

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015KK016
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Name of Service:	Clever Cats Childcare
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Address of Service:	7 Blackchurch Square, Inistioge, Kilkenny.
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Eircode:	R954P22
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Name of Registered Provider:	Suzanne Coughlan
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	16/06/2023
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No of pre-school children:	AM	22	PM	21
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Child and Family Agency, Early years inspectorate, Ely Hospital, Wexford
Inspection undertaken by:	E Mc Garry
Title:	Early Years Inspector

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

Clever Cats Childcare service is situated in the village of Inistioge in county Kilkenny. The service provides full day care, part-time and sessional day care services to early years children aged from 6 months to 6 years. The service is also registered to provide a school age service. The service is open Monday to Friday, from 07:45hrs until 18:00hrs. The childcare service is located within a small estate in the village and is a purpose-built childcare building comprising of three early years rooms, a baby room, wobbler/toddler room and an early years room upstairs. The baby room was closed on the day of inspection. There is an outdoor play area on the premises at the back of the building.

Staffing

There were six staff including the registered provider on the premises on the day of inspection. All six staff worked directly with the children. All staff working directly with the early years children held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework.

Methodology

Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate is the independent statutory regulator of early years services in Ireland. The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 define the duty of a registered provider to ensure the safety and well-being of children and to comply with these regulations. This Act also gives Tusla the authority to assess compliance with the regulations. The purpose of regulation in relation to early years services is to ensure that the care, safety, and well-being of children attending such services is upheld. Inspections of early years services are planned based on the following:

- Previous inspection history
- Any information received in relation to the service

The findings on inspection are based on:

- Information obtained through examination of documentation
- Direct observation
- Discussion with relevant staff

This inspection was unannounced and focused on the area of governance/ health, welfare and development of child/ safety/ premises and facilities. The inspections may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations:

- Regulation 9 Management and recruitment
- Regulation 10 Policies and procedures
- Regulation 11 Staffing levels
- Regulation 19 Health, Welfare, and Development of the Child
- Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety, and Welfare of child
- Regulation 25 First aid
- Regulation 26 Fire Safety
- Regulation 29 Premises

Inspection findings are documented in the inspection report which is first issued in draft format to the service with an opportunity to respond to any findings. Where statutory requirements are identified as not being met, the registered provider must demonstrate how they have rectified the non-compliance and will prevent any non-compliance from re occurring. The Corrective Action and Preventive Action plan (CAPA) will be used to inform decisions about compliance with regulatory requirements. Where the registered provider fails to meet the statutory requirements an escalation process may be commenced.

The inspectorate reserves the right to edit responses received for reasons including clarity, completeness and compliance with administrative and legal processes.

The contents of the report are compiled by the inspectorate body.

Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, person in charge, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Additional Information

An Immediate Action Notice was issued to the registered provider on 16 June 2023, regarding non-compliance identified under Regulation 25, First Aid. It is acknowledged by the inspector that the registered provider submitted a response to the immediate action notice on 19 June 2023, outlining the steps planned to address the non-compliance found on the day of 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) (b)

The manager was the designated person in charge on the day of the inspection and remained in the service for the duration of the inspection. The registered provider arrived later on the day and was available to facilitate the inspection also.

(2)

Following a discussion with the manager and on review of documentation, it was established that there were seven staff employed in the service. The files of all seven staff members were reviewed on the day of inspection.

(a)(b)

There were 11 written and validated references available on file from past employers. There were 3 written and validated references available on file from reputable sources.

(c)

There was Garda vetting available on file in the service for all seven members of staff.

(d)

Police vetting was not required as none of the staff had worked in a state other than Ireland for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

(4)

All staff working directly with the early years children held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework.

Part III – Management and Staff

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

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

Compliance Information

There were written policies, procedures and statements, as specified in Schedule 5, available for the service. The policies reviewed for this inspection were the policy on behavior management and the policy on infection control in the service. These policies and procedures were specific to the setting.

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

(2)

There was always an adequate number of staff working directly with the children attending the early years service.

Toddler room

At 10:00hrs- There were 2 children aged from 1 to 2 years of age and 6 children aged from 2 to 3 years of age in the care of 3 staff.

At 13.10hrs -There were 2 children aged from 1 to 2 years of age and 6 children aged from 2 to 3 years of age in the care of 3 staff.

Montessori Room

At 10:10hrs- There were 14 children aged from 2 to 6 years in the care of 2 staff.

At 13.15hrs -There were 13 children aged from 2 to 6 years and 8 school aged children in the care of 3 staff.

Non-Compliance Information

It was acknowledged that the minimum ratio of adults to children was always maintained in the service during the period of inspection. However, the staff did not avail of their 30-minute breaks. The inspector took her break at 13:50hrs, staff in the Montessori room had still not availed of their 30-minute break at this time. On return from break at 14.20hrs, the inspector observed that one staff member who was on duty since 09:00hrs had still not taken their 30-minute break. This non-compliance was previously identified on inspection on the 03 May 2022 and had subsequently been responded to by the registered provider in her corrective and preventive action plan. This response was not observed on this inspection. The inspector observed the staff roster did not include a roster for breaks.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

A staff meeting was held to discuss the issue of the provision of breaks for staff in the service.

A new rota has been introduced in the service. Staff are now availing of a fifteen-minute break in the morning and a thirty-minute break for their lunch. The registered provider will ensure there is an adequate number of staff always working with the children.

Supporting documentation submitted

No evidence received. The issue of the provision of breaks for the staff will be reviewed on the next inspection.

Summary Comment

The registered provider's response submitted meets the requirements of the child care act 1991 (Early years services) regulations 2016.

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

(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

(1)(a)

The manager ensured that each child's learning, development, and well-being was facilitated within the daily life of the service. Children were engaged in a variety of appropriate activities during the inspection. The staff in the toddler room were observed engaging with the children. The staff were observed talking and playing with the children and initiating games with them. There was one child observed who was transitioning to the Montessori

room. Staff introduced the idea of moving to the larger room several times during the day of the inspection. Staff who spoke to the inspector said this was to introduce the idea gradually to the child to give them time to get used to the idea of moving to “the big room”.

Staff in the Montessori room were observed playing with the children in their outdoor area. Children were observed playing in groups and using their imagination during free play in the outdoor area. For example, children were observed with garden rakes and shovels digging a hole in the ground. Other children were playing in the outdoor classroom.

The outdoor area in the service had been extensively developed and improved since the last inspection. There were two sets of double doors which opened directly from the toddler room to the play area. There was a sheltered roof covering directly outside the toddler room. Staff who spoke to the inspector said this enabled the children to play outside even if it was raining. This area also provided shelter from the sun on the day of inspection. There was newly constructed outdoor classroom built since the last inspection. This room was open on one side of the play area. The room was well resourced for the play needs of the children attending the service. There were tables and chairs, play mats and a tent for children to play in.

The registered provider had also developed a play area to the side of the service for the exclusive use of the children attending the toddler room. This area was roofed for all weather use. The ground covering was artificial grass. The area has been equipped with play equipment such as tables, chairs, balls and ride on toys for the younger children.

The materials and equipment available included a large range of developmentally appropriate equipment, arts and crafts materials, small cars, diggers, and dinosaurs. The play equipment in the toddler room and Montessori room was well organised and easily accessible for the children.

1(b)

The manager ensured that appropriate and suitable care practices were in place. During mealtimes younger children were encouraged to feed independently and given help if they could not manage to feed themselves. Staff sat with the children talking to them during their mealtime. The service provided dinner and parents provided snacks for the children which were stored in the fridges in the early years rooms.

Children who wore nappies had them changed regularly and during the day when required. Nappy changing was observed by the inspector. Staff were observed to wash their hands before and after nappy changing. Staff wore gloves and aprons and washed the children's hands after nappy changing. Staff were observed talking to the children while changing their nappies.

The nappy changing policy was on display in the nappy changing unit next to the toddler room. Older children were supported to use the toilet independently and were encouraged to wash their hands afterwards.

There were two sleep rooms situated on the ground floor of the service. Children under two were put to sleep in the cots in the sleep rooms. Children's sleep needs were child led. Staff were observed to be vigilant when children showed signs they needed to sleep. One child who did not seem to be interested in their dinner had their temperature checked by a staff member. The child's temperature was only slightly elevated at 37.5°C. The staff member was observed to be vigilant in their care of the child. The child was picked up, held by a staff member and given cool water to drink. The temperature was checked again 30 minutes later. The child's parent was given this information when they phoned the service, and the child was collected by their parent.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(a)

1. There were a number of broken toys in the outdoor area that the children could not use.
2. The play area to the side of the service used by the children in the toddler room needed to be equipped further with play equipment that was suitable to their stage of development.
3. The cover on the couch in the Montessori room was worn and needed to be replaced.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1.
The broken toys have been removed from the outdoor area.
2.
The play area to the side of the service has been modified and improved to cater for the younger children attending the service.
3.
The cover is laundered weekly. The registered provider is in the process of purchasing additional equipment to provide a suitable rest area.

Supporting documentation submitted

1.

No evidence received.

2.

A photograph of the play area to the side of the service was received by the inspector. The area has been cleared of any unnecessary toys and resourced with more suitable play equipment. For example, a sand pit for younger children.

3.

No evidence received.

Summary Comment

The registered provider's response submitted meets the requirements of the child care act 1991 (Early years services) regulations 2016. The issue of the provision of adequate play and rest facilities for the children will be reviewed on the next 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:

Access to the service was gained through the front door. There was an intercom system in place for parents and visitors to gain access to the service. The fire doors were not obstructed. Cleaning agents were stored in areas that were inaccessible to children. The outdoor area was safe, suitable and secure.

Infection Control:

The service was observed to be clean on the day of inspection. Staff were clear in describing the system in place for the daily and weekly cleaning of the early years rooms and toilets. There was a system in place for the regular cleaning of mouthable toys. All sinks for hand washing in the service were equipped with warm thermostatically controlled water, liquid soap, and foot operated pedal bins. Children were observed washing their hands before eating after using the toilet and after messy play. Staff were observed washing their hands and using the hand gel provided by the service on a regular basis. There was a system in place for the regular cleaning of mouthable toys in the toddler room.

Safe Sleep

The service had a safe sleep policy. Staff who spoke to the inspector were aware of the importance of following the procedures in place to ensure the safety of the sleeping children in their care. Staff were observed monitoring and recording the sleeping children's colour, breathing and position every 10 minutes.

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

(2)(a)(b)

There was a suitably equipped first aid box stored in an easily accessible position on the premises and was available to the children attending the early years service.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) It was observed on the day of inspection that children were checked in by their parents from 08:20hrs on the day of inspection. There was one person who was qualified in first aid for children on the day of inspection. The staff roster was clear that this person started duty at 09:00hrs. Therefore, there was no staff member trained in first aid for children immediately available to the children prior to 09:00hrs.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider has reserved places for two staff members to complete a first aid course for children. One other staff member has also booked a refresher course.

Supporting documentation submitted

The registered provider submitted evidence that two staff have been booked to attend a first aid course for children in July 2023.

Summary Comment

The registered provider's response submitted meets the requirements of the child care act 1991 (Early years services) regulations 2016.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of-

- (a) any fire drill that takes place in the premises, and
- (b) the number, type and maintenance record of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.

(4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire shall be displayed in a conspicuous position in the premises.

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) There was a record of fire drills that had taken place in the service. The last recorded fire drill took place in the service on 31 May 2023.
- (b) There was a record available on file stating the firefighting equipment was last serviced on 14 November 2022.
- (4)
- There was a notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire displayed in a conspicuous position in the main entrance of the service.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(b) There was no record of the annual maintenance of the smoke alarm in the service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

A record of the most recent maintenance of the smoke alarm was submitted to the inspector. The maintenance of the smoke alarm was carried out 30 June 2023.

Supporting documentation submitted

A certificate of the maintenance of the smoke alarm was received by the inspector. This maintenance was last carried out on 30 June 2023.

Summary Comment

The registered providers response and evidence submitted meets the requirements of the child care act 1991 (Early years services) regulations 2016.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-

- (a) of sound and stable structure,*
- (b) safe and secure,*
- (c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated*
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

Compliance Information

- (a)
The premises appeared to be of sound and stable structure.
- (b)
The entrance and outdoor area were safe and secure.
- (c)
The service was adequately lit, heated and ventilated. The windows were open for the duration of the inspection.
- (d)
The service appeared to be clean on the day of inspection. Staff who spoke to the inspector were clear in describing the daily and weekly schedule of cleaning in place in the service.
- (e)
There were adequate and suitable sanitary facilities in the service. There were four toilets and four wash hand basins, two nappy changing units and one staff toilet available for the staff to use in the service.

Non-Compliance Information

- (d)
1. There was a large piece of plaster missing from the wall beside the rest area in the toddler room. This was at a low level and accessible to the children in the room. The skirting board was worn with the paint flaking off. This area was unsightly and needed to be repaired. Small pieces of plaster were flaking off the wall and could potentially be ingested by the children. The issue of the plaster that needed to be repaired was also found on the previous inspection 3 May 2022. After this inspection, the registered provider submitted a corrective and preventative response to address the non-compliance found. The response submitted did not prevent a recurrence of the non-compliance in relation to Regulation 29-Premises.

2. There was a cold-water tap flowing constantly on a medium to high pressure, for the duration of the inspection, in the wash hand basin beside the toilets attached to the Montessori room. Staff who spoke to the inspector said this tap had been flowing for approximately two months.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1.

The broken plaster and skirting board in the toddler room have been repaired and painted.

2.

A plumber was employed to fix both flowing taps.

Supporting documentation submitted

1.

A photograph of the wall and skirting board which have been repaired has been received by the inspector.

2.

A photograph of the hand wash basins which have been repaired was received by the inspector.

Summary Comment

The registered provider's response and evidence submitted meets the requirements of the childcare act 1991 (Early years services) regulations 2016.