

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LS023
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Name of Service:	Just 4 Kids Creche
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Address of Service:	Crann Nua, Edenderry Road, Portarlinton, Co. Laois
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Eircode:	R32 H282
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Name of Registered Provider:	Catriona Robinson
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	09/09/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	38	PM	26
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla, Child and Family Agency, Primary Care Centre, Church Avenue, Tullamore, Co. Offaly
Inspection undertaken by:	R Flynn
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.
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Description of service

Just 4 Kids is one of three services operated by an independent provider in Co Laois. The Early Years' Service is located in a two storey purpose built premises, in a residential area in the town of Portarlinton. The service provides full day care and sessional service to children aged between 0 to 6 years. Full day care operates between the hours of 07:30 and 18:00, and sessional care is provided between 09:00 and 12:00, Monday to Friday.

The Frog room, Caterpillar and Butterfly rooms, staff office, storeroom, two sleep rooms are located on the ground floor. The Sunroom, upstairs, accommodates the ECCE children. The kitchen, sluice room and a staff room are also upstairs. Outdoor play areas are located to the rear, side, and front of the premises. An onsite car park is available to the side of the premises.

Staffing

The registered provider employs eleven adults to work in the service. There were ten staff present on the day of inspection, this included the registered provider, the person in charge, seven childcare practitioners and one cook. The registered provider works in an administrative capacity providing support across her three services. The person in charge facilitated the inspection on 9 September.

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.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under,

- Regulation 9 (2)(a)(b)(c), (4) - Management and recruitment.
- Regulation 11(1), (2), (8)(a) – Staffing Levels.
- Regulation 19 (1)(a) – Health, welfare and development of child.
- Regulation 22 – Food and Drink.
- Regulation 23 – Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child.
- Regulation 25 (1), (2)(a)(b) – First aid.
- Regulation 26 – Fire Safety.
- Regulation 28 – Insurance.

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, 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

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(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 and a named person to deputise as required.

(b)

The named person in charge remained on the premises for the duration of the inspection.

(c)

There was a clear management structure in place which identified the roles and responsibilities of each employee.

- (2)
Twelve staff files including the registered providers were reviewed and the following was noted:
- (a)
Fifteen written validated references were available from a previous employer and
- (b)
Nine written validated references were available from a reputable source.
- (c)
Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for the twelve staff. In regard to the twelve staff members, the service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (4)
Nine employed childcare staff members working directly with the pre-school children attending the service held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education Level 5 to Level 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed equivalent by the Minister.

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)
An adequate number of adults were working directly with the children. In the morning on arrival at the service, there were thirty-eight children being supervised directly by seven adults. In the afternoon, there were twenty-six children being supervised by six adults.

(2)
The minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained on the day of inspection demonstrated by the following observation;

Morning

- There was one adult providing direct care to three children aged between 9 months to 1 year and 2 months old in the Caterpillar room.
- There were two adults providing direct care to ten children aged between 2 - 3 years in the Butterfly room.
- There were three adults providing direct care to fifteen children aged between 2 years and 8 months to 4 years in the Frog room.
- There was one adult providing direct care to ten ECEC children aged between 3 to 4 years and 5 months old in the Sun Room.

Afternoon

- There was one adult providing direct care to three children aged between 9 months to 1 years and 2 months in the Caterpillar room.
- There were two adults providing direct care to nine children aged between 2 - 3 years in the Butterfly room.
- There were three adults providing direct care to fourteen children aged between 2 years and 8 months to 4 years in the Frog room.

(8)(a)
There were at least two adults on the premises duration the operational hours of the service. This was confirmed following review of the staff roster for 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

(1)(a)

Basic Needs

Regular hand washing was observed as children washed their hands before meals, after toileting and as needed. Self-toileting was supported, and children were supervised as necessary. Nappy changing procedures were carried out on a routine basis and more frequently if required.

The children were provided with the opportunity for outdoor play throughout the day.

The service provides cots for children aged less than two years requiring sleep, younger children were accommodated to sleep according to their individual need. Low level beds with appropriate bed linen were available for children aged two years and above. Children from the Frog room and Butterfly room were observed to go to sleep after lunchtime.

Supporting relationships

Babies and younger children were observed being held and cuddled by staff and any child that became upset or unsettled was immediately attended to and reassured.

Each care room had family walls with pictures of the children with their family members. This helped keep the children connected to home. The Frog room had a community wall showing local places of interest, helping the children develop a sense of belonging within their wider community.

Staff advised that communication with parents was via an electronic application that provides updates to parents regarding their child's activities, sleep, care and learning. Updates were also provided at drop off and collection times. Learning journals were also maintained for each child, documenting their individual learning and development over the course of the year. In the Frog Room, a classroom toy named 'Froggy', was in place to promote engagement, storytelling and a sense of belonging among the class. Froggy goes home with the children, and families document his adventures. Photographs are placed in Froggy's learning journal, 'The adventures of Froggy'. This helped to strengthen home-school connections.

Physical and material environment

Each room was equipped with space to play, learn and develop with age-appropriate play and learning materials to encourage each child to initiate self-directed activities. The Caterpillar room had low-level shelving where the materials and equipment were easily accessible to the children, enabling free choice. A cosy rest area with vinyl mats was positioned beside a low-level mirror with a pull bar for babies to stand up with support. The babies enjoyed a sensory activity with cous-cous in a tuff tray where they crawled and enjoyed the messy play activity. Other equipment available to the babies were push along and pull along equipment, stacking toys, a toy kitchen area and foam blocks for building and knocking.

Children in the Frog room were observed engaged in a fine motor activity with play dough. The children used shape cutters and rollers to make shapes, and other children used a tuff tray with sand, buckets and utensils to scoop and mould shapes.

Children in the Butterfly room were observed to enjoy story time in the cosy corner and sitting at the tables with staff participating in colouring and drawing activities.

Other equipment throughout the rooms included musical instruments, dress up areas, dolls and prams, trucks and cars, and a variety of jigsaws and puzzles.

The outdoor area was accessible from each room via patio doors. The outdoor space was fully enclosed with a high-level concrete wall and gates. Equipment included a climbing frame, a sand tray, balls, ride on equipment, tables and stools. Tyres were available for energetic play. A swing set was available and had shock resistant padding underneath. The outdoor area off the Caterpillar and Butterfly rooms, was sectioned off from the other play areas with portable low fencing and had a mini climbing frame with a slide, ride on tractor and car, and rocking equipment. Wall mounted blackboards were positioned at child level.

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 had a healthy eating policy in place and provided dinner and tea to the children attending on a full day care basis. Snacks were brought in from home. Dinner and tea were freshly prepared by the onsite cook. The hot meals provided, as per the menu displayed, was varied and included a variety of meat, potatoes, vegetables and pasta dishes. Dinner on the day of inspection was baked ham, mashed potatoes and broccoli. Children who did not eat pork were provided with an alternative such as chicken. Evening tea included cheese and crackers, fresh fruit, sandwiches, pancakes and spaghetti.

Babies in the Butterfly room were seated at low level tables and chairs and fed by staff who sat at their level. They all wore bibs to protect their clothing during mealtimes. Staff engaged in conversation with the babies. Milk was stored in the fridge in each room and water was freely available at water stations throughout.

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 to the service was secure and controlled by staff to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the pre-school and to prevent children from exiting the service unsupervised. A doorbell alerted staff to any visitors and an internal latch, and lock were positioned up high out of reach of children.

A walk around of the outside of the premises and play areas, by the inspector, indicated all gates and access points were secure.

Cleaning products were stored safely in the storage room and in high cabinets in the care rooms, out of reach of children.

The kitchen was inaccessible to the children on the day of the inspection.

Infection Control:

Liquid hand soap and warm water were available for hand washing. Paper hand towels were accessible to children from wall mounted dispensers. The children were supported to wash their hands after outdoor play, before meals and after using the bathroom. Pedal bins were available in each care room and sanitary accommodation for the hygienic disposal of waste. Mechanical ventilation was in place in the sanitary accommodation as well as openable windows. The care rooms were well-ventilated with openable windows.

Administration of Medication:

Temperature reducing medication was available in the service if a child presented with a high temperature and was stored safely in the storeroom out of reach of the children. No medication was administered on the day of inspection. Staff were familiar with the procedure of administration of medication if required by a child.

Safe Sleep:

Appropriate sleep equipment was used for children who required sleep. Children aged under 2 years old were provided with a cot while older children slept on low level beds. Sleeping children were physically monitored at 10-minute intervals. Staff were observed to record the colour, position and breathing pattern of the sleeping children on a tablet. The Caterpillar room temperature was recorded as 19.6° and the Butterfly room temperature was recorded as 19.9°.

Fire Safety:

Staff advised that regular fire drills take place, and all fire exits on the premises were easily recognisable and unobstructed. The fire assembly point was to the side of the premises in the carpark.

Outing:

A policy was in place to support outings conducted by the service. During discussion with staff, they advised that the children participate in nature walks. Risk assessments were completed and documented on an electronic application.

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)

Four staff members were qualified in First Aid response (FAR).

(2)(a)

A suitably equipped first aid box was located in each pre-school room and a main first aid box was located in the hall.

(b)

A first aid box was accessible to adults caring for children in the pre-school service.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)

A review of the staff roster indicated that a First Aid Response (FAR) qualified staff member was not present in the service between 07.30 and 08:00 each day. This posed a potential risk to children in the event of a medical emergency requiring first aid.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The staff roster has been updated to ensure a person qualified in FAR is on the premises at all times.

Supporting documentation submitted

Updated staff roster has been viewed.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the corrective and preventive actions taken and evidence submitted. The non-compliances identified under Regulation 25 has been adequately addressed.

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.
 - (c) an authorised person.
- (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 written record was available of fire drills completed in the service. The last recorded fire drill was recorded on 28 August 2025.

(b)

Records were kept of the maintenance of the firefighting equipment which was last serviced on 30 September 2024. The smoke alarm system in the premises was last serviced on 23 July 2025.

(4)

A notice of the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

There was evidence of current insurance cover for 45 children attending the service and the expiry date noted was 27 March 2026.