

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CE067		
Name of Service:	Kincora Kids		
Address of Service:	Knockyclovaun, Killaloe, Co. Clare		
Eircode:	V94 H510		
Name of Registered Provider:	Una Kierse		
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional		
Date of Inspection Day 1:	21/11/2023		
No of pre-school children Day 1:	AM	57	PM 42

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Quality and Regulation Directorate Tusla Child and Family Agency Ennis Primary Care Centre Station Road Ennis County Clare V95TY4E
Inspection undertaken by:	Á.McCarthy
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

Not applicable

Description of service

Kincora Kids is a community childcare service based in a purpose-built premises on the outskirts of the town of Killaloe in County Clare. The service offers care and learning for children ranging in age from six months to six years on a full day, part time or sessional basis. The service operates from 08:00 to 17:30 Monday to Friday throughout the year with the exception of two weeks closure at Christmas. The building accommodates six care rooms, school age childcare, a kitchen and sanitary facilities. Care and learning were facilitated in the Baby room (age range: one to two years), Toddler room (age range: one to three years), Under the Sea room (age range: three to four years), Rowan Tree room (age range: three to four years), Butterfly room (age range: three to four years) and Rainbow room (age range: two to three years). Three segregated outdoor areas were available for use, these were located adjacent to the service.

Staffing

Twenty-nine staff are employed by the pre-school service. On the 21st of November 2023 the manager, assistant manager, nineteen childcare staff, two students and six auxiliary staff members who cooked the meals, provided maintenance, and cleaned were present on inspection. The staff members held qualifications ranging from Level 5 to Level 8 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. 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. 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, 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 manager was the designated person in charge and an assistant manager was assigned to deputise in the managers absence.

(b)

The manager or assistant manager were available throughout the inspection.

Twenty-nine files were available and reviewed. The findings included the following:

(2)(a)

Forty-eight written and validated references were available from past employers.

- (b)
Ten written and validated references were available from a source other than a past employer.
- (c)
Garda Vetting disclosures were available and reviewed in respect of all adults employed by the service.
- (d)
International police vetting was available in respect of three adults who had lived in another state for a period longer than six months as an adult.
- (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.

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)
On the 21st of November 2023 an adequate number of adults worked directly with the children attending the service.

(2)
During the inspection the ratio of adults supervising the children was maintained. Sixteen adults cared for fifty-seven-children in the morning and the forty-two children in attendance in the afternoon.

(8)(a)
The staff roster demonstrated that more than two adults were available in the service 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)
Basic Needs of Children:

The inspector observed the children’s learning, development, and well-being to be supported by the members of staff. The staff interacted with the children in a respectful and kind manner. This was observed by the staff listening to, sitting with and conversing with the children at their level and responding promptly to their cues for assistance or comfort. The children were offered continuous praise and encouragement and the staff used positive behavioural strategies during interactions. The children’s individual capabilities, interests and personal preferences were readily identified by the staff. The staff communicated informally with parents by phone and interactions when the children were dropped off and collected from the service. The children’s daily observations were shared with their parents electronically through the service’s application system.

Staff comforted and held the babies when they required attention. Babies were encouraged to crawl, roll, stand and develop speech skills by staff. The children’s nappies were changed on an individual needs basis and the staff carried out these procedures in a sensitive manner. The staff supported the older children to be independent while caring for their belongings, their play materials and toileting. The children’s sleep needs were responded to appropriately and children who did not wish to sleep were provided with an alternative activity to play and learn.

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 children were encouraged and supported to manage their own personal care appropriate to their age and level of development.

Physical and Material Environment:

The children played freely in the indoor and outdoor environments. The six care rooms were appropriately resourced for the age range and stage of development of the children. The rooms were bright and individually designed by staff with relaxing lighting, hanging ceiling mobiles that included leaves, a turtle, grasshoppers and an owl. The walls had visual displays with the children's individual creations, trees and colourful illustrations and learning. The transitions in the changes of activities in each room were facilitated with ease, as staff consulted the children in advance of any change in the programme of care and learning. Individual memory journals were accessible to the pre-school children capturing their achievements and learning experiences.

The baby room provided a space with a range of surfaces, activities, and equipment. The babies freely accessed various toys and equipment and the relaxation area. The babies were supported individually and as part of the group activities by staff. The children attending the Toddler and Preschool rooms engaged in a range of play and learning activities. All the staff communicated effectively with each other to facilitate the programme and supported each child in their chosen activities. The children engaged freely in extended play and accessed the indoor and outdoor area and were observed to engage in gross motor physical activities, sensory activities using the mud kitchen, soft play activities and language development activities that included rhymes and story time. Equipment and play materials were accessed freely by the children. Staff engaged in open ended discussions and singing exercises, played games with the children and supported the children as they engaged in manipulative, pretend and sensory play and motor skill development. A diverse range of activities were afforded to the children in each room.

The outdoor area offered an environment for the children to freely move and engage in a range of sensory, creative, physical, pretend and constructive play. The area was suitably resourced for the developmental needs of the children in attendance. Defined areas of interest included: climbing frames, sensory play tables, planter boxes, wooden playhouses, mud kitchens, mirrors, music station and tricycles. The outdoor area was secured by a keypad, bell operated system, a fence and a gate.

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 entrance to the service was secured with a key code and a bell operated system to prevent unauthorised persons from entering or unsupervised children exiting the building.
- The outdoor area was secured with a surrounding fence and secured gate to protect the children within.
- The children’s arrival and departure times were recorded on the service’s electronic application system.
- Looped cord blinds were appropriately secured throughout the service.
- Cleaning agents were inaccessible to the children and stored in safe locations throughout the service.
- The manager had records of completed risk assessments demonstrating measures taken to minimise risks within the service.

Infection Control:

- The service was maintained in a clean and hygienic condition. Cleaning schedules were available to demonstrate the frequency and measures taken by the staff to maintain the service.
- Running hot water, liquid soap, hand paper towels and lined, lidded pedal operated bins were available.
- The children washed their hands at appropriate intervals during the day.

Administration of Medication:

- The staff demonstrated a good knowledge of the service’s policy.
- Documentation was available to record the administration of prescription and non-prescription medication.
- Individualised care plans are available for children and the staff had attended training to gain the knowledge and skills to administer medication.
- Medication was safely stored out of reach of the children.

Safe Sleep:

- The manager and staff demonstrated a good knowledge of the service’s safe sleep policy.
- Children were placed to sleep in their individual standard cots and low-level beds.
- A thermometer was available for staff to measure and monitor the room temperature. The room temperatures were maintained between 16-20 degrees Celsius.

- The members of staff recorded the sleeping children's observations every ten minutes during sleep periods on the service's electronic device.

Fire Safety:

- Fire exit routes and passageways were clear from obstruction.
- The fire assembly point and fire exits were clearly identified with signage.
- The staff demonstrated a good knowledge of conducting fire drills and monthly records for completed fire drill practices were available for review by the inspector.
- Records of completed fire training were available on the staff files.

Outing:

- The manager demonstrated a good knowledge of the service outings policy and the safe conduct of outings.
- Outing checklists and risk assessments were available for outings that had been undertaken by the service.

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)

Three members of staff had a record of up to date First Aid Response training.

(2)(a)

Suitably equipped and accessible first aid boxes were stored in each room in the service.

(b)

First aid boxes were readily available 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 firefighting 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 undertaken in the service. The last recorded fire drill took place on the 7th of November 2023.

(b)

A record of the number, type and maintenance for the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarm system were available. The most recent firefighting equipment and smoke alarm maintenance service took place on the 2nd of November 2023 and 20th of June 2023.

(4)

Fire action notices demonstrating the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were displayed in the service.

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 110 children attending the full day care service. The policy is valid until the 27th of March 2024.