

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC192
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Name of Service:	Kangakare Childcare Ltd
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Address of Service:	The Square, Mount Oval Village, Rochestown, Co. Cork
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Eircode:	T12 V20C
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Name of Registered Provider:	Deirdre Ronan
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time
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Date of Inspection:	06/03/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	74	PM	67
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate Administration Building St Mary's Health Campus Gurrabraher Cork
Inspection undertaken by:	D Prendergast
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	N/A
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Description of service

Kangakare Childcare Ltd. is a privately owned service, which provides an option of part time or full day care to children. While it is registered to accommodate children aged 0 to 6 years, it currently caters for children from the age of 8 months. Registered daily opening hours are from 7.30am to 6.00pm and the service is open 51 weeks of the year. Play based pedagogy is implemented.

This early years service is located in an urban area of Rochestown in Co. Cork and is provided from the purpose-built ground floor of an apartment block. There are five operational care rooms, each with either adjoining or adjacent sanitary facilities and there are two designated sleep rooms. The premises also includes staff sanitary facilities, an office, a staff room, a catering kitchen and a utility room. Two outdoor play environments are available for the children's use.

Staffing

The service employs 25 adults, of whom 24 work directly with the early years children. This includes the manager, deputy manager and the cook, who are available to provide cover in the care rooms. The registered provider is not based at the childcare facility. Two students were also undertaking work placements at the time of inspection.

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 the 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 person in charge, deputies, 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*

(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 had appointed a person in charge of overseeing the day-to-day operation of the service and named deputies had also been assigned, to deputise as needed.
- (b) The person in charge was present at the service for the duration of the inspection.
- (2) Recruitment records in respect of the 25 adults employed by the service were reviewed, along with those of 2 students. The following information was obtained:
- (a) Of the 54 required written and validated references, 39 were on file from past employers, with records of validation in place for 38 of these references.
- (b) Fifteen of the references had been obtained from sources other than previous employers and 14 of said references had been suitably validated.
- (c) Garda vetting from the National Vetting Bureau was maintained for each of the 27 adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d) Police vetting was in place for 11 of the 12 adults who had lived outside the State for six consecutive months or longer, while over the age of 18.
- (4) Twenty-two of the adults who worked directly with the children held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education, as listed on the National Framework of Qualifications, or as recognised by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY). One adult had obtained a Letter of Eligibility to practice. Qualifications were not required for the registered provider or for the students.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a)(b)

Two records of validation were required for the references obtained in respect of one of the adults.

(d)

Police vetting was unavailable for one of the staff members, who had resided in another jurisdiction for longer than six consecutive months, as an adult.

(4)

Evidence was unavailable to demonstrate that the award held by one of the adults met the minimum requirement of a level 5 award in Early Childhood Care and Education, as listed on the National Framework of Qualifications.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(a)(b)

Records of validation were forwarded following the inspection.

(d)

The staff member applied for the police clearance on the day of inspection and this was received on 11/03/2024. The requirement for police clearance will be checked more thoroughly going forward.

(4)

The staff member has applied to have their qualification recognised. The list of recognised qualifications has been printed for each staff member and their qualification has been highlighted.

Supporting documentation submitted

(2)(a)(b)

Two reference validations, dated 7 March 2024, were forwarded.

(d)

A copy of the required police vetting was submitted.

(4)

A copy of the Letter of Qualification Recognition.

Summary Comment

The response and evidence submitted by the person in charge were accepted in meeting the regulatory requirements.

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) It was observed that an adequate number of adults were responsible for the direct care of the children present.

(2) The adult to child ratios met the requirements of the regulation. The rooms were in operation as follows:

Morning:

Room Name and Age Range of Children	Number of Children Present	Number of Adults Present
Baby (11 – 16 months)	8	3
Fledgling (20 – 26 months)	13	4
Toddler (2 – 3 years)	14	3
Pre-school 1 (3 – 4 years)	21	3
Pre-school 2 (4 – 5 years)	18	3

Two students were not included in the adult child ratios.

Afternoon:

Room Name and Age Range of Children	Number of Children Present	Number of Adults Present
Baby (11 – 16 months)	8	3
Fledgling (20 – 26 months)	11	4
Toddler (2 – 3 years)	14	3
Pre-school 1 (3 – 4 years)	18	3
Pre-school 2 (4 – 5 years)	16	2

(8)

(a) The service was operated with at least two adults present at all times, as indicated through review of 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:

- Mealtimes were organised to ensure that there were no gaps longer than two and a half hours in between and up to five meal/snack breaks were accommodated for the children each day. The lunch meal was observed shortly before 11.30am in the Baby room and at 11.35am in the Toddler room and an afternoon snack was served at 2.00pm in the Fledglings room. In addition, the person in charge advised that breakfast was accommodated from 8.00am, a mid-morning snack was usually facilitated between 10.00am and 11.00am and that afternoon tea was served from 3.30pm.
- During the lunch meal in the Baby room, the children were provided with feeding bibs and developmentally appropriate crockery and cutlery were in use. Self-feeding was encouraged where appropriate and the adults also offered assistance, as needed. A notably calm, relaxed atmosphere was evident and the children were afforded plenty of time to enjoy their meal.
- In Pre-school 2, the children's reusable water bottles were stored on a low-level shelf, which allowed for ease of access, should any child become thirsty during the day.
- Adults demonstrated familiarity with the children's cues and care needs. For example, when one of the children displayed signs of tiredness, a staff member gently told the child that she would get them ready for bed.
- Upset children were promptly comforted, reassured and supported by the adults to participate in playful activities, such as moving and singing to action songs.
- The inspector was advised that nappy changing routines were undertaken at regular intervals throughout the day and as the need arose. In the older care rooms, the children were observed to independently access and utilise the toilet facilities.
- Quiet, restful environments were created in the care rooms and designated sleep rooms to support the children to relax before sleep.

- Children had sufficient space to move freely and engage with materials in their respective care rooms. On the day of inspection, the children were also provided with opportunities to access the outdoor play area, for active play and exploration.

Non-Compliance Information

Drinking water was not freely available to all of the children throughout the day. In the Toddler room, a staff member advised that cups were stored in a cupboard and that if a child became thirsty outside of the allocated mealtimes, they could ask one of the adults to get them a cup of water.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The response received stated that a jug of water and cups have been placed on the counter in the care room, for children to see, which will help them to request a drink. This will ensure that pre-verbal children can also request a drink, as needed.

Supporting documentation submitted

A photograph of the jug and cups on the countertop was forwarded.

Summary Comment

The corrective action implemented by the person in charge has addressed the non-compliance identified under regulation 19.

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:

- Entry to the service was via an electronic keypad, located alongside the main entrance door, with a buzzer system in place for parents and visitors. This safety mechanism reduced the likelihood of unauthorised access. Exit through the same door was controlled by a door release button, which was positioned at adult height.
- Within the care rooms, blind cords were secured with safety clips.
- Low lying glass panelled doors were fitted with visibility strips. This reduced the risk of a child sustaining a collision injury.
- First aid supplies were stored out of the children's reach.
- There were no cords or cables accessible to the children in the Baby room.
- Safety guards were in place in front of electric heaters, which minimised the risk of a scald injury.

Infection Control:

- Handwashing by the children was observed after they had used the toilet facilities. Liquid soap, sensor operated paper towel dispensers and foot pedal operated bins were in place at the wash hand basins.
- The children's coats and footwear were appropriately stored; wall hooks were available for hanging coats and shoes and wellies were maintained on shelving units or racks.
- Individually labelled storage was provided for the children's toiletries, within the nappy changing areas.
- Open windows in the care rooms allowed for natural ventilation.

Administration of Medication:

- The administration of medication was not observed during the inspection period.

Safe Sleep:

- Air temperatures in the two designated sleep rooms were noted to be within the required range of 18°C to 22°C, for children aged over 12 months. While occupied by sleeping children, a temperature of 19.5°C was recorded in the Baby room sleep room and in the sleep room beside the Fledgling room, a temperature reading of 20.8°C was taken.

- Evidence was available to demonstrate that frequent physical checks of sleeping children were undertaken by staff members. An online application was used to record 10-minute interval checks of the children's breathing, colour and position. Sleep logs from the previous day were sampled.

Fire Safety:

- There were no fire safety concerns noted.
- Fire exits were maintained free from obstruction.

Outing:

- Not applicable, as an outing was not observed.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Water temperatures above 43°C were recorded at two of the taps in the Pre-school 1 sanitary area, which increased the risk of a scald injury. Temperature readings of 49.1°C and 45.7°C were taken. A staff member advised that, due to the high-water temperatures, the children only used the cold water taps for handwashing. However, warm running water is required to ensure hygienic handwashing. The issue of hot water at these taps was also found at the previous inspection on 18 July 2022. The CAPA response at the time stated that the thermostat timer had been re-set and that staff had been re-trained in turning on the hot water. However, this issue was not found to have been rectified.
2. In the Toddler room, an exit door which led to part of the outdoor play area, was fitted with a thumb turn lock at child height. As this section of the outdoor area was secured with a low-level gate, which could potentially be opened by a child, there was a risk of a child exiting the premises, while unsupervised.

Infection control:

3. The following observed practices during nappy changing procedures increased the risk of cross infection:
 - A plastic reusable apron was worn by the adult who carried out the nappy changing procedures. It was noted that the service's nappy changing procedure stated that *Staff have been provided with disposable aprons to be worn while nappy changing*.
 - Children's hands were not washed after having their nappies changed and the adult did not wash their hands on one occasion. This was at variance with the service's nappy changing procedure, which directed staff to *Wash hands before and after nappy changing with antibacterial soap*.

Both of these issues were also found at the previous inspection on 18 July 2022. The CAPA reply submitted following said inspection stated that disposable aprons were available and that staff had been reminded to wear these aprons and to dispose of them after each nappy change.

It also outlined that staff had been informed to wash their hands and to ensure that children's hands were washed after nappy changing. However, these procedures were not adhered to in practice.

4. Warm water was unavailable at the wash hand basin in the Pre-school 2 care room, which was used by the children for handwashing. A temperature reading of 11.9°C was taken. Cold water temperatures may impede effective hand washing.
5. Three of the cot mattresses in the Baby room sleep room were not waterproof or were not fitted with waterproof mattress protectors, as required to reduce the risk of cross infection.
6. The Toddler room sanitary facility was used to store several fabric bags, which contained the children's spare clothing and belongings. This increased the risk of cross infection.

Safe Sleep:

7. During discussion with a staff member, the inspector was advised that children aged under two years who attended the Fledgling room, were accommodated to sleep on stackable beds. This was subsequently observed in practice during a scheduled rest period, when seven children aged under two years were noted to sleep on stackable beds, in the care room. The use of stackable beds is unsuitable for children under the age of two years, as they are not sufficiently conducive to sleep for children in this age range. It was acknowledged that suitable floor beds were ordered at the end of January and that delivery had been delayed.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The written reply outlined that both a plumber and an electrician have been to look at the boiler and will provide a quote to install a new water system, which will be controlled by a smart system and will be set to the correct temperature. The plumber has also lowered the water temperature. The CAPA stated that the installation of the new smart water system is expected to be completed by July 2024.
2. A loud sensor has been installed on the door, which will sound any time the door is opened. This will notify staff immediately.

Infection Control:

3. The nappy changing policy has been emailed to staff with the main concerns highlighted. It was also printed and given directly to each room. The room lead of the care room involved has demonstrated the correct steps to the staff member.

4. As per point 2, the reply received outlined that the installation of a new water system is awaited.
5. Three waterproof covers will be purchased and will be placed on each cot.
6. Clear plastic sealable bags have been ordered. As a preventive measure, a large amount of bags have been purchased and spares will be available at all times.

Safe Sleep:

7. The floor beds and waterproof mattresses have arrived and are now being used by the children in the Fledglings room.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. & 4. Evidence of correspondence between the service, the electrician and the plumber was forwarded. This correspondence included quotes for the new water system.
2. Video evidence of the recently installed door sensor alarm.

Infection Control:

3. The statements from the person in charge are accepted as evidence.
5. A screen shot of the order confirmation for the waterproof covers.
6. A photograph to demonstrate that the spare clothing is now stored in plastic sealable bags, on the shelving unit, within the sanitary facility.

Safe Sleep:

7. Photographic evidence of the new floor beds and a copy of the service's updated Sleep policy.

Summary Comment

The actions taken by the person in charge have addressed points 2, 3, 5, 6 and 7. Point 1 and 4 remain outstanding and will be assessed at the next inspection.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service was appropriately insured to provide full day care and the policy was valid until 27 March 2024.