

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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| TUSLA Identifier: | TU2015LK030 |
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| Name of Service: | Busy Kids Creche |
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| Address of Service: | Ennis Road, Limerick, Co. Limerick |
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| Eircode: | V94 KC7K |
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| Name of Registered Provider: | James Moore |
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| Service type: | Full Day, Sessional |
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| Date 1 of Inspection: | 23/01/2025 |
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| Date 2 of Inspection: | 28/01/2025 |
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|---|----|-----|----|-----|
| No of pre-school children: Day 1 | AM | 108 | PM | 90 |
| Day 2 | AM | 114 | PM | 100 |

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| Address of the Early Years Inspectorate: | Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Office, 2 nd Floor Estuary House, Henry Street, Limerick. |
| Inspection undertaken by: | M Riordan J Hayes 23/01/2025 |
| Inspection undertaken by: | M Riordan 28/01/2025 |
| 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

Description of service

Busy Kids is a privately owned full-day care service near Limerick City, catering to children of preschool age and offering afternoon care for school-aged children. The service operates Monday to Friday, from 7:30 am to 6:00 pm. It is located in a purpose-built facility featuring a large lobby, dining area, manager's office, kitchen, and 9 preschool rooms. A sensory room is also available at the service. The centre has five outdoor play areas, two at the front and three at the rear, where children spend considerable time during the day.

Staffing

The registered provider is the director of the company that operates the creche. He has appointed a manager to oversee the running of the service. A regional co-ordinator also assists in the management of the creche. All staff working at the facility hold an appropriate qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education. Staff participate in ongoing training and professional development.

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 inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

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

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

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

Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the person in charge, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that-

- (a) the service has a designated person in charge and a named person who is able to deputise as required,
- (b) at all times during the period when the pre-school service is being carried on, the designated person in charge or the named person referred to in subparagraph (a) is on the premises, and
- (c) there is a clear management structure in the service that identifies the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and unpaid worker.

(2) A registered provider shall ensure that each employee, unpaid worker and contractor is suitable and competent taking into consideration the nature of the needs of children, including by-

- (a) consideration of references from the person's past employers, if any, and in particular the most recent employer, if any,
- (b) consideration of references from reputable sources in the case of a person who has no past employers,
- (c) consideration of the vetting disclosure received from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána in accordance with the Act of 2012 in respect of the person, and
- (d) ensuring, insofar as is practicable, that where a person has lived in a state other than the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months, he or she provides police vetting from the police authorities in that state.

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that, without prejudice to the generality of paragraph (2) and subject to paragraphs (5) and (6), each employee working directly with children attending the service holds at least a major award in Early childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

Compliance Information

(1)(a) A designated person in charge of operating the service was present on the day of the inspection. There was a named person available who was able to deputise if required.

(b) During the period of the inspection, the service manager was present.

(c) There was a clear management structure in the service that identified the lines of authority and accountability and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee.

(2)(a) Two written and validated references were available for all 43 staff members employed to work at the service.

(b) References were submitted by staff from either their past employers or from other reputable sources such as schools and colleges attended.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures received from the National Vetting Bureau of An Garda Síochána were available for all staff employed to work at the service. All vetting was completed within the last 3 years.

(d) Police vetting was available for 24 staff members who had resided outside of Ireland for longer than 6 consecutive months.

(4) All adults working directly with children held an appropriate qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education or an equivalent such qualification.

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) On Day 1 of the inspection, the 23rd of January 2025 there were 108 pre-school children and 26 adults on the premises.

On the 28th of January 2025, day 2 of the inspection there were 114 pre-school children and 26 adults on the premises. The adult child ratio was correct overall in the facility on both days.

On the 23rd of January the following were in attendance

(2) There were 9 preschool children and 3 staff in the Curious Crawlers

There were 11 preschool children and 3 staff in the Wonderful Wanderers

There were 9 preschool children and 2 staff in Baby Bumblebees

There were 10 preschool children and 3 staff in Bright Blossoms

There were 20 preschool children and 4 staff in Mighty Oaks

There were 16 preschool children and 3 staff in Seomra Crann Mór

There were 9 preschool children and 2 staff in Small Acorns

There were 7 preschool children and 3 staff in Delightful Daises

There were 17 preschool children and 3 staff in ECCE Seomra Síolta Beag

Relief staff were available to replace staff while taking meal breaks. A designated person was available to prepare, cook and serve food to the dining room and to other individual rooms in the service.

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

BASIC NEEDS:

Busy Kids had a healthy eating policy and promoted healthy eating by serving nutritious hot meals and snacks, prepared fresh on-site daily. A 4-week menu plan was available and was displayed in the front hall for parents to view.

Mealtimes were supervised, with staff assisting children as needed in a relaxed atmosphere. For younger children, highchairs were provided, and older children used the dining area for meals.

On the day of inspection breakfast was served between 7:30am and 8:45am. A morning snack of fruit, crackers, crisp bread, breadsticks were served between 9:00am and 9:30am. Dinner was served between 12:00 noon and 12:30pm with an afternoon snack offered between 2:00pm and 2:30pm. On the day of the inspection beef, potatoes and vegetables were served for the main meal.

Drinking water was easily available to children throughout the day. A supply of fruit was accessible in all rooms if children required extra snacks between meals.

The service ensured proper hygiene with sanitary facilities located next to each room. Nappy changing areas were provided for younger children, with accessible, waist-high units, while older children had bathroom facilities located next to their preschool rooms. Hot water, liquid soap, paper hand towels were located at each sink to ensure hygienic handwashing. Spare clothes, outdoor rain gear, and suitable footwear were available to ensure children could go outdoors in all weather.

A separate sleep room with cots was provided for children between the age of 12 and 18-months. For the children aged between 18 months and 24months, their playroom was converted to a sleep room with cots, low level beds and sleep mats brought to the room at sleep time. Sleep checks were monitored and documented digitally in both areas. For toddlers over 2 years, low-level beds were provided in their rooms, with staff supervision during rest periods. Relaxation areas with mattresses, blankets and cushions were also available throughout the day for older children in their rooms to take a break from active play when needed.

The children enjoyed regular changes of environment, spending long periods outdoors in well-equipped play areas around the premises, including a sheltered area for use in all weather conditions. For those you required a break from noisy areas of the service, a sensory room was accessible.

PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

The rooms at Busy Kids were planned and designed to cater to the needs of various age groups. The rooms accommodating the younger children were equipped with soft floor mats for crawling and floor-based activities, along with blackout tents for hiding play and comfortable adult seating. Climbing frames were recently added to the rooms to ensure that children had the opportunity to develop their gross motor skills in a safe and challenging environment. Toys and equipment were stored on low-level shelving, allowing children to independently select materials for play. Items of interest and visual timetables were displayed on walls at a level visible for the children.

In the Pre-school and ECCE rooms, there were well-developed interest areas, such as building and construction zones, art and craft stations with accessible easels, messy play areas with sand, water, and pasta trays, and imaginative play spaces with home corners and dress-up clothes. Each room also featured reading areas with a variety of books. Emphasis was placed on using natural, open-ended materials, and toys and equipment were rotated to match children's interests, preferences, and abilities.

A sensory room on the first floor offered a quiet, calming space with soft lighting, comfortable seating, and soothing music. Plans were in place to enhance this room further, making it only available to small numbers at any one time, creating a more tranquil environment.

Children were encouraged to spend significant time outdoors in well-equipped play areas, with tunnels, climbing frames, slides, swings, ride-on toys, art easels, and basketball nets. A sheltered area outdoors ensured children could play outside in all weather. Additional outdoor features included gardening areas, bug hotels, and mud kitchens to enhance creative play experiences.

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:

On inspection the following was observed:

All external doors were appropriately secured with a magnetic lock to prevent children accessing unsafe areas or allowing unsupervised access to the building. All those who entered or left the building signed in and out on arrival and departure.

Suitable handrails were provided on the staircase to ensure the safety of the children when using the stairs.

All highchairs used by the younger children at mealtimes were in good condition and fitted with safety harnesses.

Safe Sleep:

A safe sleep policy was in place at the service and staff adhered to the best practise sleep guidelines for all children under 2 years of age. Good quality standard cots and beds were used. A risk assessment was conducted to ensure the safety of children moving from cots to beds when they were under 2 years old.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety

1. Adequate storage was not provided in each room to ensure children could access their personal belongings safely throughout the day. Childrens bags were stored on the ground, under their coat hooks along the first-floor corridor, creating a tripping hazard. 2. In the outdoor area for the younger children impact-absorbing material was not provided under climbing equipment. This is required to reduce injury risks from falls. The outdoor space in this area of the service had a concrete surface.
3. A storage shed in the outdoor play area at the side of the premises was unlocked. This shed contained paint cans and equipment which could be hazardous if children access the space.
4. Toiletries and access to the running water were not within easy reach of staff during nappy changing procedures. The layout of the nappy changing area on the first floor needs to be reviewed to ensure staff have easy access at all times to the requirements they need when changing nappies.
5. A minimum distance of 50cm was not maintained between all cots. A distance of 20 to 30cm was noted between the cots located along 1 wall of the sleep room. This was at variance to the safe sleep policy and did not ensure that staff would have unhindered access to each child.
6. A trailing lead for a wall light was located within reach of 2 cots in the sleep room. This posed a safety risk to children in this area of the service.

Infection Control:

7. Staff were observed removing gloves and aprons after nappy changing but omitted to wash their hands and wash the children's hands after changing. This is at variance with the nappy changing policy. To reduce the risk of cross infection all staff and children must wash their hands after every nappy change prior to returning to their playroom.
8. A covered sand tray containing sand and a black bag with plastic balls for the ball pool were inappropriately stored in the nappy changing area next to the Curious Crawlers room. A rolled-up floor mat, chalk board and push along toy were inappropriately stored in the lobby between the nappy changing area and Wonderful Wanderer's room. To reduce the risk of cross contamination, no toys or play materials should be stored in or around any sanitary accommodation areas.

Fire Safety:

9. Low level mats used by the children on the first floor for sleep time were stacked and stored along the corridor of the first floor of the building. These were obstructing one of two double fire doors. This could delay the safe evacuation of the building if a fire occurs.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. New storage areas have been created in the service and parents were advised to reduce the quantity of items send to the facility each day. All corridors are checked daily as part of the health and safety risk assessments to ensure corridors are clear and safe at all times.
2. Plans are in progress to install impact absorbing material in the Wobbler play area.
3. Locks have been fitted on all outdoor storage sheds making them inaccessible to children at all times.
4. Additional shelving has been put in place close to the nappy changing unit, to ensure staff have easy access to all toiletries required during nappy changing procedures.
5. The layout of cots in the Wobbler sleep room has been reviewed to ensure there is the required safe distance between each cot.
6. All leads were secured well out of reach of all preschool children.

Infection Control:

7. Staff have had retraining on the nappy changing policy. Updated visual instructions have been displayed next to the changing units.
8. All toys and play equipment have been stored in appropriate storage areas away from all sanitary accommodation areas in the service. Staff have retrained in the infection control policy.

Fire Safety:

9. Stackable beds used at sleep and nap time are covered and safely stored in a storage room when not in use.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence of all areas where changes took place were forwarded to the Office of the Early Years Inspectorate. Also forwarded were copies of all revised policies and the revised health and safety checklists for the premises.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions, and all the evidence submitted. All non-compliances identified have been adequately addressed.

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) The management at the service ensured that a person with First Aid Responder training was at all times immediately available to the children attending the service.

(2)(a) First aid boxes were safely stored in easily accessible and conspicuous positions on the premises.

(b) Suitably equipped first aid boxes were positioned in a location where they were available to children if required.

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 of sound and stable structure. No obvious defects were observed on inspection.
- (b) All entrance and exit points appeared well secured. A buzzer system was used to gain access to the building. All visitors were requested to sign in, on arrival to the service and sign out on departure from the facility.
- (c) Adequate natural lighting supplemented by artificial lighting was available in all areas of the service. Mechanical ventilation and air conditioning units were used where natural ventilation was not sufficient.
- (e) Adequate and suitable sanitary facilities were provided throughout the building.

Non-Compliance Information

- (c) 1. On the 1st day of the inspection the 23rd of January 2025 the large outdoor play area at the rear and the side of the premises required a deep clean. The ground was slippery and leaves had gathered in all corners of the playground. Much of the play equipment was dirty and stained from recent storms. Rubbish and broken toys were collected in corners, behind low level fences waiting to be disposed of. On day 2 of the inspection the 28th of the January 2025 all works were completed in the outdoor area. The area had been power hosed; all equipment had been cleaned. All broken toys and waste were removed.
- 2. The natural play area adjacent to the cabin was unkept, overgrown, and had a lot of broken equipment. Pots were filled with stagnant water and planting areas were overgrown and unkept. This area was not suitable for outdoor play for the children.
- 3. The floor covering throughout the building was not maintained with numerous discoloured areas noted along all wall/floor edges. This was highlighted on the last inspection of the service on the 9th of February 2024.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- 1. All outdoor areas have been thoroughly cleaned, and routine deep cleaning has been scheduled to take place on a regular basis.
- 2. All broken toys and equipment have been removed and plans for the redesign of this area are in progress.
- 3. Logistical planning for the replacement of all flooring is underway with works planned for the summer months of 2025.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence of all outdoor areas were forwarded to the Office of the Early Years Inspectorate. Copies of all quotations received for all structural works both indoors and outside were forwarded to the Office of the Early Years Inspectorate.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report Pre School

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions, and all the evidence submitted. All non-compliances identified have been adequately addressed.