

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CN031		
Name of Service:	Kids Corner		
Address of Service:	22 Thorndale Close, Kingscourt, Co. Cavan		
Eircode:	A82 E6X7		
Name of Registered Provider:	Catherine McCabe		
Service type:	Part Time, Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	26/02/2025		
No of pre-school children:	AM	19	PM
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Hampton Court, Cootehill Road, Drumalee, Co Cavan. H12 YY84		
Inspection undertaken by:	S Mc Kenna		
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

Kids Corner Pre-school is a privately operated early years' service, in operation since 2007. The childcare service provides a part-time and sessional service to children aged from 2 years to 6 years. The service operates from 8.45am to 1:45pm and 12.15pm to 3.15pm Monday to Friday. The pre-school operates from a two-storey semi-detached house in a housing estate in Kingscourt. The Downstairs Preschool operates from two interconnecting rooms on the ground floor and the Upstairs Preschool operates from two interconnecting rooms on the first floor. An outdoor play area is located to the rear and side of the premises. Car parking for arrival and collection is available to the front of the premises.

Staffing

Four staff are employed in the service to include the registered provider. One staff member is employed under the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM).

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 Regulation 9 Management & Recruitment, Regulation 11 Staffing Levels, Regulation 19 Health, Welfare & Development of Child, Regulation 23 Safeguarding

Health, Safety and Welfare of Child, Regulation 24 Checking In and Out and Record of Attendance, Regulation 25 First Aid and 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 inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, 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
- (c) there is a clear management structure in the service that identifies the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and unpaid worker.

(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 service had a designated person in charge who is the registered provider, and a named person in charge to deputise in their absence.

(b) Following discussion with the registered provider, it was confirmed that when the preschool service was in operation the designated person in charge or the named person in charge were on the premises.

(c) A management structure was in place.

(2) The staff files for 4 staff were reviewed.

(a) A total of 5 written and validated references from a previous employer were on file.

A total of 2 written references from a previous employer were on file.

- (b) A total of 1 written and validated reference from a reputable source was on file.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for 4 staff. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years for one staff member.
- (d) A review of the employment history for the 4 staff, demonstrated that no staff had lived outside the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months therefore police vetting is not required.
- (4) Documentary evidence was available to confirm that 3 staff employed to work with children, held an appropriate childcare qualification at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications, or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

Non-Compliance Information

(2) (a)

The registered provider had not completed the validation process in relation to two written references.

(4)

There was no record available on file to demonstrate that a qualification for one staff member met the minimum Level 5 requirement, or that the qualification was deemed by the Minister to be equivalent to Level 5.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Validation was received but forgot to sign and date, this has been completed. Ensure all references are dated when validated.

Ensure qualifications are checked.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence of two validated references.

Copy of letter confirming qualification was deemed by the Minister to be equivalent to Level 5.

Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider has adequately addressed the non-compliances in Regulation 9 (2) (a) and (4).

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 day of inspection there was an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.

(2) The adult to child ratios were correct in the service when the inspector arrived unannounced and remained so throughout the inspection.

The following adult to child ratios were observed:

Two adults cared for 11 children aged 4 years to 4 years 8 months in the Downstairs Preschool Room.

Two adults cared for 8 children aged 3 years to 3 years 2 months in the Upstairs Preschool Room.

(8) A review of the staff sign-in and out records, demonstrated that there are at least 2 adults on the premises while the part time service is in operation.

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

(b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.

Compliance Information

The following examples demonstrate how the registered provider ensured that the children's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the daily life of the service:

Basic Needs

Healthy food and drinks were promoted within the service. The children's snacks taken in from home included a variety of sandwiches, pasta, cereal, crackers with cheese dip, chopped fruit, meats and bread rolls. Snack time was observed to be relaxed where staff provided supports to the children if needed and used this time as an opportunity to have conversations of interest with the children.

The children that were toilet trained were observed to use the toilet independently, and the children who wear pull-ups or nappies were changed in line with their individual care needs. Gentle reminders about using the toilet were given by staff to the children who were just recently or currently being toilet trained.

Outdoor clothing was provided for the children to include coats, hats, overalls and wellie boots which were observed in use on the day of the inspection. The children in the Upstairs Preschool were observed to go for a walk outdoors, while the children in the Downstairs Preschool played in the designated outdoor play area.

Rest areas were provided to include soft seating, floor mats, cushions and armchairs which provided the children with an area to rest and relax if they wanted.

Supporting Relationships

There was minimal staff change over observed on the day of inspection. The preschool rooms joined for a short time after the morning session, where the children demonstrated familiarity with all staff that were present. The staff demonstrated knowledge of the children likes and used this knowledge to encourage and build upon the children's play. Conversations about the children's own home lives were observed which demonstrates strong relationships between the children their families and the staff who care for them. The staff sat with the children

throughout the preschools sessions both at the tables and on the floor, playing with the children and using these opportunities to build upon the children's learning opportunities.

The staff were observed to act as positive role models for the children, using soft calm tones and giving praise where positive interactions were observed such as turn taking and the sharing of toys.

The staff used age-appropriate strategies to help children find positive solutions to any problems that occurred. Where children got upset, the staff were observed to provide reassurance and comfort to the children and were observed to talk to the children about their feelings. The children were given opportunities of helping their friends, such as children were chosen daily to help to give out the bags at snack time.

The staff were observed to demonstrate sensitivity, warmth and positive regard for children and their families. A child's birthday was celebrated on the day of the inspection, where children were observed to sing a birthday song, have a group photo taken and enjoy some treats for this special occasion. The staff team were observed to work well together with transitions managed smoothly, while the children were given appropriate lead in times to what will happen next in their daily routine.

Communication with parents is in person at arrival and collection times. The registered provider advised that a newsletter is sent home each term to provide parents with updates on the activities in preschool, acknowledging children's birthdays and any other relevant updates.

Physical And Material Environment

The Upstairs Preschool had designated play areas such as a floor play area with small world toys, animals and cars, cosy areas to relax and look at books, a well-resourced home play area with dress up clothing, a construction area with tools and blocks, a creative section to include cutting and sticking materials, sand play and an area for table top toys and jigsaws.

The Downstairs Preschool had areas to include small world areas with little people and animals figurines, construction play with toys and trucks, sensory fidget toys, blocks and train-sets, a well-resourced home corner, a role play shop area, teddies and soft areas to read books, a sensory tray with rice and dough and designated areas for table top toys and activities.

Materials were stored accessible to the children, developing their independence to retrieve the toys they would like, while also allowing them to clean up with ease. Additional play equipment and resources were available on high level shelves accessed by the staff. A cutting activity, dentist role play, and a small world role play area with animals was observed as popular play choices in the Upstairs Preschool, with sensory activities such as bubbles, rice, dough and sand, along with outdoor play observed to be enjoyed by the children in the Downstairs Preschool.

Colourful displays were on the walls throughout the service to include emotion posters, birthday charts, family walls, “today I feel” display, and an “I love my Pet” poster. Art work to include the children’s painting and sticking activities of letters and winter clothing were also on display.

A spacious outdoor area is located to the rear and side of the premises. A hard ground surface and a section with artificial grass matting was provided. A wooden play house with a slide, a tunnel, tyres, benches, a mud kitchen, a fairy garden area and a shed with additional sit on or ride on toys was available for the children’s use. An area just outside the downstairs preschool room was covered allowing for play opportunities in inclement weather conditions.

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 following safety measures were observed on the day of inspection:

- The front door to the premises was appropriately secured to prevent a child from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the premises.
- The designated outdoor area was observed to be free from hazards and was secured with high level fencing and lockable gates.
- The toys and materials used by the children on the day of inspection were observed to be in good condition.
- Windows on the first floor had wooden fixtures in place to prevent children having accesses to the windows.
- Handrails were provided on stairways.
- Storage areas were inaccessible to the children.

Infection Control:

The inspector observed the following infection control measures in practice within the service:

- Warm running water, hand soap, pedal operated bins and paper hand towel was available for handwashing. The children in the Downstairs Preschool were observed to wash their hands after outdoor play time.
- Waste bins were stored inaccessible to the children.
- Nappy changing and sanitary areas were ventilated with mechanical ventilation.
- Cleaning schedules were completed and available for review.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Garda vetting was available for 4 staff members. However, three of these vetting disclosures were not dated within the previous three years in adherence to with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.

Infection Control:

2. Hand washing practices in the Upstairs Preschool were inadequate, with hand sanitiser used to clean the children's hands before snack time instead of warm running water and liquid soap.
3. The food items taken in from home for the children were observed to contain perishable items such as cheese and meat. These food items were stored in the children's bags in the hallway and not in a refrigerator at the recommended storage of 5°C or below.
4. The corner edges of two soft seats in the Upstairs Preschool were torn with internal foam exposed, therefore the seats could not be adequately cleaned.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. Garda vetting has been renewed for two staff members and awaiting registered providers vetting which is in process on the Tusla portal. Ensure vetting is checked and in date.

Infection Control:

2. Hand washing done daily at lunches. Ensure hand washing is done at lunch time.
3. Perishable foods stored in fridge. Foods checked in bags and stored in fridge.
4. Torn sofa removed and replaced with soft furnishings.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. Photographic evidence of two staff vetting certificates.

Infection Control:

2. Copy of updated policy.
3. Photos of lunches stored in fridge.
4. Cosy area with torn sofa removed.

Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider has adequately addressed the non-compliances found on inspection.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.

Non-Compliance Information

Records reviewed did not adequately reflect the attendance of each child on the day of the inspection. One preschool child had not been signed in upon their arrival. It is acknowledged that when the inspector brought this to the attention of the registered provider the attendance record was updated.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Ensure all children are signed in as they come in. This is done daily. One person is in charge to ensure all children are signed in.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence of attendance records completed.

Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider has been accepted in relation to Regulation 24.

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) The registered provider ensured that a person who held in-date First Aid Response (FAR) training was at all times immediately available to the children attending the pre-school service. Two FAR training certificates were on file, in date with both staff members present on the day of the inspection.

Non-Compliance Information

(2) (a) (b)

Items within the first aid box upstairs were noted to have passed their expiry date which included bandages and wound dressings.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Out of date items removed and replaced. Checklist and done.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copy of checklist completed.

Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider has been accepted in relation to Regulation 25.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider had insurance cover in place for 23 pre-school children attending the service on a Part Time basis. The policy showed that the service had insurance in place from 28/03/2024 to 27/03/2025.