enjoyed. The walls in the care rooms were decorated for Christmas with children's artwork including Christmas jumpers with the children's photographs, snowmen and stockings.

The outdoor area offered an alternative area of play for the preschool children with mud kitchens, wooden climbing frames, bikes and ride on cars. All care rooms located on the ground floor had direct accesses to the outdoor area. The wobbler room had its own outdoor area fenced off from the main outdoor area, in this area age-appropriate toys such as ride on cars and slides were available for gross motor skill development. The staff planned the children's days to include outdoor play. Children from the preschool care rooms were observed to spend a substantial amount of time outside playing and enjoying running, climbing and playing on the ride on toys during the inspection. Some of the children chose to play at the sandbox and staff were observed to get down to the children's levels and join in the play while supervising them.

On the day, interactions between staff members and children were observed to be positive and kind. Staff spoke to children in a gentle manner, offering praise and encouragement when participating in tasks. Younger children were held and cuddled as appropriate. Staff were observed to sing Christmas songs with the children during group play activities in the Preschool 2 care room.

There were “all about me” displays on the walls in the preschool care rooms with information on individual children such as their favourite colours and play to help staff settle children into the service. Mealtimes were used for social conversation as staff members were observed sitting at the child’s level engaging in conversation about Christmas plans. At sleep times, staff were observed supporting children to settle. This included playing relaxing music and rubbing some children’s backs to ease them to sleep. Observations were recorded and evidenced in individual journals, which demonstrated the curriculum being followed within the service. There were picture displays to help children to recognise the daily routines on the walls in the preschool care rooms. Activities were observed to be adapted or changed by staff at times in response to children’s individual needs.

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.

Non-Compliance Information

Safe Sleep:

- (1) On the day of inspection one child aged under 24 months was placed to sleep on a stackable bed. Children under 24 months require a standard cot or appropriate floor bed with a support plan. On a review of documentation there was no support plan or parental consent in place.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Safe Sleep:

- (1) All children under 24 months will be placed on our appropriate floor beds, if a floor bed is not available the child will be placed in a cot in our sleep room.
Floor bed consent has since been filled out for the child by their parent. All children under 24months who will be using a floor bed will have a parental consent form filled out before 1st use.

Supporting documentation submitted

Safe Sleep:

Documentary evidence submitted.

Summary Comment

The information provided by the person in charge on behalf of the registered provider in the CAPA form has been reviewed by the inspectorate and the non-compliance found on inspection in relation to regulation 23 have been corrected. This regulation is now compliant