

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CW044				
Name of Service:	The Creative Kids				
Address of Service:	Unit 1, Liddard House, Liddard House, Old Burrin Road, Carlow, Co. Carlow				
Eircode:	R93 A729				
Name of Registered Provider:	Katarzyna Gurzawska				
Service type:	Full Day				
Date of Inspection:	20/06/2024				
No of pre-school children:	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>AM</td> <td>38</td> <td>PM</td> <td>23</td> </tr> </table>	AM	38	PM	23
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Civic Offices, Limerick Road, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary				
Inspection undertaken by:	L McGeeney				
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

This privately owned and operated full day care service was established to provide care and education to children aged 1 – 6 years old. A registered school aged care service is also provided. The service operates Monday to Friday, 7am to 7pm for 50 weeks of the year. This includes a three-hour session that operates Monday to Friday, 9.30am to 12.30am for 38 weeks of the year which is funded under the early childhood care and education scheme (ECCE) for eligible children.

The service is operated from the ground floor of a two-storey business premises in the town of Carlow. The service consists of five activity rooms, a sleep room, sanitary accommodation areas, kitchen, office and outdoor play area.

This is a sister service to Creative Kids, Askea Business Park, Carlow.

Staffing

The registered provider does not work in the service on a daily basis but is available to call on when required and was present in the service for a short time on the day of inspection. The service manager is the person in charge on a daily basis. There are seven staff employed to work directly with the children, including one member of staff employed in the mornings under the access and inclusion model (AIM). The member of staff responsible for catering was present in the service in the afternoon.

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(2)(4), 11(1)(2)(4)(8), 20, 21, 22, 24, 25, 26(1)(4) 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 registered provider, 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

(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

The staff files of eight members of staff were reviewed as part of the inspection process:

(2)(a) Written, validated references from past employers were available in respect of each member of staff.

(b) Written, validated references from a source other than a past employer were available in respect of two members of staff.

(c) Garda vetting had been carried out in respect of each member of staff and relevant records were maintained on file. The service had a process in place to ensure that staff were re-vetted on a three yearly basis.

(d) Police vetting had been carried out in respect of staff who had lived outside the state. Relevant records were maintained on file.

(4) Staff who worked directly with the children held recognised qualifications in early childhood care and education at levels 5, 6 or 8 on the national qualifications framework.

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.

(4) Subject to paragraph (5), where a registered provider contemporaneously provides-

(a) a sessional pre-school service, and

(b) a full day care service or a part-time day care service, or both, the minimum ratio of adults to children applicable for the duration of the sessional pre-school service in respect of the children attending that service shall be the ratio specified in paragraph (3).

(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 7 staff working directly with 38 children aged between 21 months and 6 years old across five activity rooms on the morning of the inspection. There were 4 staff working directly with 23 children aged between 21 months and 6 years old across 4 rooms on the afternoon of the inspection. In addition, the service manager was present in the service throughout the day and available to work in the rooms, to relieve staff for breaks or to assist with activities such as mealtimes and nappy changing. The catering staff member was present in the afternoon but not included in the adult to child ratios. Additional staff were available in the afternoon to work with the school aged children.

(2) and (4) The adult to child ratios were maintained within the recommended ratios throughout the period of the inspection.

(8)(a) There were at least 2 staff present at all times while the service was in operation.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

(1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day, and

(b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.

(3) A registered provider of a full day care service, a part-time day care service or a childminding service, other than such a service to which paragraph (2) applies, shall ensure that-

(a) a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the pre-school children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises.

Compliance Information

(1)(a) The children had access to one of five activity rooms and the outdoor play area on a daily basis. Each room was bright and comfortable and set up with toys and equipment suitable to the age and stage of development of the children who used the room. There were double doors between ECCE rooms 2 and 3 which could be opened to create one larger room when required for large group activities.

(b) There were cosy seating and relaxation areas in each room where the children could rest during the day. These spaces were furnished with a variety of child sized sofas and armchairs, cushions, large cuddly toys and floor mats. There were two relaxation spaces in the Toddler room: a reading area and a cosy area, which was created by a wooden structure that had a removable fabric canopy. There was a sleep room off the Wobbler room that was furnished with four standard cots and used by children from both the Wobbler and Toddler rooms when

they needed to sleep. Camp beds were also available for older children who needed to sleep during the day. Staff said that sleep times were according to each child's individual needs and routines.

(3)(a) There was a large, enclosed area at the back of the premises which had been developed as an outdoor play area for the children. The space was 'L' shaped and enclosed by high concrete walls, which prevented any unauthorised access to the outdoor play area. There were trees growing outside the walls which provided some natural shade in the outdoor play area. Part of the area had a tarmac surface and part a soft fall, artificial grass surface. The children enjoyed several periods of outdoor play during the day. On the day of inspection the children who were moving on to national school in September used the outdoor area to practice for their graduation ceremony which was planned for the following day.

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

Each room in the service was furnished with tables and chairs suitable to the age and stage of development of the children in the room as well as suitable seating for staff. Toys and materials were displayed on open shelving units that were accessible to the children. The storage units and furniture such as play kitchens were used as room dividers to create interest areas including a home corner/imaginative play area, reading area, table-top activity and dining area, floor play area, art area, construction areas and sensory play area.

The outdoor area was well laid out and resourced with different play opportunities than the children had access to indoors. The soft fall area was equipped with a large climbing frame with swings and slides. There were freestanding slides and a climbing cube suitable for use by the younger children, seating areas, a balance beam and a climbing structure made from tyres. The tarmac area was used for riding scooters, tricycles, tractors and other ride-on vehicles. There was also a mud kitchen, handwashing sink/water access point, play houses, sand pit, covered play shop/house, rockers, wheelbarrows, push toys, balls, wall mounted blackboards, watering cans and a large planting box with flowers herbs and vegetables.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 22 – Food and drink

A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

The service had a healthy eating policy and a three-week rolling menu plan, which was displayed in the service. Week two of the menu was in use on the day of inspection. Parents supplied food for the children’s morning and afternoon snacks. The service provided the children who attended on a part-time or full day care basis with a hot meal at 1pm. On the day of inspection the hot meal was spaghetti bolognese followed by dessert of apple and banana slices. The children were given a second helping if they wanted them.

There were jugs of water and cups available in each room throughout the day as well as the children bringing their own drink bottles or water or squash which they could access throughout the day. The children brought their drink bottles with them when going outside to play. The children had access to their lunchboxes and snacks throughout the day so that they could get something to eat whenever they were hungry between set mealtimes.

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*

Compliance Information

(1) The staff were responsible for recording the daily attendance of the children. In most of the rooms, except the Wobbler room, both paper and electronic formats were used to record the arrival and departure times of the children. In the Wobbler room an electronic application, designed for the purpose, was used to record the children's attendance.

(3)(a) The service manager met visitors to the service at the front door before allowing them to enter the premises if appropriate.

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) There was one member of staff present in the service throughout the day who held current certification in first aid response (FAR) valid until November 2024. Another member of staff held current certification in Paediatric first aid valid until October 2024.

(2)(a) There were three well-stocked first aid boxes stored in the office where they could be easily accessed by all staff when required.

(b) The first aid boxes were available if required by a child attending the service.

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) There was a written record maintained of the monthly fire drills that took place in the service, most recently on 7 June 2024.
- (b) There was a written record of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the service. The firefighting equipment was serviced on an annual basis, most recently on 10 April 2024. The smoke alarm system was serviced on a quarterly basis.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed on the walls in the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service had current insurance cover for up to 53 children attending at any one time valid until 27 March 2025.