

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CW049
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Name of Service:	Kilkenny Road Community Childcare & Family Centre
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Address of Service:	Kilkenny Road, Carlow, Co. Carlow
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Eircode:	R93 FX65
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Name of Registered Provider:	Marian Duffy
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	03/09/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	42	PM	38
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla Child & Family Agency, Athy Road, Carlow
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Inspection undertaken by:	Norma Thornton.
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Title:	Early Years Inspector.
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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

Kilkenny Road Community Childcare & Family Centre is a full day childcare service which operates from a purpose-built premises off the Kilkenny Road, in Carlow town. The service provides sessional, part-time and full day childcare services for children aged 1 to 6 years. The service operates from 08:30 to 17:30 hours, Monday to Fridays for 38 weeks of the year.

There are four pre-school classrooms provided in the service, the Wobbler, Toddler, Preschool and Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) classroom. The service has a designated dining area adjacent to the kitchen, where children go for their meals, two designated sleep rooms and several outdoor play areas onsite.

Staffing

There were 14 staff employed in the service, which included a designated kitchen staff. The registered provider does not work directly with the children in the service. All staff employed in the service to work directly with the children held qualifications in early childhood care and education ranging from Level 5 to Level 8 on the national Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) framework.

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.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under the following regulations.

Regulation 15 Record of a preschool child,

Regulation 19 Health, Welfare and Development of Child,

Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety, and Welfare of the Child,

Regulation 25 First aid (1) (2) (a) (b),

Regulation 26 Fire Safety (1) (a) (b) (4) and

Regulation 28 Insurance.

As a result, the scope of the inspection included all four preschool classrooms and some of the outdoor play areas available in the service.

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 designated 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
- (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 inspector observed that there was a designated person in charge in the service. A named deputy designated person in charge, was also available to deputise as required.

(b) The designated person in charge was on the premises throughout the inspection.

(c) A clear management structure was observed in practice and was also clearly displayed, outlining the roles and responsibilities of each staff member employed in the service, for parents and authorised visitors to see.

(2) Staff files for 14 staff members were reviewed by the inspector.

- (a)(b) Two validated references were available on file for each of the 14 staff members, from either a past employer or from a reputable source.
- (c) Garda vetting certificates were on file for each staff member employed in the service. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d) Police vetting was on file for each of two staff members employed in the service, who had lived in a state other than Ireland for a period of longer than six months.
- (4) Certificates of qualification for each staff member, were available for review by the inspector. The documents provided, demonstrated that all staff working directly with the children, held at least the minimum Level 5 ranging to Level 6 qualification in early childhood care and education, on the National Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) Framework.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.

Compliance Information

The service's policies and procedures as required by Schedule 5 were available in the service and open for inspection.

On review of the documents, the inspector was assured that the written policies were specific to the service and had been effectively communicated to the staff as part of their induction prior to commencement of employment in the service.

Evidence was also recorded that demonstrated that an annual review of policies and procedure was carried out by the registered provider, in consultation with staff, and revised by staff.

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.

Compliance Information

(1) Throughout the inspection, an adequate number of staff members were observed directly caring for and supervising the children in attendance in each of the four preschool rooms.

(2) The minimum ratio of adults to children as required by schedule 6 was maintained as follows.

In the Wobbler room there were 7 children, (aged 1 to 22 months) directly cared for by 3 staff members, for a full day care service.

In the Toddler room there were 7 children, (aged 2 to 2 years and 8 months) being cared for and supervised by 2 staff members, for a full day care service.

In the Preschool Room, there were 17 preschool children aged 2 years 8 months to 4 years, cared for and supervised by 3 staff members and in the afternoon, there were 15 children cared for and supervised by 3 staff members.

In the ECCE room 11 children aged 2 years and 8 months to 4 years were cared for by three staff members and in the afternoon 8 children remained cared for by 2 staff members.

A relief staff member was floating in the service providing relief for staff breaks and assistance where required.

The designated person in charge was also available to assist where required.

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.*

Compliance Information

The inspector reviewed a sample of 18 children’s registration files on the day of inspection.

The children’s files were kept secured in a filing cabinet in the service office. All files reviewed were fully completed with particulars (a) to (i) signed and dated as required under the regulation.

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

(1)(a)(b) The inspector made the following observations throughout the inspection.

Basic and Individual Care Needs:

In each of the classroom's children had access to fresh drinking water with water stations provided. One classroom had named their area for their individual bottles and drinking water "The Hydration Station".

Meals were served in the adjacent dining area with snacks and meals provided onsite by the service. A menu plan was reviewed on a weekly basis and was observed to provide a variety of hot nutritious meals containing the required food groups.

At mealtimes children were provided with adequate time to eat at their own pace and enjoy their food. Staff sat and engaged in conversations with the children at mealtimes taking the opportunities to get to know them individually.

The children easily chatted to the chef in the kitchen as they observed her serving their shepherd's pie and vegetables. Alternative options were available as confirmed by the staff and chef if a child did not like certain foods. On the day of inspection all the children were observed to enjoy their food and when staff observed children had finished their portion, an offer for some more was provided.

Children's toileting and nappy changing needs were attended to as required with staff observed to be conscious of protecting the children's dignity when changing nappies or supporting children with toilet training. Nappy changing and toileting were observed to be positive experiences for the children with staff naming what part of the procedure was next and chatting away with them about their home family, likes and dislikes or singing songs with the younger children.

The younger children and any other child that required to sleep during the day were supported according to each child's individual needs. Staff worked in partnership with parents and guardians in relation to the children's sleep patterns and sleep requirements.

Physical environments:

Each of the classrooms had clear identifiable areas of interest appropriate to the age of the children in attendance, which were visually pleasing and encouraged and stimulated interest in playing imaginatively and trying new challenges. Areas of interest observed included rest and relaxation areas, dress-up areas, home corners, construction areas, transport areas, opportunities for sensory and messy play on table trays. Opportunities were provided for children to develop their physical gross motor skills. Five new infants who were settling in the wobbler room were observed exploring the wooden crawling tunnel, the wooden sensory tree tower, availing of opportunities to move freely in the clear space provide and to play in the soft rest area, enjoying the soft cushions and listening to staff telling stories.

In each of the classrooms there were supplies of well-maintained play materials and resources including treasure baskets of sensory toys, fidget toys, manipulative and connective toys, jigsaws, peg boards and interactive musical toys. Interest areas were resourced well with appropriate equipment appropriate to the individual classroom's needs and the age of the children in attendance.

A specific sensory/rest area had been created just outside the wobbler room for any child to avail of one-to-one relaxation time if required. The area was decorated with soft rugs and cushions, a sensory tower light and some reading books.

A variety of outdoor areas were provided, and staff were observed to ensure that all the children had opportunities for outdoor play on the day of inspection.

Supporting Relationships Around Children:

Throughout the four classrooms the inspector observed that staff were responsive to children's needs in a timely and appropriate manner. Children were listened to carefully and gently supported to communicate their feelings, requests and to understand rules of behaviour for being together with their friends, sharing taking turns and learning to resolve conflicts.

Staff were observed to respond to children's cues for cuddles and comfort as they transitioned into the service, demonstrating respect for each child's needs and developing their trust. The staff were observed to communicate

effectively with each other and provided calm, positive and fun environments for all the children. This was particularly evident in the wobbler room where the staff were settling in several new children and demonstrated that they were applying the service's settling in policy in practice.

Parents were communicated with at drop off and collection time and additional information was provided to parents throughout the day regarding their individual child's care via the service's parents media communication system.

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:

Access to the service could only be gained by contacting a staff member through the keypad call system at the main door. No unauthorised persons could gain access to the service and no child could leave the service unsupervised. The boundary of the service and outdoor areas was secured by a 10-foot-high wall and a large metal gate secured with a closing mechanism at a height that the children could not reach.

At mealtimes the inspector observed that the kitchen was inaccessible to all children and to staff who were not assigned to kitchen duties. While the children could observe and chat to the chef preparing their meal, a solid counter prevented them from accessing the kitchen area.

Cleaning equipment, materials and solutions were all stored safely and securely in a secure storage area away from the children.

Staff were able to demonstrate that a daily outdoor risk assessment of the outdoor areas and play equipment was carried out daily and outcomes recorded to ensure the physical play environments were safe for the children.

Infection Control:

Children were observed to use the toilet and hand washing facilities with ease, ensuring they washed their hands correctly after using the toilet, after messy and outdoor play and before snack and mealtimes.

The staff were observed to monitor handwashing ensuring children were prompted on occasions of forgetfulness and staff demonstrated to the children how they frequently they washed their hands after similar tasks.

Handwash basins were adequately supplied with liquid hand soap and paper towelling, which the children could easily access and use.

Administration of Medication:

On the day of inspection, there was no child in the service that required prescribed or emergency medication. On review of past administration of medication records maintained by the service, records were completed appropriately, by the staff, in line with the service’s administration of medication policy.

Safe Sleep:

The inspector observed that staff were familiar with best practices in safe sleep, ensuring that children were positioned on their backs, with their feet to the foot of the cots, when going to sleep.

The staff were observed carrying out physical checks on each sleeping child at ten-minute intervals, checking and recording the findings of each child’s colour, breathing and sleep position. Staff continually monitored the temperature of the sleep room to ensure that it remained between 16 °C- 20°C. These practices were in line with the service’s safe sleep policy and safe sleep procedure.

Fire Safety:

The service ensured that fire safety procedures and precautions were carried out as per fire safety guidelines in preschool settings. On review of records, it was observed that the fire alarm system and firefighting equipment was serviced annually. Fire drills were carried out routinely, monthly as recommended for preschools. Emergency fire exit doors were observed to be clear, well-lit, with fire emergency procedures in the event of a fire displayed throughout the service. A fire assembly area was clearly signposted in the outdoor area. There was evidence of documented fire training in staff files

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 were nine staff members present on the day of inspection who had current first aid responder (FAR) training. The roster reflected the presence of the FAR trained staff and ensured that there was always at least one FAR trained member of staff onsite.

(2)(a) A first aid box was present in each of the four classrooms, containing adequate and appropriate contents.

(b) The first aid boxes were always available, while the children attended 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) A record of monthly fire drills carried out in the service was maintained, the last fire drill carried out in the service was recorded as having taken place on 17 June 2024.
- (b) A record of the annual maintenance checks of fire-fighting equipment in the service and the service's fire alarm system was maintained. The last maintenance checks for the fire-fighting equipment were recorded as having taken place in March 2024 and the last maintenance check for the fire alarm was recorded as having taken place on the 29 August 2024.
- (4) A notice of the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in each classroom and on the corridor. A fire assembly point was clearly identified outside the main gate.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

An insurance certificate displaying adequate insurance for a full day childcare service providing cover for a total of 205 children between this service and its sister service St. Catherines Community Childcare, Carlow was available for inspection.