

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CE067
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Name of Service:	Kincora Kids
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Address of Service:	Knockyclovaun, Killaloe, Co. Clare
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Eircode:	V94 H510
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Name of Registered Provider:	Nollaig O'Sullivan
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	15/05/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	74	PM	62
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate Tusla Child and Family Agency Primary Care Centre Station Road Ennis County Clare.
Inspection undertaken by:	A. McCarthy & J. Hayes
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

Kincora Kids is a community childcare service based in a purpose-built childcare facility on the outskirts of the town of Killaloe in County Clare. The service offers a programme of care and education for children ranging in age from six months to six years on a full day, part time or sessional basis. A school aged childcare service is provided each afternoon and during school holidays. The service operates from 08:00 to 17:30 Monday to Friday throughout the year with the exception of a two-week closure at Christmas.

The building accommodates six care rooms, school age childcare, a kitchen and sanitary facilities. A programme of care and education was facilitated in the Jungle room (age range: 9 months to 2 years), Pirate room (age range: 1 to 3 years), Under the Sea room (age range: 3 to 5 years), Rowan Tree room (age range: 3 to 4 years), Butterfly room (age range: 3 to 5 years) and Rainbow room (age range: 2 to 4 years). Five enclosed, segregated outdoor play areas and a sensory garden were available for use adjacent to the care rooms.

Staffing

Thirty-five adults are employed by the pre-school service. On the 15 May 2025, the assistant manager, the supervisor, 18 adults working directly with the children and 4 auxiliary adults who prepared and served the meals and drove the bus were present on inspection. The supervisor provided an administrative role and provided relief cover when required. The registered provider is a member of the board of management and does not work in the service. The adults held qualifications ranging from Level 5 to Level 9 on the National Framework of Qualifications and had documented evidence of completed continuing professional development.

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 and safety. The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations:

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment (1)(a)(b), (2)(a)(b)(c)(d) and (4)

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels (1) (2) (8)(a)

Regulation 19 - Health, welfare and development of child (1)(a)

Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

Regulation 25 - First aid (1) (2)(a)(b)

Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures (1)(a)(b)(4)

Regulation 28 – Insurance

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

(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 assistant manager was the person in charge and a person was available to deputise in their absence.

(b)

The assistant manager and the deputy were available during the inspection.

(2)

Thirty-five files were available in respect of the registered provider and the adults employed by the service. The findings included the following:

- (a)
Fifty-one written and validated references from past employers in respect of the adults working in the service were available.
- (b)
Nineteen written and validated references from a source other than a past employer in respect of adults working in the service were available.
- (c)
Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for thirty-five adults. However, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years in respect of two adults. Please refer to the information outlined under regulation 23 of this report.
- (d)
International police vetting with evidence of translation to English was available in respect of four adults working in the service who had lived in another State for a period longer than six months.
- (4)
The adults working directly with the children held Early Childhood Care and Education qualifications ranging from Level 5 to Level 9 on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

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)

During the inspection, an adequate number of adults worked directly with the children in attendance.

(2)

On the 16 May 2025 the ratio of adults caring for children was maintained. Seventeen adults cared for the seventy-four children attending in the morning and thirteen adults cared for the sixty-two children in attendance in the afternoon.

(8)(a)

The staff roster demonstrated that more than two adults were available in the childcare facility at all times.

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)

The children's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the service through the provision of appropriate activities and interactions having regard to the age and developmental level of the children. Six care rooms were in operation during the inspection.

Basic Needs of Children:

The adults treated the children in a kind and caring manner, and positive behavioural strategies were used during interactions. The adults conversed with the children in a sensitive and respectful manner. The adults used soft tones of voice and conversed with the children at their level and listened attentively during conversations. The adults responded promptly to the children's cues for assistance, to be held and to be hugged. A key person approach was adopted in each care room. The adults demonstrated an understanding of the children's individual preferences, interests and capabilities. The transitions in the changes of activities in each room were facilitated with ease, and the adults notified the children in advance of any change in the programme of activities.

The children's nappies were changed on an individual need's basis, and the adults carried out these procedures in a sensitive manner. The children were encouraged and supported to manage their own personal care appropriate to their age and level of development. The older children were encouraged to be independent while caring for their personal belongings, using the toilet, participating in tasks and tidy up time. The adults promoted the children to manage their own personal care and nasal care appropriate to their age and level of development. The children's cues for sleep were responded to appropriately, and children who did not wish to sleep were provided with an alternative room to play and learn in. Individually designed areas were provided for the children in the indoor area with soft furnishings and reading materials and used by the children periodically to rest and relax.

The infants were held during bottle feeding and the adults sat next to them during mealtime and conversed amicably. The babies were encouraged to feed themselves and were promoted to be independent. Suitable age-appropriate crockery and feeding utensils were provided in each room. The children transitioned to the dining room for mealtime, and these periods were observed to be relaxed and unhurried. Healthy nutritious food was provided during mealtimes, and water was freely available and accessible at all times.

Physical and Material Environment:

The indoor environment offered an enriching and challenging experience for the children in attendance. The six care rooms and the adjacent outdoor areas were bright, spacious and appropriately resourced for the age range and developmental level of the children. The rooms were laid out with designated interest areas, using natural, open-ended, malleable, sensory and structured materials and equipment. The rooms were individually designed with displays of colourful artwork, individual creative pieces, learning and literacy aids and hanging mobiles from the ceilings. Family photos were displayed in all rooms at children's eye level to support children's sense of belonging in the service.

The outdoor play areas were very well resourced and offered an inviting and challenging space for the children to freely explore and engage in a range of sensory, creative, physical, imaginative and constructive play. Each care room had access to a designated outdoor space adjacent to their room and had access to a well maintained and resourced sensory garden. The five designated outdoor spaces were individually designed with developmentally appropriate play and educational materials and equipment. A range of water, sand and soft play stations, wooden balance and construction activities, mud kitchens, and tricycles were observed in use by the children throughout

the day. The sensory garden provided an additional enriching space for the children. This area was laid out with flowers, plants, grass and wooden surfaces with ramps, a bridge, a water station, a slide and a seating area. Individual potted plants were available to demonstrate children’s learning and engagement with nature. The children were encouraged to wear sun hats, and sunscreen was applied by the adults at regular intervals. Waterproof clothing and footwear were available for outdoor play during wet weather conditions. The children predominantly used the outdoor play areas and were observed to be offered choice in relation to their play preferences and thoroughly enjoy the range of activities provided.

Supporting Relationships Around Children:

The adults in the childcare facility were observed to foster and establish relationships with the parents/guardians and support the children’s integration in the local community. Some of the children visited the local Garda station on the day of inspection, as part of a range of community engagement activities undertaken by the service. An informal communication approach was observed during interactions by the adults working in the care rooms and the parents/guardians. A handbook was available at the entrance outlining the service policies and procedures and this was shared with parents/guardians prior to the children’s commencement in the service. Parents/guardians collected their children from the care rooms and conversed amicably with the adults to discuss the child’s day. The children’s daily activities and photographs of observations and developmental progress were shared on the childcare application device with their parents/guardians. Individual learning journals were available for each child demonstrating their achievements and capturing their learning experiences.

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:

- A key coded, bell operated, and camera surveillance system was in place at the entrance door to monitor the safe entry and exit of the children to and from the childcare facility.
- The outdoor play areas were secured with a bell operated system, fencing and gates to protect the children within.
- Unauthorised adults were recorded on arrival and departure to the service.

- Medication and cleaning agents were stored in a secure area out of reach of the children.
- The highchairs were maintained in adequate condition with fitted safety harnesses in the baby room.
- Storage facilities were secured and inaccessible to the children.

Fire Safety:

- The fire exits and passageways were clear from obstruction throughout the service.
- Written records of completed monthly fire drills were available.
- A fire assembly point was readily identifiable and identified by the adults working in the service.
- Records of up-to-date fire safety training were available.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Garda vetting was available for the adults employed by the service. However, a vetting disclosure in respect of two adults was not dated within the previous three years in adherence with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. Garda vetting was given to the two staff members in April 2025. This was not followed through. Following on from the day of the inspection on the 15th of May new garda vetting for the two staff members was submitted. Garda vetting was received for both staff members and forwarded onto the early years inspectorate.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. A checklist with all the garda vetting dates of expiry for staff has been created to ensure compliance.

Summary Comment

Based on the corrective actions and supporting evidence the area of non-compliance is addressed under Regulation 23 General Safety.

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)

Four adults had a record of up to date First Aid Responder (FAR) training, and a record indicated that an adult with First Aid Responder (FAR) training was available in the service at all times.

(2)(a)

Suitably equipped first aid boxes were stored in an accessible and conspicuous area in each care room, with an additional first aid box available in the main office.

(b)

The first aid box was available in the service for use by the adults in the event of an emergency.

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)

Records were available to demonstrate that monthly fire drills were carried out by the service. The last fire drill took place on the 30 April 2025.

(b)
 Up-to-date records of the number, type and maintenance service were available for the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarm system. The most recent service of the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarm system took place respectively on 31 October 2024 and 18 December 2024.

(4)
 A fire action notice was displayed demonstrating the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

Up to date insurance cover was available for 110 pre-school children. The insurance policy for the full day care service is valid until 27 March 2026.