

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DL056
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Name of Service:	Kid Kare Crèche & Montessori
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Address of Service:	Tawnalarry, Donegal Town, Co. Donegal
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Eircode:	F94 A895
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Name of Registered Provider:	Sharon Graham-Porter
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date of Inspection:	02/05/2023
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No of pre-school children:	AM	100	PM	82
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Donegal Early Years Inspectorate, St. Conal's Campus, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal. F95 XK94
Inspection undertaken by:	L Mc Glynn, M Farrell and L Costello
Title:	Early Years Inspectors

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

Kid Kare Crèche & Montessori is a privately owned and operated early years' service located in a rural setting on the outskirts of Donegal Town. The service is registered to provide a full day, part-time and sessional care to children aged 0 - 6 years and operates from 8.00am-6.00pm each weekday. The service is also registered to provide school age care.

The service operates from three separate buildings which are located adjacently on the pre-school site.

There are four playrooms provided in the two-storey building to the front of the site. The Little Discoverer's and Little Adventurer's rooms are located on the ground floor in this building. Children's sanitary facilities and sleeping accommodation are located adjacent to both of these ground-floor rooms. A staff room, a kitchen where meals for children are prepared and ancillary storage areas are also located on the ground floor. The Montessori Sun and Montessori Moon rooms are located on the first floor of this building.

A single storey building situated towards the rear of the pre-school site includes two additional playrooms, namely the Little Explorer's and Montessori Star rooms. The Montessori Star room is served by adjacent children's toilets. Nappy-changing facilities and a designated sleep room are available just off the Little Explorer's room. Other facilities provided in this building include an office and staff sanitary facilities.

A further single storey building to the right of the two main buildings houses the Earth room which is used as a sessional pre-school in the mornings and a school age service in the afternoons. A large awning shelters an outdoor play area utilised by children in this room on a daily basis.

Staffing

A total of 34 staff members were employed in the service at the time of inspection. This included the registered provider as manager and 28 staff members working directly with the children. Auxiliary staff included kitchen, maintenance and office staff. There was also one student on educational placement at the time of the inspection.

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 and safety. The inspections may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations *9, 11, 23, 25, 26* 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 inspectors wish 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

(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

(2) The employment records of eight staff members recruited since the previous inspection were reviewed on this inspection.

From the information reviewed, the following met the requirements of this regulation;

(a) and (b) There were two written and validated reference on file for five staff members and one written and validated reference for the remaining three staff members.

(c) Garda Vetting disclosures received from The National Vetting Bureau of an Garda Síochana were available to view for the eight staff members.

(4) Evidence of completion of a major award in Early childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above was available for six staff members. This requirement was non-applicable in respect of one staff member.

Non-Compliance Information

(2) (a) (b) The second reference on file for three staff members was from sources other than those listed on their past employment record.

(4) A statement of results was on file for one staff member and not their final award certificate as required.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

(2) (a) (b) The staff members were informed of the issue and asked to amend their CV to include this reference source in their employment history. One of the staff members is no longer in employment with us.

In future, references will be reviewed alongside the CV to ensure that the referee is listed in the employment history.

(4) A copy of the certificate is now on file and the service will obtain appropriate final award certificates from any future employees.

Supporting documentation submitted

Documentation was submitted to evidence compliance.

Summary Comment

The information submitted was reviewed and deemed to meet the regulatory requirement.

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) & (2)

On the inspectors' arrival at the service, 100 children were being cared for by 20 staff members in seven care rooms.

- In the Little Discoverers (baby) room 3 staff members were caring for 8 children aged 1-2 years.
- In the Little Adventurers (toddler) room, 3 staff members were caring for 10 children aged 2-3 years.
- In the Montessori Sun room, 3 staff members were caring for 19 children aged 3-4 years.
- In the Montessori Moon room, 2 staff members were caring for 10 children aged 3-4 years.
- In the Little Explorers (toddler) room, 3 staff members were caring for 13 children aged 1-2 years.
- In the Montessori Star room, 3 staff members were caring for 20 children aged 3-5 years.
- In the Earth room, 3 staff members were caring for 20 children aged 3-5 years.

There was one additional adult in the Little Discoverer's (baby) room working in the service as part of their educational placement.

When assessed in the afternoon, the following adult child ratios were observed.

- In the Little Discoverers (baby) room 3 staff members were caring for 9 children aged 1-2 years.
- In the Little Adventurers (toddler) room, 3 staff members were caring for 15 children aged 2-3 years.
- In the Montessori Moon room, 1 staff member was caring for 7 children aged 3-4 years.
- In the Little Explorers (toddler) room, 3 staff members were caring for 15 children aged 2-3 years.
- There were no preschool children being cared for in the Earth room in the afternoon.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)

On the afternoon of the inspection the minimum ratio of adults to children was not adhered to at all times as follows:

1. At 2pm, 2 adults in the Montessori Star playroom were caring for 19 children aged from 3-5 years of age where the required adult to child ratio was 1 adult to each 8 children.
2. At 2:15pm 2 adults were found to be caring for 17 children aged from 3-5 years from the Montessori Sun room in the outdoor area where the required adult child ratio was 1 adult to each 8 children.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

(2) 1. Staff rotas have been reviewed to ensure that lunch cover is available every day including days where there are unexpected absences like what occurred on the day of inspection.

2. An email was sent to parents explain the importance of prompt collections as on the day of inspection there were children collected late without notice to the service. The next parent's newsletter will address the importance of prompt collections of children. Parents will also be referred to our collections policy about this.

Supporting documentation submitted

Documentation including staff rosters and a copy of a notice sent to parents was submitted to evidence compliance.

Summary Comment

The service has demonstrated that they have adequately addressed the non-compliances found on the day of 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 main entrance to the service had a bell entry system and an electronic keypad that was controlled by staff to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the service and to prevent children from exiting unsupervised.
- The service had an extensive outdoor play area to the front, side and back of building. This area was secured by appropriate fencing and gates.
- Cleaning products in the playrooms were stored in high shelving out of the reach of children or in locked cupboards with safety restrictors.
- Materials and resources were maintained in a clean and good state of repair.
- Blind cords were secured with appropriate securing devices.
- The stairs were well maintained with no trip hazards evident. Children were supervised when using the stairs by either a staff member or their parents on arrival and departure.

Infection Control:

- Adequate handwashing facilities were provided in the service with warm water, liquid soap and paper towels.

- The care rooms and sanitary accommodation were ventilated by either openable windows or mechanical ventilation systems. Older children were observed to have access to outdoor play on the day of inspection for sustained periods of time.
- Aprons and gloves were available and used by staff for nappy changing procedures.
- Staff members were responsible for daily cleaning duties and cleaning schedules were in place and up to date. Staff were observed on inspection cleaning surfaces and floors prior and post mealtimes. Colour coded cloths were used by staff to clean the various areas in the rooms and sanitary accommodation. Cloths were stored in labelled containers to prevent misuse. Hot running water was available in sinks that were inaccessible to children for effective cleaning purposes and each room had a supply of both general and concentrated cleaning products for use when required.
- Soothers were stored in individual containers and labelled for use.

Administration of Medication:

- Staff were aware of the service's medication administration policy.
- Consent had been given by parents for administration of medication at enrolment.

Safe Sleep:

- The service had three designated sleep rooms with standard cots.
- All children had individual bed linen stored in individual baskets.
- Staff informed the inspectors that soft toys and comforters are removed from cots once children are settled to sleep.
- Staff observed the children as they slept at 10 minute intervals and recorded observations of their colour, position and breathing pattern in writing.

Fire Safety:

- Staff were aware of the evacuation procedures and assembly points in the event of an emergency with the emergency routes observed to be free from obstruction during the inspection.

Outing:

- The service had a policy on outings and consent was given by the parents prior to any outings taking place. Staff were familiar of the procedure to follow in preparation for and while on an outing as per the services policy.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. There was a section of fencing with wood damage exposing a nail that posed a risk of injury to a child in the outdoor area used by the children from the Little Explorers' care room.
2. In the outdoor area used by the Little Explorers' care room, two metal hooks were positioned at a low level posing a potential risk of injury to a child.
3. There was a loose spindle on the wooden bridge in the outdoor area used by the Earth care room that posed a potential risk of injury to a child.

Infection Control:

4. It was observed that the young children's hands were not routinely washed after nappy changing in one of the care rooms posing a potential infection control risk.
5. Waste was not disposed of appropriately in all care rooms and sanitary accommodation. Whilst there were foot pedal operated bins in some areas, there was a combination of open top and swing bins in some of the rooms and sanitary accommodation. One foot pedal operated waste bin in one care room was also broken. Foot operated pedal bins were not available in two of the nappy changing rooms to dispose of contaminated waste. All waste bins in the service are required to be foot pedal operated to prevent the risk of cross infection.
6. Childrens lunches brought in from home in the Earth and Montessori moon rooms were stored in the children's schoolbags and not refrigerated prior to eating. In discussion with staff, it was confirmed that children's lunches regularly contain perishable items such as yogurts, cheese and cold meats which require refrigeration to prevent food spoilage.
7. The sanitary accommodation in the Montessori star room was not maintained and repaired as required to provide for effective cleaning. The paint was extensively chipped on the walls in one cubicle and there was evidence of rust developing on the radiator beside the wash hand basins.
8. The first aid boxes in the care rooms contained over the counter medication cream. Medicines, creams or ointments are not permitted to be stored in the first aid box.
9. There was inadequate spacing between the 7 cots in the Little Discoverer's sleep room with distances ranging from 18-37cm of space. There was also inadequate spacing between 8 of the cots in the Little Explorer's sleep room. This was despite 2 of the 12 cots in this sleep room having been removed and set up in the playroom at sleep time to increase the amount of space available between cots in the sleep room. A minimum space of 50cm is required between cots for infection control purposes. This is a recurring non-compliance from the previous inspection.

Administration of Medication:

10. There were three bottles of temperature reducing medication individually labelled that had passed their expiry dates of the 1 May 2022 and two bottles that had expired in February 2023. Expired medication poses a risk of injury if administered to a child.
11. Records of medication administered to children were not always signed by the parents on collection which poses a risk that a parent may unintentionally administer additional doses of medication outside of the maximum safe limits.

Safe Sleep:

12. There was no evidence to demonstrate that seven of the cot mattresses met the required safety standards in the Little Discoverers, Little Adventurers and Little Explorers sleep rooms. This is a recurring non-compliance from the previous inspection.

Fire Safety:

13. A notice of the procedure to follow in the event of an emergency was not displayed in a conspicuous position for each care-room which posed a potential risk of a delay in the evacuation of the premises in the event of an emergency.

Outing:

14. A small field at the rear of the premises used by staff for short walks was overgrown and contained a barb wire perimeter fence. Staff confirmed that they had not carried out a risk assessment identifying actions to be taken to reduce the risk of injury from children using the area.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The fence has been fixed.
2. The hooks have been removed and replaced with alternative hanging option.
3. The bridge spindle was fixed.

Staff will carry out regular risk assessments of the outdoor area to identify any hazards like these in the future.

Infection Control:

4. A memo was sent to all staff to inform them of the need to wash children's hands after nappy changing. Childrens handwashing has also been added to our nappy changing policy and procedures. All staff are informed of policy updates and new staff read policies before induction.

5. Foot pedal operated bins have been added to all areas. In future, any bins that need replacing will be replaced only by foot pedal operated bins.
6. Children's perishable lunch options will be put in the refrigerator on arrival. All staff, and new parents, are informed of procedures for perishable lunch items upon starting in Kid Kare.
7. The wall was re-plastered and painted to cover any chipping. The radiators were painted to cover any rusting. The walls and radiators will be monitored and staff will report any need for repainting.
8. Items were removed from all first aid boxes. Staff were informed via emailed memo regarding storage of creams in the first aid boxes. The staff will regularly check and restock first aid boxes to ensure that no creams, ointments, or medicines are stored there. The issue will also be addressed at next staff meeting.
9. In the Little Explorer's room tape and marks have been put on skirting boards to ensure that cots are consistently 50cm apart when children are sleeping in them. In the Little Discoverers room one of the cots will be taken out of the room, like in the Little Explorers room, to accommodate the children sleeping at the same time. When new children start in the room the service will assess the children's sleeping patterns, if the children are sleeping at different times, sleeping times will be rotated.
10. The expired medicines were disposed of. Staff were informed of the need to check the expiry dates on medicines monthly.
11. The unsigned medication administration records were signed by parents/guardians. A memo was sent to all staff reminding them of the need to have these signed on the day medicine is administered.
12. New cot mattresses with safety standard labels will be ordered to replace some of these mattresses. Stacking floor beds will be ordered to replace the remainder and will only be used for children over 2 years. Regular checks will be carried out to ensure that safety labels are still in-tact.
13. Evacuation procedures have been created and displayed in a conspicuous position each of the rooms. Visual checks will be carried out alongside monthly fire drills to ensure that these procedures are still well displayed.
14. A risk-benefit assessment was carried out for the area. This uses both a safety talk and boundary game to help children identify the hazards and develop responsibility in helping make safe choices in the outdoor area. All visits to the area, especially first visits of a new group, will reiterate the safety talk and boundary game.

Supporting documentation submitted

A number of images and documents were submitted to evidence compliance with this regulation.

Summary Comment

The information submitted by the service has been reviewed and the non-compliances identified under Regulation 23 have been adequately 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)
A sample review of staff records demonstrated that a minimum of 11 staff members had up to date training in first aid for children. The staff roster demonstrated that at least one of these staff members was available to the children at all times.

Non-Compliance Information

(2) (a) and (b)

- The first aid boxes in each room and in the main box in the hallway did not contain a sufficient quantity of the recommended contents for providing first aid treatment for the numbers of children catered for in the service. This included insufficient first aid items such as triangular bandages, sterile eye pads, water-based burns dressings and wound dressings.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

(2) (a) and (b)

- The first aid boxes were checked and additional items were purchased. The service will carry out regular three month first aid box checks that will ensure that the appropriate quantities are also in stock.

Supporting documentation submitted

Purchase receipts were submitted to evidence compliance.

Summary Comment

The information has been accepted and the requirements of this regulation have been met.

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.*

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) A written record of fire drills carried out in the service was maintained. The record indicated that fire drills occur monthly with the most recent dated 27th April 2023.
 - (b) A record of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms was maintained. The most recent maintenance record for the firefighting equipment was dated November 2022 and the smoke alarms was dated March 2023.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

A certificate of insurance was available to view which demonstrated that the service was insured to provide a full day care service for up to 110 children with an expiry date of 27 March 2024.