

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LH041
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Name of Service:	Just Kids Creche & Montessori
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Address of Service:	31 Bothar Brugha, Drogheda, Drogheda, Co. Louth
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Eircode:	A92 XD59
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Name of Registered Provider:	Yvonne Carr
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	02/03/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	57	PM	51
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate 180-189 Lakeshore Drive Swords Co Dublin
Inspection undertaken by:	M. McDonnell and S. McKenna
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

Just Kids Creche & Montessori is based in a converted two-storey building in a residential area in Co. Louth. The service is registered to provide full day, part time and sessional care from 7.30am to 6.00pm. The service provides Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE). The children have access to four care rooms, with the Baby Room and Toddler Room based downstairs, and the two Montessori rooms based on the first floor. Each room has access to their own sanitary facilities. There is an outdoor area at the rear of the premises.

Staffing

The registered provider works in the service on a daily basis in a supernumerary capacity. The registered provider employs 23 staff members. This includes a deputy person in charge who works in a supernumerary capacity, 21 staff members who work directly with the children and a cook. Three students, including one transition year student, were also completing work experience placements.

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

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The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under Regulation 9 Management & Recruitment, Regulation 11 Staffing Levels, Regulation 19 Health, Welfare & Development of Child, Regulation 20 Facilities for rest and play, Regulation 21 Equipment and materials and Regulation 27 Supervision and Regulation 28 Insurance. However, on inspection additional non-compliances which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 23 Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child and Regulation 24 Checking in and out and record of attendance. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

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.

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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) There was a designated person in charge of the service, and a there was a named person to deputise in their absence.
- (b) Following discussion with the person in charge, and review of the staff roster it was confirmed that when the preschool service was in operation the designated person in charge or the named person in charge were on the premises.
- (c) On discussion with staff members, there was a clearly defined person and deputy person in charge to ensure lines of accountability.

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- (2) On the day of inspection, the recruitment files of the registered provider, 23 staff members and 3 students were reviewed.
- (a)(b) There were 54 written and validated references, where required, available for the registered provider, 23 staff members and the 3 students.
- (c) A Garda vetting disclosure was available for all staff members, and the registered provider and 2 students. These also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years following a review of staff members previous employment in the service. One student did not require a Garda vetting disclosure as they were under 18 years old.
- (d) Documentation available demonstrated that police vetting was not required for 22 staff members, the 3 students or the registered provider. International police vetting required for one staff member was available.
- (4) The inspectors reviewed evidence to demonstrate that 22 staff members employed to work directly with the pre-school children and the person in charge held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 - 8 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,*

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Compliance Information

(1) On the day of inspection there was an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.

(2) On the inspectors' unannounced arrival, the adult child ratio was observed to be correct and remained so throughout the inspection. The following adult-to-child ratios were observed:

- In Baby room there were 3 staff members and 10 children, aged between 1 year 6 months and 2 years old, attending on part time or full day care basis.
- In the Toddler room there were 3 staff members and 13 children aged between 2 years and 3 months old to 2 years and 11 months old attending on part time or full day care basis.
- In Montessori 1, there were 3 staff members and 17 children, aged between 4 years to 4 years 8 months old, attending the morning session. Following the sessional hours the ratio reverted to 3 staff members and 16 children attending on part time or full day care basis.
- In Montessori 2 there were 3 staff members and 17 children, aged between 4 years and 1 month to 4 years 3 months old, attending the morning session. Following the sessional hours the ratio reverted to 3 staff members and 13 children attending on part time or full day care basis.

(8) A review of the staff roster and sign in sheets demonstrated that two adults were present on the premises at all times.

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
- (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.

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Compliance Information

Supporting Relationships

The staff members were observed to interact kindly with the children within their care. Staff members spoke of routines in place for some of the children who required additional support. Staff were aware of individual goals and strategies required for support and these were observed being implemented by staff members. This was supported by daily communication with parents at drop off, collection and through electronic applications. Staff discussed management support in developing strategies to help the children in their rooms with time given to planning and development of activities. The inspectors observed these activities in place in the service. Children were also included within the daily routine of the service as children were given various jobs.

The children played contently in their care environments and appeared familiar with the adults and students who cared for them. Conversations about children's home life such as parent's birthdays demonstrated strong relationships between staff, children and families. The staff and students encouraged positive behaviour and gave praise when kind interactions were observed. The adults consistently engaged with the children throughout their play for example while outdoor role play activities of "going on a bear hunt" and the story of the "Gruffalo" were acted out by staff, and the children were observed to enjoy engaging in these activities.

Snack and meal times were observed to be relaxed and unrushed. Staff and students were observed to sit with the children engaging in conversations at appropriate times, and while children were eating their food the staff sat with them and supported children where needed. Independence was promoted as the children were observed getting their own dinner from the food tray and later selecting their own choices of fruit from the fruit platter at snack time.

The staff and students in all of the care rooms were observed to work well together and openly communicated with one another, ensuring transitions were smooth for the children within their care.

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Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

(1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child 19 to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day, and

(b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.

(3) A registered provider of a full day care service, a part-time day care service or a childminding service, other than such a service to which paragraph (2) applies, shall ensure that-

(a) a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the pre-school children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises,

Compliance Information

(1)(a) Each room had suitable play facilities for the children in attendance. In the baby room there were soft play facilities to support the children's gross motor development. In the older rooms the children had access to larger play equipment, which was suited to their age and stage of development.

(b) Each room had a low-level bookshelf containing a range of books which were accessible to the children alongside a cosy area with a mat and cushions in each room. In the Baby room an adult chair was provided and used by staff when providing comfort to children. Children under 2 years old were provided with a cot or floor bed, as appropriate. Children over two years old had access to a stackable bed. There were sufficient numbers of these items to facilitate the needs of the children currently in attendance.

(3) (a) An outdoor space was available at the rear of the premises for the children to access on a daily basis.

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Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

Each room had a range of materials and activities to support the children's development and interests. Toys and games available for the children were located in low level containers on shelves that were accessible to the children. Each room had a home corner with a kitchen and associated items such as play food, crockery and cutlery. There were also real-life items, such as bottles and boxes to support imaginative play. Sensory play was also provided with play dough.

Tables and chairs were available for the children in the rooms. In the Baby room there were highchairs and low-level chairs available for the children. At snack, dinner and play time, there was enough furniture to accommodate all children in each of the rooms.

The children were observed enjoying playing running games and using the climbing frame and slide. The outdoor area had a soft safety surface area. Children had access to climbing equipment, slides and a playhouse. There were also scooters and trikes available. A covered section was also available.

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 service had a secure entrance to the service with a buzzer system in place. This prevented any unauthorised access to the service and exit from the service by children.
- Blind cords were secured.
- The highchairs available were in good condition and fitted with appropriate harnesses.
- Play equipment and materials used by the children were observed in good condition.
- Stairways and railings were maintained in good condition, with no trip hazards observed.

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- Cleaning materials were stored out of children's reach, and storage areas were inaccessible to the children.

Infection Control:

- Children's soothers were stored in individual containers and staff were aware of cleaning procedures.
- Individual bedding was available for each child and staff discussed the cleaning procedure used for the shared cots.
- Cleaning schedules were maintained, and the service was maintained in a clean and hygienic manner throughout.
- Tables were observed to be cleaned before snack and mealtimes.

Safe Sleep:

- Children under 2 years old were provided with a cot. Children under 2, where required, were provided with a suitable bed for sleep, in conjunction with a signed risk assessment from parents allowing their child to sleep on the bed.
- Staff members recorded the 10-minute sleep checks for all sleeping children and were aware of monitoring a child's breathing, position and colour during sleep.
- A thermometer was available in the care rooms to monitor the temperature whilst children slept. Staff were aware of procedures required should the temperature exceed 22°C whilst children slept.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

1. Handwashing procedures observed did not adequately reduce the risk of cross contamination. The following was observed.
 - During the sample of nappy changing observed in the Baby room the staff member did not wash the children's hands before returning the child to the care room.
 - Following play the children's hands were not washed before they had their dinner in the Baby room.
2. The water in the Montessori 2 sink did not allow effective handwashing to occur. The temperature of the water was recorded at 11°C at 10.30am. The inspectors brought this to the attention of staff, however the water remained at a low temperature of 13.7°C at 1.47pm.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control:

1. The registered provider stated that they had discussed with all staff the importance of handwashing and had gone through the policy. The Nappy changing policy was also provided to staff and displayed in the service. The registered provider and manager will monitor handwashing practices.
2. The registered provider had a plumber fix the water in order to ensure it was reaching the correct temperature. Initially it was a temporary fix however, the piping and units have been replaced to ensure it is working correctly at all times. This will be monitored going forward.

Supporting documentation submitted

Infection Control:

Nappy changing policy

Plumbing receipt

Hazard checklist

Summary Comment

The actions and evidence submitted by the registered provider, in their corrective and preventive action plan, has addressed the non-compliance identified on inspection.

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.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) no person other than-

(i) pre-school child attending the service,

(ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,

(iii) an employee, or

(iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and

(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.

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Compliance Information

(3) A record of visitors to the service was maintained, with the inspectors being asked to sign the log on arrival to the service.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) The children's attendance was not recorded contemporaneously to ensure an accurate record of children in the service. In the Baby Room at 10.35am four children, who had arrived between 8.00 and 8.50am had not been signed in to the attendance book. At 12.06pm in the Toddler room a child who had arrived at approximately 9.20am, as advised and documented at this time by a staff member, had not been signed into the attendance record.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1) The registered provider stated the spoke with all the staff individually to reiterate the importance of recording the arrival and departure of all children in real time regardless of what else may be happening within the room at any time. A message regarding the importance of being vigilant with the role books was also given to staff member electronically. The registered provider and manager have been and will continue to supervise and randomly check that the role books are being completed in real time by all staff.

Summary Comment

The actions submitted by the registered provider, in their corrective and preventive action plan, has addressed the non-compliance identified on inspection. This will be reviewed on the next inspection.

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Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.

Compliance Information

The inspectors observed consistent supervision of all children throughout the inspection. The inspector observed that staff members provided appropriate supervision to support the children's needs. For example, in the Baby room children were sat ready for their dinner, however, one child became upset and was removed from their highchair and provided with comfort. Staff members were aware of children with additional needs and supervision of children in their rooms demonstrated that staff were aware of the strategies in place to support individual children.

There was an outdoor area to the rear of the premises which contained large climbing equipment, trikes and scooters. Staff members were observed directly supervising children in this area whilst the children played on the variety of equipment.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service was adequately insured for the maximum number of children registered to attend the service. The policy showed that the service was insured from 28 March 2025 to 27 March 2026.