

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CE093
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Name of Service:	Loughraney Kids Corner
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Address of Service:	Flagmount, Caher, Feakle, Co. Clare
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Eircode:	V94 YT52
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Name of Registered Provider:	Thomas O'Mara
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	22/08/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	21	PM	20
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Quality and Regulation Directorate Tusla Child and Family Agency Ennis Primary Care Centre Station Road Ennis County Clare
Inspection undertaken by:	A.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
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Description of service

Loughgraney Kids Corner was established in 1997, as a purpose-built childcare facility, in a rural area, in Feakle, County Clare. The service operates Monday to Friday from 07:30 to 18:00 on a full day, part-time and a sessional basis for children ranging in age from six months to six years.

The childcare facility is located in a two-story building. Two rooms are located on the ground floor and two rooms are located on the first floor. On the 22 August 2024 two playrooms were in operation. A school aged childcare service is facilitated each afternoon and during school holidays. Children had access to two separate sleep rooms. A kitchen was available in the two playrooms on the ground floor. An enclosed outdoor play area was located at the side and front of the premises and was subdivided in accordance with the different age groups of children.

Staffing

Fifteen adults are employed by the service. On the 22 August 2024, the manager, five adults who worked directly with the children, a student on work placement and one adult who provided an administrative role were present. The service is operated by a community based limited company, the registered provider does not work in the service and is a member of the board of management.

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 may also focus on other areas as required. The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11 and 19(1)(a), 23, 25, 26 and 28.

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, 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 person in charge and a person was available to deputise in their absence.

(b)

The manager and a named person to deputise was available at all times during the inspection.

(2)

Sixteen files were available and reviewed by the inspector. The findings included the following:

(a)

Twenty-one validated references from past employers in respect of adults working in the service were available.

- (b)
Thirteen validated references were available in respect adults working in the service from a source other than a past employer.
- (c)
Garda vetting disclosures were available in respect of the adults working in the service. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d)
International police vetting was available for three adults working in the service who had lived in another state for a period longer than six months.
- (4)
Eleven adults working directly with the children held Early Childhood Care and Education qualifications ranging from Level 5 to 8 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 22 August 2024 the ratio of adults caring for children was maintained in each care room. Seven adults cared for twenty-one children in the morning and twenty children 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)
The children's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the service through the provision of appropriate activities, interactions, materials, and equipment, having regard age and level of development of the children.

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, used soft tones of voice, acknowledged the children by their individual names and responded promptly to their cues for assistance. The children were encouraged to be independent in play and learning, whilst caring for their belongings and using the toilet. The adults supervised and treated the children in a sensitive manner during nappy changes and toileting. Nappies were changed frequently and on an individual need's basis. The children were encouraged to be independent with caring for their belongings, in play, during feeding and toileting. The infant's sleep was attended to on an individual basis and an alternative area and activities were offered for children who did not wish to sleep. The infants were encouraged to feed themselves and promoted to be independent. Appropriate crockery and feeding utensils were provided in each room.

The staff offered praise and encouragement and children were respected and supported in their choice of individual and group engagement in activities. The children's care need observations were shared daily with parents on individual written records. The children in each room were offered a range of developmentally challenging play and learning activities and were observed to be fully engaged and included in activities in the indoor and outdoor environments.

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 system was in place at the entrance gate to monitor the safe entry and exit of the children to and from the childcare facility.
- The designated outdoor areas were secured with fencing and gates to protect the children within.
- Medication and cleaning agents were stored in secured areas out of reach of the children.
- Suitable handrails were provided on the stairwell leading to the care rooms on the first floor.
- The highchairs were maintained in adequate condition with fitted five point safety harnesses in the Baby room.
- Looped blind cords were secured and inaccessible to the children throughout the service.
- The kitchen areas and storage facilities were secured and inaccessible to the children.

Infection Control:

- The service was maintained in a clean condition.
- The children washed their hands at appropriate intervals after activities, toileting and before mealtime.
- Labelled containers are available for storing bedlinen and personal care items.

Administration of Medication:

- An administration of medication policy was available to inform practice in the service.
- Medication was not given during the inspection. Documentation was available should medication be required.

- Medication was stored safely in a secure cabinet out of reach of the children.

Safe Sleep:

- Two designated sleep rooms were available for the children to sleep.
- The two sleep rooms had eight standard sized cots for the children to sleep.
- The sleep room temperatures were maintained between 16-20 degrees Celsius during the inspection. A thermometer was available for staff to measure and monitor the room temperatures.
- The children's sleep observations were recorded by staff every ten minutes on a written record. These observations included the children's: colour, position and breathing.
- The staff demonstrated an adequate knowledge of the service's safe sleep policy.

Fire Safety:

- The fire exits and passageways were clear from obstruction throughout the service.
- A fire assembly point was readily identifiable.
- Records of up-to-date fire safety training were available.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

1. Eight mattresses in the two sleep rooms were worn, not firm and discoloured and in need of replacement.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control:

1. Eight new waterproof mattresses and eight mattress covers have been purchased. The old mattresses have been destroyed and replaced with the new mattresses and mattress covers.

Supporting documentation submitted

Infection Control:

1. Photographs and receipts for the purchased equipment.

Summary Comment

Based on the registered provider's corrective action and evidence submissions the area of non-compliance is addressed. The regulatory requirement for Regulation 23 is met.

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)

Seven adults working in the service had a record of up to date First Aid Responder (FAR) training.

(2)(a)

A suitably equipped first aid box was stored in a readily identifiable area in each care room.

(b)

First aid boxes were available in each room 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 in the service. The last recorded fire drill took place on the 06 August 2024.

(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 respectively on the 10 October 2023 and 07 June 2024.

(4)
Fire action notices demonstrating the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were displayed throughout 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 for seventy pre-school children. The policy is valid until the 27 March 2025.