

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015LH041
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Just Kids Creche & Montessori
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	31 Bothar Brugha, Drogheda, Drogheda, Co. Louth
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<b>Eircode:</b>	A92 XD59
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Yvonne Carr
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<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	29/11/2023
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	56	PM	48
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate, 181-189 Lakeshore Drive, Airside Business Park, Swords, Co. Dublin K67 Y5C6.
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	S. Taaffe and AM Coyle
<b>Title:</b>	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).

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

Just Kids Creche was established by the registered provider in 2002 providing sessional, part-time and full day care to pre-school children aged between 1 year and 6 years. The service operates from 7.30am to 6.00pm each weekday, accommodating a maximum of 65 pre-school children. Just Kids Creche is conducted from a 2-storey premises which was converted from two adjoining end-of-terrace residential houses located on a corner site in Drogheda town. The service has 4 care rooms in operation, namely the Baby Room and the Toddler Room which are located on the ground floor, and Montessori Room 1 and Montessori Room 2 which are located on the first floor. An enclosed outdoor play area is located to the rear of the premises. The registered provider also operates a second early years and school aged childcare service a short walk from this premises.

### Staffing

The registered provider and 14 staff members including the service manager work directly with the children in the service on a daily basis, in addition to a further staff member who is employed as a cook. Two students who were being facilitated to engage in work experience in a supernumerary capacity 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. 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. 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 registered provider, service 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) The registered provider was the designated person in charge of the service and the service manager deputised when required.

(b) The registered provider was present and in charge of the service, in conjunction with the service manager, when the inspectors arrived unannounced at 9.10am on the day of inspection.

The files maintained for 18 adults in total were reviewed, in respect of the registered provider, the 15 staff members and the 2 students.

(2)(a)(b) There were 2 written, validated references available for all 18 adults whose files were reviewed.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for all 18 adults.

(d) International police vetting was available as required for 1 staff member who had resided outside of the Irish jurisdiction for more than 6 consecutive months as an adult.

(4) The registered provider and all 14 staff members who work directly with children in the service held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 – 6 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) or a qualification deemed by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) 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) During the inspection there were an adequate number of adults 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 the service at 9.10am and remained so throughout the inspection.

The following adult to child ratios were observed:

- In the Baby Room there were 10 children aged 1 year 1 month to 1 year 10 months being cared for by 3 members of staff. In addition, a student undertaking a Level 5 childcare course was present in this room, being facilitated to work under supervision in a supernumerary capacity, as part of a work experience placement.
- In the Toddler Room there were 12 children aged 2 years 1 month to 2 years 9 months being cared for by 3 members of staff.
- In Montessori Room 1 there were 16 children aged 2 years 8 months to 2 years 11 months being cared for by 2 and, at times, 3 members of staff.
- In Montessori Room 2 there were 18 pre-school children aged 3 years 6 months to 4 years 10 months being cared for by 3 members of staff, one of whom was employed to reduce the adult to child ratio, and if necessary to work directly with a child with additional needs in a post which was funded by the Minister for 3 hours each day as part of the Access and Inclusion Model scheme.

In addition, a student undertaking a Level 5 combined course in early years care and education and special needs assisting was present in this room, being facilitated to work under supervision in a supernumerary capacity, as part of a work experience placement. Five of the 18 children in this care room were attending the service on a sessional basis on the day of inspection.

(8) The registered provider ensured that there were two adults on the premises at all times when the service was in operation as evidenced in the staff roster and staff sign in records maintained on the premises.

### 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

The following examples demonstrate how each child's learning, development and well-being was observed being facilitated during the inspection:

#### Basic needs:

- Warm and positive interactions were observed taking place between the staff members and children during the inspection. The registered provider and staff members were observed engaging with the children using welcoming facial expressions and warm vocal tones and showing a keen interest in what each child was doing.
- The staff were observed to build the children's confidence by their support and encouragement especially when the children were developing new skills. The children's independence was encouraged with staff members heard readily providing encouragement and praise for the children's efforts and accomplishments. Staff members responded promptly and kindly when children needed assistance. Children who were able were supported to feed themselves, children who could manage were facilitated to use the toilet independently, and some children put on and took off their own clothing. The children who were not yet toilet trained had their nappies changed regularly and as often as was required.

- The staff members sat with children at snack and meal times encouraging conversation in a sociable manner. The children were given sufficient time to relax and enjoy their meals. The children's water bottles were accessible during the day and these were placed beside the children on their tables when eating.
- Foldable standard cots were set up in the front section of the Baby Room after dinner at 11.00am and all children in this care room settled to sleep at that time on the day of inspection. Staff members informed the inspectors that the sleep needs of the children in the Baby Room were generally met in line with their home routine but that these children would be facilitated to sleep when they showed signs of tiredness outside of their normal routine, if required. The children from the Toddler Room who still availed of a daytime nap were placed to sleep for a scheduled period of rest after dinner on sleep mats set up on the floor of the care room.
- All children in the service were facilitated to engage in outdoor play on the day of inspection, dressed appropriately for the cold dry weather in coats, hats and gloves. The children were taken back indoors as soon as they showed signs of becoming chilled or complained of feeling cold.

### Supporting relationships:

- It was observed that the registered provider, service manager and staff members were affectionate with and knew the children well, as evidenced in the positive manner in which they spoke to and about the children in the service.
- The staff members demonstrated sensitivity and responsiveness to each child's needs (both individual needs and, for some children, their additional needs), their likes and their preferences, thereby fostering each child's inclusion and involvement in activities. The staff members were observed displaying anticipation and appropriate responsiveness when children experienced challenges within the environment and when children chose to change or opt out of activities.
- Exchange of information on children's care and well-being was observed taking place between parents and staff members in a friendly manner at drop off and collection times in the service. The service also uses a digital application to communicate with parents regarding each individual child's snacks and meals, nappy changes, sleep times and activities.
- Familiar routines had been established and children's transitions were supported in the service as evidenced by the staff members signposting which activities were coming next, including indoor and outdoor play, snack and meal time, and sleep time.

### Physical and material environment:

- The care rooms were laid out in clearly defined interest areas to prompt and support children to engage in self-directed and imaginative play. Interest areas included home and kitchen corners, construction areas, arts and crafts zones, rest spaces and library corners.
- The play resources available to the children were accessible and stored on low level shelving which allowed the children to select and replace items and materials of interest.
- Sensory play was supported in each of the care rooms through the provision of materials including dried pasta and rice trays.
- Children's artwork was on display in each care room.
- Highchairs were provided in the Baby Room for the youngest children who could not yet sit unsupported and safe floor space was provided in this room to allow the children to explore and move around unhindered by furniture or fixed structures. Push-along toys and a low level wooden slide was provided in this care room to facilitate the children to engage in active play.
- The outdoor play area which is located to the rear of the premises was fully enclosed and sub-divided by fencing into two separate areas. The area accessed directly from the Baby Room was surfaced in natural grass and was currently not in use. The second area, accessed directly from the Toddler Room and also through a gate from the adjoining grassy area, was surfaced in safety matting and was partially covered in a lean-to structure which provided shelter from sun and rain and which facilitated outdoor play in all weathers. A wooden climbing frame with standing platform and seating beneath, two attached slides, a ladder and climbing wall was provided in addition to wooden tunnel with hand holds attached to the surface to support further climbing activities. Push-along toys, sit-in self-propel cars, two large outdoor kitchens and a wooden playhouse with extra play resources including dolls, balls, cars, trucks and magnets were also provided to facilitate play experiences for the children when outdoors.

### 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

The service provided all meals and snacks to children attending on a full day care basis. A varied and nutritious 4-week menu was on display in the premises. Children who attend the service on a sessional basis brought their own healthy snacks from home. Breakfast which includes a choice of breakfast cereal with milk and toast was available up until 9.00am or thereabouts. Beef casserole with carrots, parsnips, onions, mashed potato and gravy was cooked on-site and provided for dinner which was served to the children in the Baby Room and Toddler Room at 11.00am and to the children in Montessori Rooms 1 and 2 at 11.15am. An alternative option of pasta with a tomato and vegetable based sauce was provided for children with specific dietary requirements and those children who declined to eat the beef dinner. The food was appropriately fork-mashed and diced for the younger children to encourage chewing whilst reducing the risk of choking. Afternoon snack was served at approximately 1.15pm and listed menu options included hummus, crackers, fruit, yogurts and brioche. Evening tea was served at 3.30pm with scrambled egg and toast provided for this meal on the day of inspection. The children's water bottles were available to the children throughout the day, stored on low level shelving and these were placed on the children's tables to drink with their meals and snacks.

### 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 doors and garden gates were secured to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the service. Doorbells were provided at the two front doors leading in to the service, allowing parents and visitors to notify staff members of their arrival, in order to facilitate entry to the premises if appropriate.

- The water temperature in the hot taps did not exceed the recommended maximum water temperature of 43°C. This reduced the risk of scalding for the children in attendance.
- Play materials and equipment provided in each care room were observed to be safe and suitable for the age range and developmental stage of the children present.
- Cleaning agents were stored safely out of the reach of children.

### Infection Control:

- Thermostatically controlled running warm water, liquid soap and single use paper towels were available at all wash hand basins in the service.
- Documented up-to date cleaning schedules were available.
- The children in the service were facilitated to wash their hands before eating and following outdoor and messy play. Children who were toilet trained were gently reminded, and assisted when necessary, to wash their hands after using the toilet.
- Staff members wore individual disposable aprons and disposable gloves for nappy changing procedures and washed their own hands before changing gloves between each nappy change. Children's hands were washed after they had their nappies changed.
- Staff members described effective soother management procedures, with all individually labelled soothers washed and then sterilised twice daily in a microwave steriliser in the Baby Room and stored in personalised containers when not in use.
- The sand tables provided in the outdoor play area were covered when not in use, to prevent contamination by animals and birds.

### Administration of Medication:

- Medications were stored out of the reach of children. No children were observed having medication administered on the day of inspection.
- There was evidence of appropriate record keeping in relation to medication administered to children in the service. The records showed that written parental consent had been provided in advance of administration of medication and the completed forms had been signed by the children's parent or guardian when they were collecting their child to confirm that they were aware of when and how much medication had been administered to their child over the course of the day.

### Safe Sleep:

- A review of the records demonstrated that sleep checks noting the children’s breathing pattern, colour and position were carried out and documented at 10 minutes intervals on all sleeping children in the service.
- In discussion with the inspectors, staff members were familiar with national best practice safe sleep guidelines. A documented care plan with risk assessment and written parental consent was available for one child aged 1 year 10 months who slept on a floor bed on the day of inspection, due to a history of climbing out of the cot.

## 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 who held in-date First Aid Response (FAR) training was at all times immediately available to the children attending the service. This was evidenced in the FAR training records maintained for the registered provider and 3 staff members and their scheduled attendance in the service’s staff roster.

(2)(a)(b) The first aid boxes available in the service were suitably equipped and stored in conspicuous locations on the premises and these were available for the children in attendance, in the event of an emergency.

## 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 was maintained of fire drills which had been completed in the service. Based on the records maintained and as reported by staff members, fire drills were carried out monthly. The last recorded fire drill took place on 02/11/2023.

(b) A record was kept of the number, type and maintenance of the fire fighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises. The fire fighting equipment was certified as having been serviced most recently on 22/12/2022 and the smoke alarms on 19/09/2023.

(4)The fire evacuation procedure was displayed in the care rooms in the service which contained details in relation to the procedure to be conducted in the event of a fire.