

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

.TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CN039
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Name of Service:	Corfree Kids Ltd
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Address of Service:	Corfree, Lough Gowna, Co. Cavan
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Eircode:	H12 HE44
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Name of Registered Provider:	Colette O'Reilly
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date(s) of Inspection:	30/09/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	20	PM	7
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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
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Description of service

Corfree Kids Ltd (previously Little Rascals) is a privately owned service in operation since 1999. This service operates from a converted garage beside a private residence outside the village of Lough Gowna in Co. Cavan. The service operates from 8.30am to 6pm Monday to Friday and provides full day care, part-time and sessional care to pre-school children aged 2 to 6 years. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE). The service caters for a maximum of 25 pre-school children. A school aged service is provided to a maximum of 16 children. There is off street parking available for drop off and collection. The premises consists of 1 playroom and there is access to an outdoor play area to the rear of the premises. A prefabricated building adjacent to the pre-school room was not in operation and not inspected.

Staffing

On the day of the inspection there were six staff members employed in the service, including the registered provider. Three staff were working directly with the children additionally, a transition year student was also present. One person is named as relief staff, one staff member is employed to work with school aged children, and one staff member is employed for cooking duties.

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/ safety/ premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 16, 19, 21, 23 and 29. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

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

(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 has a designated person in charge who is the registered provider, and a named person in charge in the absence of the registered provider.

(b) A review of the staff roster demonstrated that at all times when the preschool service was in operation the designated person in charge or named person in charge were on the premises.

(2) Staff files for five of six staff employed in the service were reviewed upon the service's last inspection 04/12/2023. The staff file for the one new staff who is employed to work with School Aged children was reviewed.

(a) (b) Two written and validated references from past employers were on file.

(c) A Garda vetting disclosure had been obtained for the new staff member. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years for all six employed staff.

(d) A review of employment history for the one new staff member, demonstrated that they had not lived in a state other than 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 the new staff member, held an appropriate childcare qualification at Level 5 or higher 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 day of inspection there was an adequate number of staff members working directly with the children attending the 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:

- In the morning upon the inspector's arrival there were 20 children aged between 2 years to 4 years 7 months, being cared for by 3 staff members.
- In the afternoon there were 7 children aged between 2 years to 4 years 7 months being cared for by 3 staff members. Eight school aged children were present in addition to the pre-school children.

(8)(a) The registered provider ensured that 2 adults were present on the premises at all times, verified by staff rosters.

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;
- (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.

Compliance Information

- (1) A record in writing was maintained as follows
- (h) Daily attendance records were available detailing each child’s arrival and departure time on a daily basis.
- (i) A staff roster was available, and detailed staff arrival, departure time and lunch break cover.
- (j) A medication booklet was available, no entries have been made to date.
- (k) An accident and incident book were available, records reviewed were completed in full detailing the accident/incident description, steps taken by staff, staff and manager signatures and parents signature upon collection.

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.

Compliance Information

(1) (a) The following examples demonstrate how the registered provider ensured that children’s learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the service:

Basic Needs:

- Children availed of snack times at 11.15am and 1.15pm, which was provided from home. Snacks contained a section of sandwiches, cheese, crackers, yogurts, fruit and rice cakes.

A hot meal was provided by the service daily at 4pm. The hot meal provided on the day of inspection as advised by the cook was pasta, sausage, bacon, mixed vegetables and a choice of carbonara or tomato-based sauce. Where a child requires food upon arrival or additional food at snack time both the registered provider and cook advised that additional food can be provided. Drinks were accessible to the children throughout the day, which were supplied from home and refilled in the service if required.

- Spare clothing, boots and coats for outdoor use were available to the children. Aprons were available for messy play activities. Two children that were being toilet trained had their toileting needs met as required, with staff positively promoting and encouraging the use of the toilet.
- Stackable beds and appropriate bedding were available should children require a rest. The registered provider advised that a quieter area at the back of the play room was assigned for use if a child needed to sleep, with a sleep check log available if needed.
- On the day of the inspection the children were observed to have access to the outdoor environment after morning time snack, and again after their afternoon snack.
- Throughout the inspection children were observed to be consistently engaged in play or activities. Some activities observed included story time, playdough, matching activities, stacking toys, jigsaws, role play in the kitchen area, floor play with blocks, and relaxing on the cushions at the library area chatting with their peers and reading books. Whilst outdoors, children availed of physical play opportunities riding trucks, balance bikes, playing with footballs and dancing. Children were observed to help the staff sweep up some fallen leaves, with other children observed to make some “tea” in the outdoor play kitchen area.

Supporting Relationships Around Children:

- Children demonstrated confidence in their environment and familiarity with the routine. Positive interactions between staff and children were observed, with conversations about the children’s home life such as a visit to the dentist.
- The staff were observed to work well together. Transitions throughout the day during play time, snack time and outdoor time were observed to be smooth and calm.
- Where small disagreements on the sharing of toys/turn taking occurred between children, staff were observed to speak to the children at their level and helped to provide solutions to any issues that occurred.
- Individual boxes for each child contained their own belongings and creative work. A family tree was on display which children took pride in, by telling the inspector where their family photo was and who was in the picture with them.

- Communication with parents is through in person chats upon arrival and collection. At the end of the sessional service staff were observed to speak to parents about their child's day and progress on settling in.

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 care room had defined areas of interest some of which included a soft rest area, library area, kitchen area, table top sections for fine motor play opportunities, role play/small world and floor play area, jigsaw area and creative area. The room was bright and welcoming, and children were observed to play and work at both the table top and floor play areas as they wished. The outdoor area that was available contained a mixture of ground surfaces to include, concrete, soft mats and a covered artificial grassed area. Equipment available in the outdoor area included a wooden play kitchen with appropriate play equipment, balance bikes, ride on trucks, large building blocks, a wheelbarrow, tables and benches, footballs and two play houses.

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:

- All cleaning agents were stored on high shelving out of the reach of the children.
- The main entrance door to the pre-school service was secured upon the inspector's arrival and remained secured throughout the inspection.
- The inspector was requested to sign the visitors book upon arrival.
- All play equipment and materials were placed on shelving units easily accessible to the children.
- The emergency exit doors were unobstructed throughout the inspection.

Infection Control:

- The service was visibly clean with up to date completed cleaning schedules available. Play equipment and toys used by the children were maintained in a clean and hygienic manner.

- Warm running water, hand soap, paper towels and waste bins were provided for handwashing.
- Children's lunches were stored in the fridge, easily accessible to the children.
- Children were observed to wash their hands before snack times and after toileting.
- Tables were cleaned prior to meal times.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

- (1) A small external gate in the designated outdoor play area was observed to be unsecured while children were availing of outdoor play in the morning time. The inspector brought this to the attention of the registered provider who then secured the gate.
- (2) A pre-school child was observed to eat popcorn as part of their morning snack. Popcorn for children under the age of 5 years old is deemed a choking hazard.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

- (1) The registered provider has put a small lock on all gates, that can only be opened by an adult/staff member.
The Managers daily morning checklist has now been updated to include checking gates and staff have also been reminded to check them before outside play.
- (2) The registered provider has sent a message to parents on the day of inspection advising them of the dangers of certain fruits and that popcorn is not permitted in preschool.
Checking lunch boxes has now been included in the daily check list and all staff have been made aware that popcorn is not permitted and should be removed immediately if found.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Photographic evidence of updated managers daily checklist, plus new lock on gate and also notification to parents regards choking hazard risks regards certain foods for children, submitted to the office of the early years inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider has addressed the non-compliances in Regulation 23.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-

- (c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated*
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

Compliance Information

- (c) The care room and sanitary accommodation areas were maintained at recommended room temperatures of 18 to 22°C on the day of inspection. Opened windows provided a means of ventilation in the sanitary facilities.
- (d) The care room and designated outdoor play area was observed to be kept clean and maintained in a good state of repair.
- (e) There were adequate sanitary facilities for the number of children attending the service. A staff toilet was available in the building next to the preschool service.