

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LK003		
Name of Service:	Kilmallock Community Childcare Services Limited by Guarantee T/A Abbey Kids		
Address of Service:	The Old Library, Abbeyfarm, Kilmallock, Co. Limerick		
Eircode:	V35 R761		
Name of Registered Provider:	PJ Carey		
Service type:	Part Time		
Day 1 of Inspection:	31/01/2024		
Day 2 of Inspection:	01/02/2024		
No of pre-school children: Day 1	AM	31	PM 7
No of pre-school children: Day 2		32	
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla, Early Years Inspectorate, Estuary House, Henry St, Limerick		
Inspection undertaken by:	E Browne		
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

Description of service

This community-based service provides sessional and part – time care from 08:00 – 13:45 hours, Monday – Friday for 38 weeks of the year for children aged 2.5 – 5 years, including the Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme. A school aged service is provided which is available to the children attending the local primary schools. The service comprises of the four playrooms, sanitary accommodation for each playroom, a nappy changing area/adult sanitary facilities and outdoor play areas to the rear and back of the premises.

Staffing

The registered provider does not work in the service.

The manager, the deputy person in charge and 7 adults work directly with the children in the service. The adults who work in the service, all hold a recognised qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education at level 5 to 8 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 and premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 19, 24, 25 and 26; however, on inspection additional non-compliances which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 23 and 29. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulation(s) 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.

Additional Information

01/02/2024

An Immediate Action Notice was issued to the registered provider as the water temperature at the wash-hand basin in the disability /staff bathroom which was also used as the nappy changing area for the children was too hot and posed a risk of scalding.

Please refer to Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child in the body of the report.

01/02/2024

The issue was immediately addressed by the manager of the service.

Acknowledgments

The inspector wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the manager, deputy person in charge, staff and children who were present on the days 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) On the day 1 of the inspection there was the named deputy person in charge present and on day 2 the manager and the deputy were both present for the inspection.

(b) The designated person in charge was present in the service for the duration of the inspection on day 1 and the manager and deputy were both present on day 2.

(c) There was a clear management structure in the service that identified the lines of authority and roles and responsibilities of each employee. Team leaders were appointed in each room of the service.

(2)(a) There were written references from past employers available in respect of each staff, with recorded validations where required.

- (b) Where past employer references were not available, references from an alternative source such as work placement and college were provided.
- (c) Vetting disclosures from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána were available in respect of all staff members.
- (d) Overseas police vetting was on file for 1 member of staff who had lived outside the jurisdiction for longer than 6 months.
- (4) The staff who work at the facility all hold an award in Early Childhood Care and Education.

Non-Compliance Information

- (d) Police vetting was not available for a member of staff who had lived in another country for longer than 6 months.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The manager has stated in their response that:

A vetting disclosure for the staff member dated 2011 is on file and an up-to-date vetting process dated the 28/02/2024 from the country is also on file.

Supporting documentation submitted:

Copy of Police vetting

Summary Comment

The action as stated by the manager in relation to the non-compliance identified under Regulation 9 point (2)(d) has been addressed.

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

(1) The manager ensured that there were an adequate number of staff working directly with the preschool children attending the service.

(2) On day 1 there were 9 staff working directly with 31 preschool children in the sessional groups and 5 staff in the afternoon working with 7 preschool children availing of the part time service.

On day 2 there were 9 staff working directly with 32 preschool children for the sessional groups.

This was compliant with the recommended adult/child ratios.

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) Basic Needs:

A healthy eating policy was in place at the service and parents were encouraged to provide their children with a healthy snack and drink each day for their lunch. All perishable foods were stored in a fridge. Childrens drinks were accessible to them on a low shelf at all times during the session.

All children were toilet trained and were able to access the toilets and handwashing facilities independently.

Assistance from staff was on hand if required. Handwashing was observed to take place with the encouragement of the staff following messy play and before snack time.

A supply of tissues and wipes were accessible to the children. Lidded bins were available for the safe disposal of waste.

A designated area with soft couches were available to the children if they wished to rest and relax away from more active play areas.

The staff responded to the children's cues for assistance in a prompt and sensitive manner. The children were supported as they played individually and as part of a group.

Physical and material environment:

There were 4 playrooms in operation and each sessional group of children had access to their own playroom, the large hall for gross motor play and development and the designated outdoor play areas.

Each playroom was laid out with uncluttered, clear floor spaces for the children to play safely. Designated areas of interest were available with appropriate supporting play materials and equipment. Imaginative play areas with dress up clothes, play kitchen and a home corner, reading area with soft seating and a wide range of books, and a construction area with building materials were clearly visible in each playroom.

There were turf table and trays filled with sand, water and other materials for sensory play and well-resourced art and craft areas where play equipment and materials were easily accessible in labelled boxes for the children to access on their own .

There were appropriate tables and chairs for table top activities and later the tables were cleaned for the children to sit and have their lunch.

The outdoor areas provided opportunities for fresh air, discovery, movement, exploration and activities exclusive to the outdoors. The outdoor play areas were safe, secure and children were supervised by staff at all times while in the outdoor spaces.

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.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

The water temperature at the wash-hand basin in the disability /staff bathroom which was also used as the nappy changing area for the children was too hot and posed a risk of scalding. It was recorded at 64 °C. This should be thermostatically controlled to a max temperature of 43 °C for children's and staff use.

This was brought to the attention of the deputy person in charge to address the issue and an immediate action notice was issued to the registered provider by email to undertake action by the 1st of February 2024.

A visit to the service on the 1st of February confirmed that the concern had been addressed. The water temperature recorded 38 °C which was safe for the children and adults to use.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

The manager has stated in their reply that:

The water temperature at the disability/staff bathroom was recorded too high. This was rectified immediately, and the water temperature recorded 38 °C on the 2nd day of the inspection.

To prevent the dial on the water heater being tampered the service has enclosed the water heater within a closed cupboard .

Summary Comment

The action as stated by the manager in relation to the non-compliance identified under Regulation 23 General safety has been addressed.

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.

Compliance Information

(1) Each pre-school child attending the service was checked in and out of the service by staff. This record was available on the attendance register.

(3)(a) The person in charge ensured that no person other than the following were allowed enter the service.

(i) Pre-school child attending the service.

(ii) A person dropping or collecting such a child.

(iii) An employee.

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

(b) A daily record in writing was kept of persons who entered the preschool. The visitor's logbook contained the following details.

- The persons contact number.
- Their reason for entry.
- The name of the person who approved access.
- The check in and out times.

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) There were 7 staff working in the service who had up to date training in first aid response for children.

(2) (a) The first aid boxes were safely stored in easily accessible and conspicuous positions at the premises.

(b) The first aid boxes were readily available and easily accessible if required.

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) Records were available to show that fire drills were carried out on a monthly basis. The most recent fire drill took place on the 6th of December 2023.
- (b) A record of the number, type and maintenance of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms were available on the premises. The last maintenance check for firefighting equipment was in October and the smoke alarm system was in November 2023.
- (4) The fire evacuation procedures were clearly displayed in the service and a fire assembly point was located in the grassy area at the front entrance of the service.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

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

Non-Compliance Information

(d) The outside lidded waste bins were accessible to the children and parents. The bins were positioned close to the main entrance area of the preschool facility. This posed a safety and hygienic risk to children, parents and staff.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The manager has stated in their reply that:

(d)The bins are now positioned inside a wooden gate that's not accessible to parents and children. This was completed on the 3rd of February 2024.

Supporting documentation submitted:

No evidence submitted

Summary Comment

The action as stated by the manager in relation to the non-compliance identified under Regulation 29 Premises point (d) has been addressed.