

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015MH091
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Kidology Childcare
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Unit 42-44 Dunboyne Business Pk, Dunboyne, Co. Meath
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<b>Eircode:</b>	A86 KX73
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Deirdre Finnegan
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<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day, Sessional
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<b>Date(s) of Inspection:</b>	14/10/2025
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	79	PM	43
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate 180-189 Lakeshore Drive Airside Business Park Swords Co Dublin
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	M. McDonnell and S. McKenna
<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

Kidology is one of three privately owned services based in commercial area of Co. Meath. The service is registered to provide sessional, full-day care to children aged 1-6 years old. The service provides Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE). Kidology is in a two-storey building and the Wobbler, Toddler, Playschool, Montessori Playschool, Montessori, ECCE Playschool and combined Naíonra and Pre Naíonra. There are also a kitchen and sanitary facilities available. There is an outdoor area on the premises. There is also a registered school age service in operation.

### Staffing

The registered provider works in the service in a supernumerary capacity. An owner also works in an operational capacity in the service. The registered provider employs 17 staff members to work in the service, and this includes a cook, a maintenance person and 15 staff members who work directly with the pre-school children.

### 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 Management & Recruitment, Regulation 11 Staffing Levels, Regulation 19 Health, Welfare & Development of Child, Regulation 15 Records of a Preschool child, Regulation 25 First Aid, Regulation 26 Fire Safety Measures, Regulation 27 Supervision and Regulation 28 Insurance. However, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of a child. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulation(s) within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance and as result, the scope of the inspection included rooms the Wobbler, Toddler, Montessori Preschool, ECCE Playschool and the combined room of Naíonra and Pre Naíonra.

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, an owner, 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.

(7) A registered provider shall ensure that all employees, unpaid workers and contractors are appropriately supervised and provided with appropriate information, and where necessary training, including in relation to the following:

- (a) the policies, procedures and statements of the service specified in Schedule 5;
- (b) Part VIIA (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013)) of the Act, and
- (c) these Regulations.

#### Compliance Information

(1) (a) The registered provider was the designated person in charge of the service, and there was a named person to deputise in their absence.

(b) Following discussion with the person in charge, and review of the staff roster it was confirmed that when the preschool service was in operation the designated person in charge or the named person in charge were on the premises.

(c) A review of notices in the service and on discussion with staff members and the registered provider, there was a clear management structure in place and staff were familiar with it.

(2) On the day of inspection, the recruitment files of the registered provider, owner and 17 staff members were reviewed.

(a)(b) There registered provider had a written reference available for themselves and twenty written and validated references were available for the owner and 17 staff members.

(c) A Garda vetting disclosure was available for all staff members and the registered provider. However, the service did not demonstrate compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years following a review of staff members employment in the service. This is detailed in Regulation 23.

(d) A review of the documentation available demonstrated that 10 staff members did not require police vetting. The police vetting required for nine staff members was available and appropriately translated as required.

(4) The registered provider and 15 staff members who work directly with the pre-school children in the service held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 - 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

(7) A review of the staff files demonstrated that staff members were provided with training to support them in the care of the children. Staff members spoke of regular team meetings and communications with staff regarding policies, practice and training opportunities. Inspectors were provided with documented records of these for review on the day of inspection. In a review of the staff files there was also documented Induction, supervision and job chat records which reflected the service's staff training policy.

### 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) On the day of inspection there was an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.

(2) On the inspector's unannounced arrival, the adult child ratio was observed to be correct and remained so throughout the inspection. The following adult-to-child ratios were observed:

- In the Wobbler Room there were 2 staff members, and 10 children aged between 1 year 2 months old to 1 year 10 months old.
- In the Toddler Room there were 2 staff members, and 19 children aged between 1 years 11 months old to 2 years 6 months old.
- In the Playschool Room, there was 1 staff member and 11 children aged between 2 years and 9 months old to 4 years old.
- In the Montessori Preschool Room, there were 2 staff members and 20 children aged between 3 years and 8 months old to 4 years and 7 months old.
- In the Montessori Room, there was 1 member and 10 children aged between 3 years and 9 months old to 4 years and 7 months old.
- In the ECCE Playschool there were 2 staff members and 12 children aged between 2 years and 10 months old to 3 years and 9 months old.
- In Naíonra and Pre Naíonra, there were 2 staff members and 11 children aged between 3 years and 2 months old to 4 years and 8 months old.

The registered provider arrived during the inspection and the deputy person in charge were available to provide cover for breaks and support with care for the children.

(8) (a) Following a review of rosters, sign in records and discussions with staff members and the registered provider the inspectors could confirm that two staff members were always on the premises when the children were attendance in the service.

### Part IV – Information and Records

#### Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

*(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:*

- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;*
- (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;*
- (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;*
- (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;*
- (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;*
- (f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;*
- (g) the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner;*
- (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;*
- (i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.*

#### Compliance Information

- (1) The registered provider ensured that a record in writing was kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service. A total sample of 10 child record forms were reviewed, to include children registered to attend across all care rooms and included the required information as detailed at (1) (a) to (i) above.

### 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*

*(1) A registered provider shall, in providing a pre-school service, ensure that-*

*(b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.*

#### Compliance Information

##### Basic Needs

The children's drinking water was accessible to the children within their rooms. Children's food was provided by the service which included cereal and toast for breakfast, a selection of chopped fruit for morning snack, dinner was Caribbean chicken and rice, with brioche rolls for afternoon snack. At snack and mealtimes, the staff were observed to sit and chat with the children whilst they ate. The children were encouraged to participate in the daily routines, with children being given clear roles and responsibilities daily, which included giving out lunches and water. Children had their nappy changed in a timely manner and staff engaged with the children whilst they were being changed. Children were observed to use the toilet independently with staff remaining close by for support if required. Spare clothing was available for the children, and they were observed to be dressed appropriately for the weather on the day while in the outdoor area.

A digital application was used to record children's activities, food eaten, sleep and toilet/nappy routines which is shared with the child's parents throughout the day.

##### Supporting relationships around children

The staff members were observed to interact kindly with the children within their care and demonstrated awareness of the children's individual preferences. The staff members provided comfort and responded efficiently to children who were transitioning in the service between the Wobbler and Toddler rooms. Children were observed to have choices within their play routine. For example, in the Wobbler Room staff members played with children, helping them dress dolls in real nappies and read books of the child's choosing. At this time other children played independently with the easily accessible toys and equipment such houses and dolls and cars. The children in the Montessori, Naionra and Pre Naionra rooms were observed to enjoy free play choices and also

planned activities such as circle time stories and songs in line with curriculum planning and seasonal themes. The children in ECCE Playschool were observed to enjoy a mark making activity with sheets and wipeable markers.

### Physical and material environment

Appropriate relaxation areas were available in the rooms, with well-developed cosy areas available in all rooms. Activities and equipment were available on open shelving at a low level for children to access independently which included a range of books, tabletop activities, construction toys. The home corners in each of the care rooms, were equipped with a range of materials which included food, cutlery and dining items. Some of these items were real life natural items. There were also babies, buggies and clothes available.

Many creative art pieces were on display in all the care rooms, along with a picture schedule of the daily routine, family photos and birthday charts. Interest boards to record children's emerging interests and learning journals with links to the curriculum framework were maintained for each child.

The service had an outdoor play area. The area had a newly laid artificial grass ground surface, and was surrounded by high level walls, fences and a secured gate. The inspector observed the children from ECCE Playschool room enjoying the outdoor play area in the service. There was a wooden climbing structure with a slide, two wooden houses, large games, push on and ride on trucks, scooters, prams and seating provided in this area.

## 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 service had a secure entrance to the service with a buzzer system and keypad locks in place. This prevented any unauthorised access to the service and exit from the service by children.
- Blind cords were secured and were not accessible to children.
- Cleaning agents and medications were stored out of the reach of children.
- The children were provided with a range of fruit for snack from the service. The inspectors observed that the grapes provided were appropriately cut to avoid the risk of choking.
- The outdoor area was observed to be secured and no hazards identified.

- Windows on the first floor were fitted with restrictive devices, and blind cords were present, were observed to be secured.

### Safe Sleep:

- There were documented sleep checks of children whilst they slept. Staff members spoken with were aware of the requirements of the checks including checking the children's breathing, colour, position and room temperature at 10-minute intervals. The checks were recorded on the service's electronic application.
- The temperature of the rooms whilst children, who were all over 12 months, slept was maintained at or below 22°C.

### Non-Compliance Information

#### General Safety:

The service did not demonstrate compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. Following a review of staff members employment in the service one staff member required updated vetting disclosures.

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

#### Corrective & Preventive Action

#### General Safety:

The registered provider stated that an administrative delay had occurred, and the Garda Vetting disclosure was received shortly after the inspection. The registered provider will ensure that more time is given to apply for updated disclosures.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

GV disclosure submitted

### Summary Comment

The actions and evidence submitted by the registered provider, in their corrective and preventive action plan, has addressed the non-compliance identified on inspection.

### 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 registered provider ensured that a person trained in a First Aid Responder (FAR) course was available to the children attending the service. There were four staff members, three of whom on the roster for the day of inspection, who had FAR training certificates.
- (2) The first aid equipment available in the service provided adequate resources in the event of a first aid 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 of the previous fire drill on 10 September 2025 was available for review. The service had maintained a record of monthly fire drills for each room.
- (b) The registered provider had evidence of the annual maintenance of the fire alarm system on 25 September 2025 and the fire extinguishers in February 2025.
- (4) The procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were displayed in the rooms.

### Part VI - Safety

#### Regulation 27 – Supervision

*A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.*

#### Compliance Information

The inspector observed staff supervising children primarily by sight throughout the period of inspection. The layout of the rooms supported staff in being able to maintain sight of the children. This was evidenced as staff were able to support children sharing and engaging with different toys, whilst they completed activities with other children.

Each of the rooms had to access their own separate sanitary facilities. Staff were aware of children who needed to use the sanitary facilities.

In the outdoor area there was a climbing frame, trikes, scooters and toys for the children to play with. Staff members were aware of children's play and appropriately supervised the use of the different equipment that was available.

#### Non-Compliance Information

The registered provider did not ensure that children were appropriately supervised during sleep time in the sleep room located off the Playschool Room. The children who slept in this room were aged over 2 years old and slept on stackable beds. The inspector observed and a staff member confirmed that when children went to sleep the staff used a monitor for observation purposes and carried out 10-minute checks.

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

##### Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider stated that staff are now present inside the sleep room at all times while children are resting and that although the room is fitted with vision panels that provide continuous visual contact, acknowledge that the previous approach, relying on documented 10-minute physical checks, a camera monitor with sound, and staff positioned one to two metres from the sleep area, did not meet the standard required. All staff were briefed on this change, and supervision logs and related documentation have been updated accordingly with regular training planned.

##### Supporting documentation submitted

Copy of amended sleep policy

### Summary Comment

The actions and evidence submitted by the registered provider, in their corrective and preventive action plan, has addressed the non-compliance and will be reviewed on the next inspection.

### Part VI - Safety

#### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

### Compliance Information

The registered provider provided evidence that the service was adequately insured. The policy showed that the service was insured from 28 March 2025 to 27 March 2026.