

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015LK036
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Care Bears Creche and Montessori
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	The Loughmore Centre, Loughmore Avenue, Raheen Business Park, Raheen, Co. Limerick
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<b>Eircode:</b>	V94 RD30
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Mariana Kok
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<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	15/03/2024
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	37	PM	35
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Office, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor Estuary House, Henry Street, Limerick
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	M Riordan
<b>Title:</b>	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).

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

Care Bears Creche and Montessori is a full day childcare service located in the Loughmore Centre in Raheen Business Park, close to the outskirts of Limerick City. It caters for children aged 0 to 6 years. It is open Monday to Friday, 7.30am to 5.30pm. The service operates from a ground floor purpose-built facility. It has 4 well designed preschool rooms. A large outdoor play area is located to the rear of the building.

### Staffing

The registered provider is the owner and the manager of the service. There are 12 staff employed to work at the service.

### 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 inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, 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 operating the service at the time of the unannounced inspection. There was a named person available who could deputise if required.

(b) During the period of the inspection, the registered provider was present, and the staff roster indicated that the registered provider or their deputy were at all times rostered for duty during the hours of operation.

(2)(a) Two written and validated references were available for each staff member working at the service.

(b) References were from either past employers or from other reputable sources such as schools and colleges as required.

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

(d) Police vetting was available for 6 staff who had lived outside the Irish jurisdiction for a period of time longer than 6 consecutive months.

(4) Eleven of the twelve staff working at the facility held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework.

### Non-Compliance Information

(4) There was 1 staff member working at the service who had not completed her level 5 Early Childhood Care and Education course.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective and Preventive Action

(4) The registered provider stated in her reply to the report that the staff member who was not qualified has commenced her training in Early Childhood Care and Education in September 2023. The service will only employ staff who have completed their training prior to taking up of employment at the facility.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

N/A

### Summary Comment

Compliance with this regulation remains outstanding until such time as the staff member has completed their Early Childhood Care and Education programme.

### 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 the day of the inspection there were 37 pre-school children and 9 childcare staff on the premises. The adult child ratio was correct overall in the premises.

(2) There were 6 preschool children and 3 staff in the Baby room.

There were 14 preschool children and 3 staff in the Toddler room.

There were 12 preschool children and 2 staff in the Preschool room.

There were 5 preschool children and 1 staff in the Montessori room.

Relief persons were available to replace staff while taking meal breaks. Designated staff were available to prepare, cook and serve food for all children at 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:**

Healthy eating was promoted within the service. Nutritious hot meals and snacks were prepared fresh each day at the facility. On the day of the inspection mashed potatoes, vegetables and beef were served for the main meal. Younger children were helped at dinner time and older children were encouraged to serve and feed themselves independently. Drinks were served with meals and were accessible to the children throughout the day.

Sanitary accommodation was located close to each room in the service. Nappy changing facilities were provided next to the Baby, Toddler and Preschool rooms. Easily cleanable, good quality changing mats were used. All toiletries for the children were safely stored and clearly labelled and were located within easy reach of staff. The nappy changing policy was displayed to remind staff of the measures to be taken to reduce the risk of cross infection. Older children who were toilet trained were allowed independent access to the bathrooms and were always within hearing distance of the staff. Low level wash hand basins were located in the Preschool and Montessori bathrooms with hot water and liquid soap accessible to ensure hygienic washing of hands.

Each room had a supply of tissues and wipes which were easily accessible to the children. A change of clothes was available for all children if required.

There were two separate sleep rooms available for children under two years of age. Good quality standard cots were used. Children were closely observed during all sleep periods and all physical sleep checks were documented in writing. Low level beds were used at sleep time for the older children in the Toddler and the Preschool room. A calm, quiet atmosphere was observed in these rooms at sleep times, with lighting dimmed and soft music played while children were resting.

Rest areas with age-appropriate seating, soft floor coverings, cushions and blankets were accessible in all rooms. Staff throughout the service encouraged quiet periods during the day where the main lights were turned off and soft wall lights were used to create a calm atmosphere.

The children in the Toddler, Preschool and Montessori room got to spend time outdoors every day at the service in a well-resourced outdoor play area at the rear of the premises.

### PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT

The environment throughout was comfortable, inviting and laid out to accommodate the needs of all children in the setting. Lots of clear floor play space was available in the Baby room to facilitate children not yet walking. Lots of play materials with a variety of colours, textures, shapes, and sizes to experiment with and explore freely were available. In the Toddler, Preschool and Montessori rooms there was access to varied materials and equipment to suit the changing programmes, to suit current and new interests and skill levels. All materials were grouped together to create interest areas. Low level tables and chairs were accessible for tabletop activities and for dining at lunch time. Childrens artwork and educational posters and maps were displayed within view of all children. Lots of imaginative play equipment was visible and readily accessible to promote independent access by children. Outdoors the equipment and materials supported children’s play, movement and exploration. Raised areas and climbing steps and ladders provided opportunities for children to improve balance and gross motor skills. Low level dividers were used to divide the various spaces for the varying age groups at the facility. Play houses, mud kitchens and construction areas provided children with lots of opportunity for entertainment in the outdoors areas.

### Non-Compliance Information

#### BASIC NEEDS:

The children in the Baby room were not taken outdoors on the day of the inspection. Staff stated that due to poor weather conditions babies had not been outside in over 2 weeks. No sheltered area in wet weather was accessible outside.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective and Preventive Action

In the reply to the inspection report the registered provider stated that parents have provided appropriate outdoor clothing to ensure all children get outside each day regardless of the weather. Plans are in progress to provide a sheltered area outside to ensure children not yet walking get to spend time outside every day.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

N/A

### Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions submitted. The noncompliance identified under this regulation has been adequately addressed.

### 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:

A risk management policy was in place at the service. Risk assessments were completed by the registered provider and a record of these checks were maintained.

The front door of the facility was secured with a magnetic lock. A staff member had to permit access to all visitors to the service.

All internal doors were appropriately secured to prevent children accessing unsafe areas within the building.

All emergency exits were clear and unobstructed both from the premises and from the outside playground.

There were no blind cords hanging freely within a child's reach that could pose a risk to children.

All toys, furniture and play equipment were in good condition and free from sharp edges or corners. No broken toys were noted on the premises or in the outdoor play areas.

No flexes or cables were located within reach of children.

The outdoor play areas were surrounded by a high timber railing and staff were outdoors with the children at all times to ensure adequate supervision.

##### Infection Control:

A detailed infection control policy was in place and all staff were familiar with the procedures outlined in the policy. A high standard of operational hygiene was observed in all areas of the building. Cleaning schedules were maintained, and all cleaning duties were signed off by staff members when completed.

#### Non-Compliance Information

##### General Safety:

1. A large basketball net and pole were located in the outdoor play area. The fillable base used to secure the structure was open with the cover on the base removed. This posed a safety risk to the children if not anchored correctly. This base must be appropriately filled with either sand or water and the cap secured to ensure that the structure is properly secured.

##### Infection Control:

2. The nappy bins used in the sanitary accommodation areas had hand operated openable lids. To reduce the risk of cross infection in the service, the bins in these areas must be replaced with foot pedal operated lidded lids.

## Action submitted by the Registered Provider

### Corrective & Preventive Action

#### General Safety:

1. In her reply to the report the registered provider stated that the basketball net has been removed and all outdoor play structures are adequately secured and safe before use by the children.

#### Infection Control:

2. New foot pedal operated bins have been purchased for both Nappy changing areas at the service.

### Supporting documentation submitted

#### General Safety:

N/A

#### Infection Control

N/A

## Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions submitted. The noncompliance identified in the report has been adequately addressed.

### 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 building appeared to be of sound and stable structure both internally and externally and no obvious defects were noted on inspection.
- (b) The premises indoors appeared safe and secured. A buzzer system on the entrance door ensured all who entered the building were checked in by an authorised person. The outdoor area was well secured preventing any unauthorised access to this area of the service.
- (c) All areas were well lit by natural light and by artificial light when needed. There was no evidence of mould, mildew, stale smells, stuffiness or condensation.
- (d) The areas outside were all well maintained and routine cleaning schedules were in place for all internal and external areas. An external company was employed to ensure the area was rodent proofed.
- (e) There were an adequate number of toilets, wash hand basins and nappy changing areas available in the service.