

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC195
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Name of Service:	Kealkil Childcare
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Address of Service:	Droumlickacruie, Kealkil, Bantry, Co. Cork
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Eircode:	P75 W596
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Name of Registered Provider:	Martina Doody
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date of Inspection:	08/04/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	15	PM	15
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Department, Child & Family Agency, Hospital Grounds, Coolnagarrane, Skibbereen, Co Cork P81 PD78
Inspection undertaken by:	M. O Reilly
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).

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Description of service

Kealkil Childcare offers early years care and education to children aged 0 to 6 years. The full day care service is open from 08:00 to 18:00 each day Monday to Friday, 51 weeks of the year. Sessional services are provided from 08.45am to 11.45am daily, over a 38-week annual period, in conjunction with the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme.

The service comprises of a detached, two storey purpose-built facility located within the grounds of the registered providers own private residence, in a rural area in Bantry, Co Cork. The facility consists of five care rooms, adult and children's toilets and nappy changing facilities, a designated separate area for the children to sleep in the Baby room. Most of the playrooms have direct access to the outdoor play areas beside the premise.

On day of inspection there were three of the five rooms in operation, the Baby, Toddler and Preschool room 1. Preschool room 2 and 3 were closed during the Easter holidays.

Staffing

There are 16 adults attached to the childcare facility. This includes the registered provider who provides staff cover as needed and who is involved in the direct care of the children. There was one volunteer attached to the service, not present at time of inspection. All of the adults who work directly with the children have achieved a relevant award in early childhood care and education.

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

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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 registered provider/ 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*

(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*

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(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) There was a named person in charge and a deputy appointed to deputise as required.
- (b) The person in charge was present on the premise on day of the inspection.
- (2) Following a review of previous inspection information, information available on inspection and discussion with the person in charge, it was determined that of the 17 adults, 6 new adults had been employed since the previous inspection. A total of 6 files were reviewed. In addition, Garda vetting for 1 adult whose disclosure was identified as due for renewal was requested for review.
- The following records were available for the 6 new staff:
- (a) Of the 12 required references, 7 were from previous employers, with required records of validation on file.
- (b) Of the 12 required references, 5 were from sources other than previous employers, with records of validation on file.
- (c) A Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained and were on file for each of the 6 adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d) A police vetting record was available on file for 1 of the staff members, who had lived outside the State for a period of six consecutive months or longer, as an adult.
- (d) The 6 staff who worked directly with the children all held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education, or an equivalent qualification, as listed on the National Framework of Qualifications.

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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) At the time of inspection, there was an adequate number of adults responsible for the direct care and supervision of the children in attendance.
- (2) The adult child ratio was maintained as follows:
- A total of 15 children, aged 1 to 5 years, were present in the morning and afternoon, with 4 adults involved directly with the care of these children.
- In addition, the person in charge was observed to provide cover as needed.
- (8)
- (a) At least two adults were present at all times throughout the inspection period. This practice was also evidenced through review of the staff roster.

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:*
- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

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Compliance Information

- (1)
- (h) Details of attendance by each child was recorded. The record indicated the arrival and departure time of each child, on a daily basis in the service.
- (i) The staff rosters for the week of inspection and the previous week were available for assessment. A copy of the rosters were received and the following were recorded:
- The names of the staff rostered daily in each room in the service.
 - The times staff went on their lunch break daily in each room.
 - The rosters were in keeping with the staff working in the service on the day of inspection.
- (k) The service had records detailing any accidents or incidents that had occurred in the service. A sample of the accident and incident records reviewed, each had been counter signed by the child's parent to evidence that the information had been relayed.

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

(1)(a)

Basic needs:

- Mealtime routines were conducted at a relaxed, unhurried pace. During this time, the adults were observed to promote a chatty atmosphere. Support and assistance offered by the adults during meal times was appropriate to the age and stage of development of the children in their care. For example, the children in the Toddler Room were observed to feed themselves, while the younger children were provided with one-to-one support. The available cutlery was suitably sized and easily handled by the children.
- Drinking water was accessible to the children within the care rooms outside of allocated mealtimes.

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- Tissue boxes were within easy reach for the older children, which encouraged them to develop personal hygiene and self-care skills.
- The adults interacted with the children in a warm and caring manner. For example, calm tones of voice were used, and children were patiently guided during activities and routine tasks.
- Soft seating areas, with books and soft toys, were included within the care rooms, for any child who may wish to opt out of scheduled activities or take some time to relax.
- A scheduled nap period was facilitated in the Toddler room in the afternoon. Prior to this, the children were asked whether they wanted to rest or play outdoors, which provided them with an opportunity to make decisions in relation to their own needs.
- Adequate space was provided within the indoor environments for the children to freely explore their chosen activities and interest items. The children were observed playing in the outdoor area in the morning and afternoon on the day of the inspection.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

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

Compliance Information

- The colourfully decorated care rooms were warm and inviting. A selection of the children's artwork, along with their birthdays and family photographs were prominently displayed.
- There was an adequate supply of suitable highchairs in the Baby room and child sized tables and chairs available in the other playrooms, which supported the children's participation in tabletop activities and mealtime routines.
- Shelving used to display play materials was positioned at a low height, which supported ease of access by children.
- The Baby room had soft areas for children to roll and crawl and walk. There was appropriate equipment such as, shape sorters, pull along toys, handheld toys, sound making materials and construction available to the children.
- The range of interest items on offer across the three care rooms in operation included the following:
 - Play kitchens with utensils, dolls, and handheld toys to prompt imagination and pretend play.
 - Construction based materials, such as wooden blocks, plastic bricks and play tools.

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- Books, jigsaws, threading materials and connectable shapes.
- Art and craft materials.
- In the outdoor areas, the children had the use of equipment such as a playhouse, building blocks, a climbing frame with a slide and seesaws. Seating areas were also available to accommodate tabletop activities. The children in the Baby and Toddler rooms were observed to have a choice of a large selection of push and ride on toys to choose from while playing outdoors.

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:

- In the outdoor play spaces, secure enclosures that were in a good state of repair were created through a combination of plastered block walls, the registered providers private residence, fencing and secured gates with padlocks in place.
- Low-level cupboards were fitted with restrictive opening devices, which reduced the likelihood of a child coming into contact with potentially harmful materials. Low-level dishwashers were fitted with restrictive opening devices as well.
- Cleaning agents were stored out of children's reach.
- First aid boxes were appropriately stored and inaccessible to children.
- No cables were visibly within reach of children on the day of inspection.
- The open storage area in one of the children's bathroom facility where cleaning equipment and materials were stored has been adequately secured since the last inspection.

Infection Control:

- At the children's wash hand basins, there was a supply of warm running water, liquid soap, paper towel dispensers and foot pedal operated bins. These facilities supported the practice of effective handwashing. It was noted that handwashing routines took place after the children had used the toilet, after outdoor play and before mealtimes.
- The children's soothers in the Baby room were suitably stored in individual plastic containers when not in use.

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- Tables were sanitised before mealtimes.
- Within the nappy changing areas, there were neat and tidy individually labelled storage for the children's toiletries.
- In general, the playrooms, toilets and nappy changing facilities in the service were visibly clean on day of inspection. There were weekly cleaning schedules on display in each room.
- Suitable storage was provided for the children's bags, outdoor clothing and footwear.

Safe Sleep:

- A review of the written sleep records demonstrated that the children's breathing, colour and position were assessed at 10-minute intervals.
- While occupied by sleeping children aged between 1 and 3 years, the air temperature of the Toddler room fell within the required range of 18°C to 22°C; a temperature reading of 20°C was noted. The air temperature reading of the sleep area in the Baby room was 19.5°C. The age of the children were between 1 and 2 years on day of inspection.

Fire Safety:

- Fire exits were unobstructed.
- All visible firefighting equipment was safely wall mounted.

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) Up to date records of First Aid Response (FAR) certification were in place for three of the adults, who worked at the service. Two of the staff with current certified training were present on day of inspection.

(2)

(a) There were sufficiently stocked first aid boxes available, which were safely stored out of reach of children.

(b) The first aid supplies were always accessible, should they be required.

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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.
- (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 monthly fire drills which had been conducted previously were recorded in writing. The most recent fire drill was noted to have been undertaken on 20 March 2026.
 - (b) A record which contained details regarding the number and type of firefighting equipment was on file. According to the servicing documentation available, the firefighting equipment was last checked on 10 November 2025 and the wired smoke alarm was tested on the 8 August 2025.
- (4) A notice, which outlined the steps to be taken in the event of a fire, was displayed in the premises.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

- The registered provider ensured the service was adequately insured, with insurance for 54 children until 27/03/2027. The records detailed the category of service covered which was full day care, the name and address of the premises and details regarding public liability cover, fire, theft, buildings, and outings cover.