

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015FL135
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Kids Inc.
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Seatown Road, Swords, Co. Dublin
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<b>Eircode:</b>	K67 DN82
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	John Harnett
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<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day
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<b>Date 1 of Inspection:</b>	17/02/2026
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<b>Date 2 of Inspection:</b>	18/02/2026
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	53	PM	41
<b>Day 2</b>	AM	51	PM	51

<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor, Unit 4/5 The Nexus Building, Blanchardstown Corporate Park, Ballycoolin, Dublin 15
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<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	Y Kelly & AM Coyle
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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

Kids Inc is one of five Early Years services which are owned and operated by the registered provider. The service is registered to provide full day, part time and sessional preschool education to children from 0 to 6 years and provides school aged care to children up to the age of 12 years. The service operates from 8:00am to 6:00pm Monday to Friday and participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme from 9:00am to 12:00 midday. The service is conducted from a purpose-built single storey building within its own grounds which is located adjacent to a primary school and a car park which is operated by Fingal County Council. There are 7 care rooms in the service namely the Baby room, Toddler 1 room, Toddler 2 room, Preschool room 1, Preschool room 2, Preschool room 3 and the ECCE room which accommodates preschool children in the morning and school aged children in the afternoon. Two separate sleep rooms are provided in the service and there are 2 fully enclosed outdoor play areas available.

### Staffing

The registered provider employs a service manager and a deputy manager to oversee the daily operational management of the service in addition to providing support across the rooms, supported by a team of 20 core staff members who work directly with the children. Two early years practitioners are employed in the service to reduce the adult to child ratio and if necessary to work with children with additional needs, posts which are funded by the Minister as part of the Access and Inclusion Model scheme. The service also employs a bus driver, and a chef for catering duties who also provides cover in the rooms as required and a staff member who carries out household duties in the evenings. There were 2 staff members employed to work with school aged children. The registered provider was not present on the day of the inspection.

### Methodology

Tusla 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 and premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 19, 22, 23, 25 and 26, however, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under regulation 29. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

As a result, the scope of the inspection included the Baby Room, the Toddler Room 1, Toddler Room 2, Pre-school Room 1, Pre-school Room 2, Pre-school Room 3. The ECCE Room was closed on the day of the inspection.

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, deputy manager, 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)(a) There is a designated person in charge for the service and a named person to deputise as required.

(b) The service manager was present and in charge of the service when the inspectors arrived unannounced to the service at 09.15am and was present for the duration of the inspection.

(2) The files for 27 staff members were reviewed. The following was recorded:

(a) Thirty-nine written validated references were available from past employers.

(b) Fifteen written validated references were available from a reputable source other than a past employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for 27 adults. Garda vetting disclosures that were available demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring the service to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) International Police vetting was available for 10 adults who had lived outside of the state for a period of more than 6 months.

(4) Documentary evidence was available to confirm that 24 adults who may work directly with the children in the service held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed eligible by the Department of Children, Disability and Equality.

### Part III – Management and Staff

#### Regulation 11 - Staffing levels

*(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

(2) On the 17/02/2026 the following adult to child ratios were observed when the service was operating at capacity:

- In the Toddler room 1 there were 13 children aged 1 years 2 months to 1 year 10 months being cared for by 3 staff members.
- In the Toddler room 2 there were 14 children aged 1 year 11 months to 2 years 11 months being cared for by 3 staff members.
- In the Preschool room 1 there were 5 children aged 3 years 2 months to 3 years 8 months being cared for by 1 staff member.
- In the Preschool room 2 there were 5 children aged 3 years 2 months to 4 years being cared for by 1 staff member.
- In the Preschool room 3 there were 12 children aged between 3 years to 5 years being cared for by 2 staff members.
- The ECCE room was closed on the day of inspection.

On the 18/02/2026 the following adult to child ratios were observed when the service was operating at capacity:

- In the Toddler room 1 there were 11 children aged 1 years 2 months to 1 year 10 months being cared for by 3 staff members.

- In the Toddler room 2 there were 13 children aged 1 year 11 months to 2 years 11 months being cared for by 3 staff members.
- In the Preschool room 1 there were 4 children aged 3 years 2 months to 3 years 8 months being cared for by 1 staff member.
- In the Preschool room 2 there were 6 children aged 3 years 2 months to 4 years being cared for by 1 staff member.
- In the Preschool room 3 there were 13 children aged 3 years to 5 years being cared for by 4 staff members.
- The ECCE room was closed on the day of inspection.

(8)(a) The registered provider ensured that 2 adults were present on the premises at all times, verified by staff rosters and staff attendance records maintained at the service.

### Non-Compliance Information

(2) The registered provider did not ensure that the adult to child ratio was maintained in the baby room on both days of the inspection as evidenced by the following:

1. In the Baby room there were 4 children aged 9 months to 1 year 1 month (two children under 12 months with ratio 1:3 and two children over 12 months with ratio 1:5) being cared for by 1 staff member. Two staff members were required to maintain the correct adult to child ratio.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective Action

The ratio has been corrected. As per ratio regulations a single ratio is not applied uniformly where mixed ages are accommodated in one room instead the requirement for each is calculated. The requirement for this number of children was 1.06 adults which was calculated on the day as 1.

#### Preventive Action

A new ratio calculator was introduced to help with ratio calculation. After consultation with Tusla inspectors, management has been retrained in minimum requirement for mix aged group.

### Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliances under Regulation 11 have been addressed.

### 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

#### Compliance Information

1(a) The following observations were made on how each child's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the daily life in the service:

##### Basic needs:

- Children's meals are cooked onsite using fresh ingredients in the kitchen by the chef working in the kitchen. Parents provide dinners for the children in the Baby room. On the first day of the inspection the children had chilli beef with potato croquettes for dinner and coconut curried chicken with rice was served for dinner on day 2 of the inspection. Parents provide the children's afternoon tea which was observed to be stored in the fridges in the individual care rooms. A further snack of crackers and fruit is available for children who require it later in the afternoon.
- The children's water bottles were available for the children in the care rooms.
- The children's personal care needs were attended to promptly. Nappies were changed at scheduled times and more frequently as needed. The staff members used the opportunity to engage with and chat to the children. The children who were toilet trained used the toilet independently.
- The children under two years of age slept in cots in the 2 sleep rooms and Toddler 2 room. Children aged over years in the service who required sleep slept on floor mats in the Toddler 2 room.
- The children attending the service were given the opportunity to spend time in the outdoor area during the inspection.

##### Supporting relationships around children:

- Staff demonstrated warm and caring interactions with the children. There was a welcoming atmosphere in the service. The early years practitioners demonstrated sensitivity and responsiveness to each child's individual needs and supported children's inclusion and involvement in play. Staff were responsive to children's cues and engaged positively, using distraction and redirection when children were observed experiencing challenges in play or interactions during the inspection.
- Staff soothed children whilst going to sleep with relaxing music playing to provide a calm atmosphere.

- Children’s identity and belonging were promoted in the service. For example, there were ‘Family Wall’ displays at children’s level with photographs of children’s families and birthday charts which included children’s photographs. There were ‘Community Wall displays with photographs of local community landmarks.
- Staff discussed that they document information in a ‘daily memo’ record sheet in relation to children’s meals, nappy changing, sleep and ‘what I enjoyed doing today’ to share with the parents on a daily basis.

### Physical and material environment:

- There was age-appropriate furniture with small child sized chairs and tables for children to sit whilst they played or for mealtimes. Toys and equipment were visible and accessible to children on low level shelving which facilitated children’s independence in play. The care rooms were divided into areas of interest which provided opportunities for a variety of spontaneous play experiences and choice for the children. In the Baby room, the materials and equipment provided to the children were suitable to the age and stage of development of the children present. There were soft mats and soft blocks and a tunnel on the floor to provide physical play opportunities for children. There were sensory bottles, sensory box with feathers and musical instruments for sensory play. There was an armchair for adults to sit whilst feeding young children.
- Interest areas included home corners and kitchen areas including cooking utensils, work bench and toy tools, dolls and small world items including dinosaurs all of which supported the children’s imaginary play experiences. There were transportation materials including trains, train tracks, cars and construction resources including plastic building bricks. There were art materials such as chalk board and chalk to support mark making for children. There were cosy areas with a rug, soft sofas, canopy and basket of books at the children’s level for reading and relaxation and to provide opportunities for storytelling.
- Two fully enclosed and spacious outdoor areas were provided at each side of the service. Both areas have access to sheltered areas beneath the eaves of the building which enabled children to be outdoor regardless of weather conditions. Both areas were surfaced with an impact absorbing surface. In the outdoor area accessed by the children attending the Baby room, Toddler room 1, Toddler room 2 and Preschool room 2 was resourced with a wooden slide, climbing frame, wooden steps and ride on bikes which promoted safe risky play, gross motor and fundamental movement skills. There were wooden kitchens and real-life pots and pans, steel jugs and wooden spoons which provided opportunities for dramatic play. There was a box of large plastic building blocks and large foam blocks which supported

construction and co-operative play. A sandpit provided opportunities for sensory play. Children’s wellies for outdoor play were provided in the outdoor area. The outdoor area used by the older pre-school children and the school aged children was equipped with a mud kitchen located beneath mature trees and surfaced by grass for pretend and sensory play, a rope climbing frame, a low-level rope bridge balance boards, a climbing frame and slide all of which supported children’s gross motor development.

### Programme of Activities and its Implementation:

- There is a key person approach in the service. Staff carry out planning which informs the curriculum.
- The facilitation of smaller groups of children was observed during the inspection with staff dividing groups between indoor and outdoor play. This enabled practitioners to spend time interacting with children in small groups such as reading stories and involvement in children’s play.
- Transitions were observed to be well managed; children were given verbal cues and practitioners sang songs with the children whilst waiting for mealtimes which supported children with the transitions. There was a visual timeline of the daily routine displayed using photographs. Children were observed to move from the table independently after finishing meals and moved to play areas of preference. Routines provided for predictability and comfort for young children.

### 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

Nutritionally balanced snacks and meals were detailed on the service’s 3-week menu on display in the premises. A cook is employed to prepare and serve the morning snack and the dinner in the service. The hot meal provided in the service is sourced from an external catering company which is reheated and served on the premises. Dietary requirements specified by the parents were accommodated and observed in practice during the inspection. A selection of cereals was available for the children to have for breakfast if required. The morning snack served by the service at 10am on the first morning of inspection consisted of brown bread and butter with orange slices with yogurt and blueberries served on the second day of inspection. On the first day of inspection from 11.30 am, the children were provided with a hot meal of chilli beef with potato croquettes for dinner with water provided to drink, coconut curried chicken with rice was served for dinner on day 2 of the inspection. Parents provide the

children’s afternoon tea which was observed to be stored in the fridges in the individual care rooms. A further snack of crackers and fruit is available for children who require it later in the afternoon. The children’s water bottles were available for the children to take from low-level shelves, should they feel thirsty at any stage during the day.

### 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 door leading into the service was appropriately secured to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the premises.
- The service’s designated emergency exits were unobstructed.
- Cleaning agents were stored safely out of the reach of children on raised shelving and in locked cupboards.
- The kitchen was inaccessible to the children during the inspection.
- The outdoor play areas were gated and secured with walls and fencing to prevent a child gaining unsupervised access to a roadway or other source of danger.

##### Infection Control:

- Warm water, liquid soap and paper towels were provided at the wash hand basins in the service. The children were facilitated to wash their hands before eating, after using the toilet, after nappy changing and following messy play and outdoor play.
- There was a lined, lidded, and pedal-operated bin in the sanitary accommodation where nappy changing took place.
- The premises, play equipment and materials were in a clean and hygienic condition.
- Up to date documented cleaning schedules were on display in the service.
- Soothers were stored in personalised containers when not in use.

### Administration of Medication:

- Medications were stored out of the reach of children. No children were observed having medication administered on the day of the inspection.

### Safe Sleep:

- All children aged less than 2 years had access to and were observed sleeping in one of the 15 standard cots provided in the sleep room adjacent to the Baby room or in the sleep room located off the main corridor of the service.
- The inspectors observed that 10-minute sleep check observations were being performed and documented on all sleeping children, noting each child's colour, position and breathing pattern at the time of each check.
- Adequate space of at least 50cm was left between the cots in both of the sleep rooms and the sleep mats set up on the floor of Preschool room 2 during the inspection.

### Fire Safety:

- The records demonstrated that fire drills were practiced on a regular basis to familiarise both adults and children of the correct procedures to follow in the event of a fire.

## 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 including first aid responder (FAR) training was immediately available to the children attending the pre-school service as evidenced in the staff roster and the in-date FAR certifications provided for inspection in respect of seven staff members.

(2)(a) and (b) The first aid boxes were suitably equipped and safely stored in readily accessible positions on the premises, out of the reach of children.

### 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.*
- (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 fire drills was available on the premises with the last fire drill dated as having been carried out on the 29 January 2026.
- (b) The number, type and maintenance record for firefighting equipment and smoke alarms were available. Firefighting equipment was last serviced on the 02 July 2025, and the smoke alarms were serviced on the 04 February 2026.
- (4) Fire evacuation procedures were displayed throughout the service.

### Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

#### Regulation 29 - Premises

- A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-*
- (b) safe and secure,*
  - (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*

#### Compliance Information

- (b) The door leading into the service was appropriately secured to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the premises.

#### Non-Compliance Information

- (d) The paint on the wall adjacent to the wall in the rest area of the Toddler room 1 and the wall alongside the couch in Preschool room 3 was peeling and not maintained in a good state of repair.

#### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

## **Corrective Action**

Maintenance work was carried out on these areas on 25 March 2026.

## **Preventive Action**

The conditions of walls (especially when displays are removed will continue to be monitored by health and safety officer. All defects will be reported to the manager who will update the maintenance list and will report it to Head Office.

## **Supporting documentation submitted**

- Photographic evidence.

## **Summary Comment**

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliances under Regulation 29 have been addressed.