

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:	04/12/2023
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No of pre-school children:	AM	20	PM	7
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Family Resource Centre, Commons Road, Navan, Co. Meath
Inspection undertaken by:	C Tunney
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. The service provides full day care, part-time and sessional services to pre-school children from 2 – 6 years of age. It caters for a maximum of 25 pre-school children and opening hours are 08:30hrs – 18:00hrs. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme from 09:15hrs to 12: 15hrs each weekday. A school aged service is provided to a maximum of 16 children. This service operates from a converted garage beside a private residence outside the village of Lough Gowna in Co. Cavan. There is off street parking 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

Four staff members are employed in the service of which three staff care directly for pre-school children and one staff member is responsible for cooking and were present on the day of inspection. Additionally, a transition year student was also present. Two adults who are available for relief were also identified.

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 inspections may also focus on other areas as required.

These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report. The pre-school room in operation on the day of inspection was inspected. The registered provider stated that the prefabricated building is presently not in operation and not inspected.

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) The registered provider was the person in charge and had identified a named person to deputise as required.

(b) The registered provider was present on arrival of the inspector.

(2) Six staff files were reviewed (4 staff, 2 relief staff), a transition year student file was also reviewed.

(a) Seven written past employer references were available and validated.

(b) In the absence of past employer references, 3 validated references from a source other than an employer was available

(c) Seven staff files reviewed had the required garda vetting documents available for inspection.

(d) Police Vetting in respect of two staff members who had lived outside the state for more than 6 months were available.

(4) Three staff members and 2 relief staff members who provide direct care to pre-school children had documentation to show they held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Qualifications Framework.

Non-Compliance Information

(2) Two references in respect of one staff member and 2 references in respect of the transition year student were not available for inspection.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Two references have been sought in respect of each person. Vetting procedures will be put in place before new staff commence in the service.

Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider has been accepted. Outstanding vetting procedures have been put in place. Regulation 9 has been addressed.

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) There were three adults working directly with the children on the day of inspection. The children were attending the service on a sessional/ part day care and full day care basis.

(2) The adult: child ratio was satisfactory.

- Pre-school Room: There were 20 children aged between 2 years 7 months to 5 years being cared for by 3 staff members, of which 7 children availed of part-time / full day care. A transition year student was also present.
- Prefabricated Room: The registered provider reported that this room is not presently in operation.

(8) Two staff members are present, at all times, in the service as required by Regulation 11 (8) as evidenced from examination of the staff roster and staff reported hours of attendance.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:

- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;*
- (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;*
- (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;*
- (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;*
- (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;*
- (f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;*
- (g) the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner;*
- (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;*
- (i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.*

(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-

- (c) an authorised person.*

Compliance Information

(1) Records were available as specified by Regulation 15 (a)(b) (c) (d)(e)(f)(g) (h)(i) (j) in relation to each child attending the service. Eleven child records were examined.

(3) The records as specified above were available for inspection.

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

Basic Needs

- The children availed of two snacks at 11.30am and 1.30pm provided by the parents/guardians and consisted of small sandwiches, fruit and vegetable pieces. Children's drinks were available within their reach which they could access as they wished. Dinner was provided by the service at 4.30pm and consisted of pasta and tomato-based sauce, sausages, and bacon.
- The staff members sat with the children during the sessional service where the children were involved in tabletop activities such as making puzzles or playing games, assistance was given as required.
- Children were facilitated to move freely in the care room to engage in play material of their choice.
- The children availed of outdoor play during the morning time.

Supporting Relationships

- Staff were observed being kind and respectful to all children and addressed each child appropriately.
- A sense of identity and belonging for the children attending the service were observed. There was a family and birthday wall on display where children could refer to during the sessional service.
- The pre-school is situated within a close-knit community and parents/ guardians were greeted warmly at the door.
- There was predictability and routine to the morning and the children responded to this positively and were observed to be busy and engaged in their environment.

Non-Compliance Information

Basic Needs

1. A child's signs of tiredness/ prompt for sleep were not acted on, the child was observed sitting at a table with his head resting on the table and then fell asleep. The child was moved to a more comfortable facility when requested by the inspector. The child was availing of part time day care.
2. The children's basic care needs in relation to meaningful play was not met in the afternoon period which did not promote the children's wellbeing and development. Up to 14 school aged children were cared for in the same room as the seven pre-school children. Two staff members were present, but their attention was drawn to the needs of the school aged children. The staff members sat away from the pre-school children and did not adequately engage in meaningful conversation or collaborate in meaningful play with the children. Instead, the transition year student chatted with the pre-school children and engaged in making puzzles with them or children played alone.
3. The noise level in the pre-school room was high from normal school aged children's activity but uncomfortable for the pre-school children. A pre-school child was observed lying on the floor and pulling his hoodie over his head when the school aged children were doing their lessons.
4. A child was placed to sleep lying on a woollen blanket, appropriate linen (bed sheets) was not available to ensure children's comfort during sleep.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. As the child was due to be collected at that time, I failed to notice he fell asleep in the two minutes after I had given him his bag. I will be more aware in the future of the possibility of this one of incident. I am glad it was brought to my attention.
2. We have now employed a person to work with part-time and full-time children while the other 2 staff members engage with the after-school children.
3. The new staff member will have her own room to engage with the part-time /full-time children.
4. Sheets are now used on the sleep beds. Photograph submitted.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence

Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider has been accepted. The registered provider submitted a corrective and preventative action to each non-compliance with applicable photographic evidence. Regulation 19 has been addressed.

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 pre-school room had a range of play-based materials. The play materials and equipment were positioned at an accessible level on open shelving.
- Play material included a large selection of puzzles, play kitchen with support material, arts and crafts and dress up clothes. A separate small area off the main room facilitated a train track and large and small blocks.
- A range of books were available which supported children's language development.
- The children's artwork was noted on a notice board and a birthday and family wall was also displayed.

Non-Compliance Information

1. Some of the designated areas were poorly resourced and the variety of play material was limited. For example, the kitchen area in the playroom contained minimum amount of support material and no natural material. There was limited sensory play material available, such as sand, or water play. There was also limited natural material noted.
2. Valuable space was taken up by the presence of a photocopier and staff administration material such as workbooks, roll books and admin paper. Additionally, valuable space was taken up by a container holding extra dress up clothes.
3. In the outdoor area the wooden kitchen unit / messy play area was empty and contained no support play material.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. Since the visit from the inspectorate, we have reconfigured our room into different areas. We have a sand and water area, construction area, library with soft seating. Dressing up and home corner which includes natural materials. Musical instruments are used freely during circle time. The photocopier is needed daily as staff members cannot leave the room to photocopy materials in the interest of health and safety. Therefore, it has now been given a designated area within the writing area. Photos included.
2. The extra clothes box has been removed and room reconfigured.
3. The outdoor wooden kitchen materials were in a box in the playhouse. Photo included.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence submitted

Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider has been accepted. The registered provider has provider assurance that the pre-school environment meets the care needs of the children attending by having well-resourced interest areas. Photographic evidence submitted demonstrated this positive change following the reconfiguration of the pre-school room. Regulation 21 has been addressed and will be reviewed at the next inspection.

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 door leading into the premises was appropriately secured to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the premises.
- Fire doors throughout the building were unobstructed.
- The outdoor area was secured.

Infection Control:

- Warm water, liquid soap and paper hand towels were provided to support effective hand hygiene in the sanitary accommodation in the service.
- The children were facilitated to wash their hands before eating and following personal care.
- The standard of cleaning throughout the pre-school was satisfactory.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. A Christmas tree was noted on top of a storage cupboard that was unsecured.
2. A TV was noted on top of a cupboard that was not secured.
3. Cleaning agents was noted on top of a radiator accessible to pre-school children.
4. Trip hazards were noted in the outdoor area, the cement surface was uneven and consisted of multiple step-down levels and a large gully running through the outdoor area that posed trip hazards.
5. A drain in the outdoor area was uncovered and posed a trip hazard.
6. The lower aspect of the fridge door was rusted.
7. There was inadequate space for the storage of the school aged bags and coats. They were seen lying on the floor and in a large heap which posed a trip hazard.

Administration of Medication:

8. While a policy for the administration of medication was available a procedure for the safe administration of medication was not available. A consent form or a record form for recording the administration of medication was not available. The registered provider stated the service does not administer medication and parents attend the pre-school if medication is to be administered. Therefore, administration of medication especially in an emergency was not considered.

Safe Sleep:

9. Ten-minute sleep observations were not carried out on a pre-school child who was placed to sleep on a low bed. Ad hoc checks were carried out by two staff members in variance to safe sleep guidance.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

- 1 The Christmas tree is now secured, and a photo was sent to the inspector.
2. The brackets have been bought and the TV will be secured to the wall during the Christmas break.
3. As per photograph, cleaning materials have been moved to a designated high shelf out of the reach of children.

4. The uneven areas have been highlighted using orange paint, additional all weather mats have been sourced to place on uneven surfaces, designated play areas have been put in place such as messy kitchen area.
5. The drain has been covered by an appropriate steel lid, see photo attached.
6. Rust areas on the fridge was sprayed using enamel spray, however it was unsuccessful. A new fridge has been ordered.
7. School bags and coats from school-aged children will be stored on the shelves in the covered outdoor play area.

Administration of Medication:

8. New medication record book is now available for use by staff in the case of an emergency. Photo included.

Safe Sleep:

9. A new sleep observation roster and documentation has now been put in place, with a designated staff member. Photo included. Ten-minute sleep observations are now carried out in relation to the child's colour, breathing status and position.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Photographic evidence submitted

Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider has been accepted. Each non-compliance has been addressed appropriately safeguarding health, safety and welfare of children attending the service. Regulation 23 has been addressed and will be reviewed at the next 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.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) no person other than-

(i) pre-school child attending the service,

(ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,

(iii) an employee, or

(iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and

(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.

Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider ensured that each pre-school child's attendance and departure time is recorded on a roll book at time of arrival and departure.

Non-Compliance Information

(3) A system was not in place to ensure that no person other than employees or authorised visitors can enter the pre-school. A visitor's book was not maintained, the inspector was not requested to record her attendance and departure time.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

3. This was an oversight on my behalf, and I will ensure this doesn't happen again. The book was there on the day, is used correctly but unfortunately not on this day.

Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider has been accepted. Appropriate documentation is in place. Regulation 24 has been addressed.

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 was trained in First Aid Responder (FAR) and immediately available to the children.
- (2) (a) A First aid box was safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position on the premises.
- (b) A First aid box was fully stocked, available to the children attending the pre-school service at all times.

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.*
- (2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-*
- (a) a parent or guardian of a pre-school child attending or proposing to attend the pre-school service,*
 - (b) an employee, and*
 - (c) an authorised person.*
- (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) A written record was available of the fire drills completed in the service. The last recorded fire drill took place on the 6/11/2023.
- (b) A record was kept of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment which was last serviced on 03/11/23 and 06/12/23 respectively.
- (2) (c)The record was available for inspection by an authorised person.

(4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was conspicuously displayed on the premises

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured the service was insured. The insurance certificate submitted for review showed an expiry date of 27/03/2024.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

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

- (a) of sound and stable structure,*
- (b) safe and secure,*
- (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 service was adequately lit, and ventilated.
- (d) The indoor environment was adequately cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required.
- (e) There was adequate sanitary facilities for the number of children attending.

Non-Compliance Information

- (c) The service was inadequately heated on the day of inspection. At 10.30am the room temperature was cold with a temperature of 16.4°C recorded, in variance to the recommended temperature 18°C to 22°C. The temperature was rechecked at midday and recorded at 17.7°C.
- (e) A staff toilet was not available. This was previously located in the adjoining domestic house but that is no longer available.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(c) It was -5 degrees on the Monday morning in question, the heating had not been on all weekend as is usual and had been turned on at 6.30am. I now realise the heating needs to come on at an earlier time during cold spells in order to rectify this problem. This is done on an app on my phone.

(e) An area has been secured which will serve as an office and a staff toilet. Works commence in the early the New Year and will be completed by the end of February 2024.

Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider has been accepted. Regulation 29 has been partly addressed as construction work is required to rectify the staff sanitary accommodation, therefore Regulation 29 (e) remains outstanding and will be reviewed at the next inspection.