

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015FL135
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Name of Service:	Kids Inc.
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Address of Service:	Seatown Road, Swords, Co. Dublin
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Eircode:	K67 DN82
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Name of Registered Provider:	John Harnett
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date of Inspection:	23/05/2023
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No of pre-school children:	AM	71	PM	63
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, 181-189 Lakeshore Drive, Airside Business Park, Swords, Co. Dublin K67 Y5C6.
Inspection undertaken by:	A.M. Coyle and S. Cully
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
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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 care and 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 8am to 6 pm Monday to Friday and participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) from 9am to 12 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, the Toddler 1 room, the Toddler 2 room, the 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

There were 23 staff members present in the service on the day of inspection including one practitioner who works with school aged children only. 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 manager and deputy manager were present in the service throughout the inspection coordinating the day-to-day operations of the service in addition to providing support across the care rooms in the service. Two students on work experience placements were present in the service on the day of 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/ health, welfare and development of child/ safety/ premises and facilities. The inspections may also focus on other areas as required.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 9 Management and recruitment and regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child.

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

(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 service manager was the designated person in charge of the service and there was a named person available to deputise in their absence when required.

(b) The service manager was present and in charge of the service when the inspectors arrived unannounced on the morning of the inspection and remained in the service for the duration of the inspection.

(2) Following a review of previous inspection records and in discussion with the service manager, the inspectors were informed that 7 staff members 6 of whom work directly with the Early year's children had commenced working in the service since the last inspection on 26/09/2022.

The files maintained for these 7 staff members were reviewed in addition to files for 2 students on a work experience placement who were present during the inspection.

(2)(a) and (b) Two written, validated references were available for the 7 adults and 2 students whose files were reviewed.

(a) Fourteen written references were from past employers.

(b) Four written references were from sources other than past employers.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for the 9 adults whose files were reviewed.

(d) In respect of the 9 files reviewed, international police vetting was available as required for the 2 adults who had resided outside of the Irish jurisdiction for more than 6 consecutive months as adults.

(4) The 6 staff members whose files were reviewed and who work directly with children in the service, each held appropriate childcare qualifications on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be 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.

(8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-

(a) a registered provider of a pre-school service other than a child-minding service or a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that there are at least 2 adults on the premises at all times,

Compliance Information

(1) On the day of inspection there was an adequate number of staff members working directly with the children attending the service.

(2) The adult to child ratios were correct in the service when the inspectors arrived unannounced at 09.10am and remained so throughout the inspection.

The following adult to child ratios were observed during the inspection:

- In the Baby room there were 6 children aged 7 months to 1 year 4 months being cared for by 2 staff members.
- In the Toddler room 1 there were 13 children aged 1 years 3 months to 02 years being cared for by 3 staff members.
- In the Toddler room 2 there were 12 children aged 2 years 1 month to 2 years 6 months being cared for by 3 staff members.
- In the Preschool room 1 there were 8 children aged 3 years 6 months to 4 years 3 months being cared for by 1 staff member.
- In the Preschool room 2 there were 7 children aged 3 years to 3 years 4 months being cared for by 1 staff member.
- In the Preschool room 3 there were 15 children aged 3 years to 5 years being cared for by 4 staff members.
- In the ECCE room there were 10 children aged 3 years 7 months to 4 years 7 months being cared for by 1 staff member.

(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.

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.*

(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-

- (c) an authorised person.*

Compliance Information

(1) Using a sampling process, 16 child registrations form were reviewed by the inspectors. On review, it was found that these records contained the information required under Regulation 15 (1)(a) to (i).

(3) (c) The records were open to inspection by an authorised person.

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 are examples of how each child's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the daily life of the service:

Basic needs:

- Mealtimes in the service were observed to be social and relaxed. The Early years practitioners sat with the children encouraging their independence and providing appropriate support when required.
- Childrens nappies were changed regularly throughout the day and practitioners were observed interacting positively with the children during this time and using it as an opportunity for warm one to one interaction. Older children were encouraged to use the toilet independently with discreet supervision and support provided when required.
- Bibs and aprons were available to the children for messy play activities. Bibs were placed on the children before they ate, spare clothes were available if the children required a change of clothes throughout the day.
- Comfortable rest areas including appropriately sized couches, floor mats and cushions were available throughout all the care rooms for the children to retreat to should they feel tired. The children attending the Baby room were observed being placed to sleep when they exhibited signs of tiredness and if their sleep time coincided with mealtimes, they were given their meals when they woke up. A comfortable armchair was provided in the Baby room to enable the practitioners to feed and comfort the children.
- The practitioners were observed using distraction and problem-solving techniques to good effect to prevent the escalation of any minor issues that took place between the children.

Supporting relationships around children:

- The children were observed to be engaged, content and relaxed throughout the care rooms in the service and the practitioners were observed to be warm, kind and respectful towards the children in their care. The practitioners were very familiar with the children and responded quickly to the children's verbal and nonverbal cues, children were spoken to using their first name with appropriate eye contact and soft vocal tones used throughout interactions.
- Throughout the care rooms family walls displaying photographs of the children with their families in addition to birthday walls were displayed this practice supports the transition between home and the service for the children.
- An outline of the daily routine in addition to visual cues was displayed at the children's level throughout the care rooms. This was observed being used to support the children to transition between activities.
- A child who was transitioning into the Baby room was observed to be well supported on the day of inspection. Staff demonstrated awareness of the child's need for additional support through the provision of nurturing hugs and cuddles to enable the child to settle.
- The practitioners were observed engaging with each other in relation to each individual child's needs, likes and routines, and appropriate hand over of information was provided to relief staff when relieving for breaks.
- Practitioners were observed taking the opportunity to communicate with parents at drop off and collection times.

PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

- The low-level shelving units that were provided throughout all of the care rooms in the service ensured that the equipment and materials were accessible to the children facilitating their free choice. Furthermore, the children demonstrated familiarity with their environment to access the play equipment and resources they chose to play with.
- The Baby room had free floor space for the children to roll, crawl, explore and enjoy time on the floor which contributed towards the children's gross motor development. A wall mounted shatter proof mirror supported the development of the children's visual senses.

- All of the care rooms had well developed areas of interest including home areas with additional resources including empty packaging from home which allowed the children to extend their play, construction areas, transport toys such as cars, play garages and train tracks, art materials, and sensory play experiences for example sand trays.
- Childrens artwork was valued and displayed on the walls of the care room and the children’s language development was enhanced through the availability of a wide range of books throughout the care rooms.
- Two spacious outdoor areas were provided at each side of the service. Both outdoor areas have access to sheltered areas beneath the eaves of the building which enabled the children to be outside regardless of the weather. 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 fixed low-level slide, a low-level climbing frame, a tunnel, a stand on roundabout, ride on and push along toys as well as water and sand trays. The outdoor area used by the older pre-school children and the school aged children was equipped with a mud kitchen which was located beneath mature trees with grass underfoot, a rope climbing frame ,a low level rope linked bridge balance boards, a climbing frame and slide, all of which supported the children gross motor development , a large art easel and art supplies in addition to a range of ride on and push along toys.

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 entrance door leading into the service was appropriately secured. Entry to the service was accessible through a call bell and intercom system which staff members operated.
- The kitchen was inaccessible to the children.
- Cleaning agents were stored safely out of the reach of children.
- Emergency exits were unobstructed.

Infection Control:

- Liquid soap and paper hand towels were available at the wash hand basins throughout 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.
- Nappy changing was carried out in keeping with the services nappy changing policy.
- The premises, play equipment and materials were in a clean and hygienic condition and up to date cleaning schedules were maintained.
- The bottles of formula milk which the children attending the Baby room brought with them from home were placed in the fridge on the children's arrival to the service.

Administration of Medication:

- Medication was stored safely out of reach of the children. One child required medication to be administered on the day of inspection and this procedure was conducted in keeping with the services medication administration policy and the child's care plan.

Safe Sleep:

- Sleep checks noting children's colour, breathing pattern and position were conducted on all sleeping children in the service.

Fire Safety:

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

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

1. The management of mouthed toys in the Baby room was inadequate. Staff reported spraying the toys with antiseptic spray rather than washing them in warm water and detergent followed by sterilising on a daily basis.
2. The water at the sink located in the Toddler Room 1 was cold to touch when checked at 09.55 am with a temperature reading of 15.8°C and again at 12.10am with a temperature reading of 15.9°C. During the inspection, this sink was used for adult and child handwashing. Cold water is not conducive to effective handwashing.
3. Two children were brought to the nappy changing room together with one early year's practitioner for nappy changing. While 1 child was being changed, the other child was touching surfaces that are high risk for cross contamination including the changing room floor and lid of the bin.

- The blue child sized sofa in the Preschool 3 room was torn exposing internal foam. This prevents effective cleaning of this item of furniture and poses a risk of bacteria harbouring in the foam.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Action

Infection Control:

- Mouthed toys are sterilised after each use. Any dirt is washed off prior to sterilising using warm soapy water. Unfortunately, staff member failed to explain this to the inspector on the day of inspection. Staff were retrained in the management of mouthed toys across all rooms at staff meeting. Please note staff who could not attend Staff Meeting were retrained at a later date as indicated on the staff sign off sheet.
- An engineer was requested to assess the water temperature in Toddler 1. Limescale (due to the hard water in North County Dublin) became lodged on the mixing valve preventing hot water getting through. Engineer demonstrated simply rotating the mixing valve dial back and forth to release the blockage. Hot water was instantly provided.
- During the staff meeting, staff were retrained in our Supervision of Children Policy and that only one child should be brought per nappy change. Staff were retrained on our Cleanliness & Hygiene Policy. Staff were retrained on our Infection Control Policy. Please note that staff who could not attend staff meeting were retrained at a later date as indicated on the sign off sheet.
- During an internal audit of the equipment, it was noted that the sofa in Preschool 3 is torn. An order was placed straightaway and new sofa has been in place since.

Preventive Action

- A protocol on how to clean toys has been printed and placed in each of the rooms for staff as a reminder. Ongoing internal audits on cleanliness and hygiene to include more thorough questioning on the management of cleaning mouthed toys.
- Continue to Monitor temperatures across all rooms.
- Continue to run internal audits on nappy changing practises in the centre. Continue to support staff if they need an additional person to change a nappy.
- Continue with regular audits on all equipment and furniture.

Supporting documentation submitted

Written confirmation of staff having attended retraining in the following.

- Mouthed toy policy

- Cleanliness & hygienic policy
- Infection control policy

Written confirmation of repair of the thermostatic mixing valve.

Photograph of new couch in Preschool room 3.

Summary Comment

The evidence submitted by the registered provider in relation to regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child has been reviewed and accepted.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.

Compliance Information

(1) The service maintained accurate details of the children's attendance during the inspection. Throughout the care rooms in the service the attendance records were accurately maintained to reflect the children in attendance.