

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015DS207
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Links Childcare
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Silken Park, Kingswood, Citywest, Co. Dublin
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<b>Eircode:</b>	D22 TH92
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Gillian Kelly
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<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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<b>Day 1 of Inspection:</b>	29/10/2024
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<b>Day 2 of Inspection:</b>	30/10/2024
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<b>No of pre-school children day 1:</b>	AM	82	PM	89
<b>No of pre-school children day 2</b>	AM	81	PM	81

<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Floor 7, Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, Kilmainham, Dublin 8
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<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	F Carty, S Quigley and S Early-O'Brien
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<b>Title:</b>	Early Years Inspectors
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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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not Applicable
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### Description of service

This service is one of eleven early years services operated by the registered provider. The service provides full-time, part-time and sessional education and care from age three months to six years between 7 am and 6:30 pm Monday to Friday.

The service operates from a purpose-built facility beside City West. Children are allocated by age to one of seven rooms. There are four sleep rooms, and a separate dining area is available for the older children. The service has an outdoor area which is divided into three separate spaces pertaining to the different age groups of children.

### Staffing

The service employs twenty nine staff members including a manager, chef and float staff member. On the first day of inspection there were twenty-four adults working directly with the children. The manager and an additional staff member were available to assist in rooms when required. The chef was also present. The area manager arrived following the inspector's arrival to the service.

On the second day of inspection there were twenty three adults working directly with the children. The manager, area manager and an additional staff member were available to assist in the care rooms when required.

### 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, information and records, health, welfare and development of child and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under the following regulations:

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

Regulation 11 – Staffing levels

Regulation 16 - Record in relation to pre-school service

Regulation 19 – Health, welfare and development of child

Regulation 23 – Safety

Regulation 25 – First Aid

Regulation 26 – Fire safety measures

These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 16.

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 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.*

*(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.*

*(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

Documentation was reviewed in respect of all adults who were employed in the service. This included the area manager who was present on both days of inspection. A total of 30 files were reviewed. The following records were available for the adults:

(2)

(a)(b)

The registered provider demonstrated that they had verified the references obtained from 2 sources for each of the adults.

(c)

Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for each of the adults. The service adhered to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

- (d)  
International Police vetting was available for twenty eight adults who had lived outside the State for a period exceeding 6 months.
- (3)  
The procedures specified under regulation (2) were carried out prior to the adults commencing work in the service.
- (4)  
Records were available evidencing that all staff members who were employed to work directly with the children held the required qualification or equivalent.

## 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)  
An adequate number of adults were working directly with the pre-school children attending the service throughout the inspection.
- (2)  
The registered provider ensured that the minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained in the service at all times throughout the inspection. There were 24 adults working directly with 82 children on the 1st day of inspection and 23 adults working directly with 89 children on the 2nd day of inspection.

## Part IV – Information and Records

### Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

*(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:*

- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*
- (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

### Compliance Information

(h) Details of the attendance of each child in all care rooms were recorded at the time of entering and leaving the service. The movement of children between care rooms during designated sleep times were also accurately recorded.

(i) The staff roster was available on both days of inspection and reflected the adults working in the service on each day.

(j) A sample of medication administration records were reviewed. These records were signed by staff and parents and were completed appropriately.

(k) A sample of accident and incidents records were reviewed. These records were signed by staff and parents and were completed appropriately.

### 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-

(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

Appropriate and suitable care practices were observed, as evidenced by the following.

Children were provided with regular and adequate food on the day of the inspection. Children with alternative diets and preferences were catered for. Mealtimes were observed to be pleasant experiences for the children. Staff were observed to sit and assist the children when required, and children were supported to eat their meal at their own pace. Bibs were worn during meals to protect the children's clothing. Drinking water was available within the rooms and was offered regularly to the children. Infants brought bottles of milk from home and were given these according to their individual routines. Children were assisted to clean their faces at appropriate times. Nappy changing was carried out at frequent intervals throughout the day and as the need arose. Nappy changing was observed to be respectful, and warm interactions were observed during this time.

Children accessed the toilet independently and assistance was provided when required.

The staff interacted with the children in a respectful, warm and sensitive manner. Appropriate verbal and nonverbal communication such as low tones, eye level contact, touch, using the child's name and other strategies were observed. Staff provided comfort to children when upset and managed behaviours using positive strategies. The experiences and activities provided to the children in the rooms were suitable to the age and stage of development of the children. For example, staff discussed the choice to participate, and the timing of these activities, and how alternative activities were provided ensuring the play experiences were meaningful. These included messy play, arts and crafts activities and playdough. Each care room spent time outdoors and children were dressed appropriate to the weather. Staff demonstrated a robust knowledge of the individual needs of each child in their care.

Younger children were placed to sleep according to their individual routines and when they showed signs of tiredness. The sleep room was calm and conducive to sleep. The children who had soothers were offered these when they were being placed to sleep. Staff provided the children with reassurance and comfort as they were settling them to sleep, sitting next to them and speaking in gentle tones. Older children were given the opportunity to sleep within their care rooms after dinner time. Designated cosy areas were provided within the rooms where children could relax or take a break from activities.

## 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

The inspectors found by observation of practice, review of documentation, discussion with staff and inspection of the premises that the registered provider had taken the following steps to safeguard children attending

#### General Safety:

- The entrance door to the service was adequately secured to ensure the safety of the children within and to avoid unauthorised persons accessing the service or children exiting unsupervised.
- Hand sanitisers and cleaning agents were stored safely out of reach of children.
- All storage facilities were inaccessible to children.
- The toys and play equipment observed in use by the children on the day of inspection appeared in good working order.
- All blind cords were secured.

#### Infection Control:

- Liquid soap, warm water and paper towels were available to facilitate hand washing.
- A system was in place for effective sterilisation of soothers.
- Waste was managed appropriately with the use of pedal bins.
- Individual bed linen was provided for children. Staff stated that bed linen is laundered once a week or when required.

#### Administration of Medication:

- There was written evidence of prior parental consent for the administration of both temperature reducing and prescribed medications, and there were procedures in place to safely administer and document such medication if required, including in the case of an emergency.
- Staff adequately detailed the procedures for administering medication when required during discussions with the inspectors and had appropriate documentation available to record such administration if required.
- Individual care plans were in place for children requiring emergency medication.

#### Safe Sleep:

- Staff were familiar with safe sleep guidance and placed babies on their backs to sleep.
- Sleep logs were maintained in the dedicated sleep room and the younger care rooms, and individual children's observations recorded room temperature, breathing, colour, and position every ten minutes.
- The temperature of the rooms where children slept were maintained at the required temperature ranges.

### Fire Safety:

- The designated fire escape routes were clearly indicated and free from obstruction on the day of inspection.
- Staff members adequately outlined the evacuation procedures in place in the event of a fire and stated that fire drills are practiced regularly on a monthly basis.

### Non-Compliance Information

#### Safe Sleep:

1. Two children aged 1 year were put to sleep-on-sleep mats in the Dolphin room. The requirement is for children of this age to sleep in cots or a floor bed. Although there was risk assessments carried out by the service in conjunction with the parents, they were inadequate as they did not state there would be a risk to these children sleeping in cots or floor beds.

### Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective & Preventive Action

#### Safe Sleep:

The Risk Assessment form was used more as a parental waiver than a risk of danger and therefore did not fulfil its design purpose. It was mentioned at the Inspection that we were at the final stages of drafting our new Safe Sleep Policy which has addressed this issue. An Individual Sleep Plan will be drafted in consultation with parents for children between 15 and 24 months if Floor Beds are in use and are agreed to be more appropriate for the child. Where only sleep mats are in use, all children under 2 will sleep in a cot and will only be moved to a sleep mat where there is a genuine risk of climbing/falling from the cot.

The policy mentioned above clarifies for all staff the exact procedure to follow in determining sleeping arrangements for children under 2. The basic premise is that there is a cot provided for every child under 2 and that is where he/she should sleep except in extraordinary circumstances of substantiated danger. The policy implementation will be monitored by the Regional Manager

#### Supporting documentation submitted

**Safe Sleep:**

The revised sleep policy submitted to the inspectors.

**Summary Comment**

The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider have addressed the non-compliance under Regulation 23.

**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 person trained in First Aid Responder was available to children at all times.
- (2)  
(a)(b) A fully equipped first aid box was stored in a conspicuous position and available to the children attending the 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.

### Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) A record in writing was available of fire drills that took place in the service. The last fire drill took place on the 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2024.
  - (b) A record was available on the day of inspection detailing that the fire fighting equipment was serviced during January 2024 and the smoke alarms were last serviced on the 17<sup>th</sup> September 2024.