

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015MN019
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Name of Service:	Crafty Kids Ltd
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Address of Service:	Unit 1 Gortakeegan, Monaghan, Co. Monaghan
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Eircode:	H18 HP20
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Name of Registered Provider:	Eve McCabe , Clare McEnroe
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Service type:	Full Day, Sessional
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Dates of Inspection:	15/01/2024
	18/01/2024

No of pre-school children:	AM	70	PM	50
	AM	32	PM	-

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	No.18 The Grange Plantation Rd Monaghan
Inspection undertaken by:	S. Skinnader
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

Crafty Kidz Ltd is a privately owned service which provides full day care, part- time and sessional care to pre-school children from 0 - 6 years. The maximum number of children that can be accommodated is 81 and the service operates from 07:30 – 18:30 Monday to Friday.

The service operates from a converted industrial unit on the outskirts of the town of Monaghan. There is a car park available for parental drop off and collection. There are 5 care rooms in operation namely Preschool Rooms 1 and 2, the Toddler Room the Baby and Wobbler Rooms. The ancillary accommodation consists of a kitchen, a sleep room, sanitary accommodations with nappy changing facilities, an office upstairs and an area upstairs that is currently converted to a sleep area for children from the Toddler Room during the morning. There is an outdoor play area to the rear of the premises.

Staffing

The service employs 24 staff including the registered providers and 1 student. Twenty of the staff members including 1 of the registered providers work directly with the preschool children. The 4 remaining staff are employed - 1 as service cook, one in administrative duties, a 3rd adult who works directly with the school age and is also in the rooms in a supernumerary capacity and the 4th member of staff is also employed in a supernumerary capacity while completing their childcare qualification.

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.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under Regulations 9, 11, 20, 22, 25 however, on inspection additional non-compliances which posed a risk were identified under Regulation 23 and 29. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under the regulations as a result, the scope of the inspection included the Baby Room, the Wobbler Room and all rooms under Regulation 23 and 29.

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

A Garda Vetting Immediate Action Notice was issued to the registered provider on the 15/1/24. A satisfactory response was received on the 16/1/24.

A referral sent to the Fire Officer 7/2/24 in relation to a fire safety concern observed during the inspection.

A referral was sent to the Fire Officer regarding the location of the sleep area and office at first floor level.

Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered providers, 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.

(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) & (b) The service had a designated person in charge and a system in place to designate a named deputy person to deputise as required. One of the registered providers was the person in charge and was on the premises when the inspector arrived unannounced to the service.

There were 24 staff files and 1 student file presented for inspection.

(2)(a) & (b)

- There were 2 written and validated references from a past employer or an alternative source available for all 19 members of staff and the 1 student.
- Two staff had 1 written and validated reference.
- Three staff had 2 written references and 3 staff had 1 written reference.

(c) Documentary evidence of a processed Garda vetting disclosure was available for 23 of the 24 staff members in the service and for the student.

(d) Following a review of the staff files presented on the day of inspection, international police vetting was available for 4 staff members who had resided outside the jurisdiction for a period of greater than 6 months as an adult.

(4) Documentary evidence was available to demonstrate that 18 out of the 22 members of staff, who worked directly with the pre-school children on day 1, including one of the registered providers held at least the minimum required level 5 Childcare Qualification.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a) and (b) The following was noted in respect of staff references,

- One staff member did not have a 2nd written and validated reference.
- Nine written references were not validated.

(c) A Garda Vetting disclosure was not available for 1 member of staff who was working directly with the children on day 1 of inspection.

A Garda vetting Immediate Action Notice was issued on day 1 of inspection 15/1/24. An adequate response was received from the registered provider on the 16/1/24. On day 2 on inspection, it was observed that the staff member was not on the premises.

(3) From the documentary evidence available for inspection 9 of the staff members had commenced working in the service prior to Garda Vetting being obtained

(4) Four members of staff who did not have documentary evidence of having a minimum Level 5 childcare qualification were observed working directly with the children on day 1 or 2 of inspection.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(a) and (b)(c)

- The second written and validated staff reference has been received.
- All nine references are now validated.

No staff will commence work until all references are received and validated.

All staff will have full garda vetting prior to commencing work.

(3) Preventive measures have now been put in place as staff have already commenced their employment. Going forward, all staff will have service vetting before commencement of work.

(4) One staff member has been dismissed due to an inadequate childcare qualification; another is due to commence level 5 online in May 2024 and currently employed in cleaning duties in the morning and helping out in the afterschool room in the afternoon. One staff is currently in college one day a week completing level 5 in childcare - she is still employed and working but not counted as ratio and never left on her own. One staff member has commenced level 6 childcare course and is now office based.

All staff employed in the service will hold a minimum level 5 qualification in childcare which will be checked prior to commencing work.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copies of references and Garda vetting disclosure

Summary Comment

A Garda Vetting Immediate Action Notice was issued to the registered provider on the 15/1/24. A satisfactory response was received on the 16/1/24.

The registered providers' response and supporting information was reviewed and the non-compliances identified have 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.

(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 Day 1 during the inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service in the Toddler Room, Preschool 1 and Preschool 2.

There were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children in the Baby and Wobbler Rooms with the exception of the non-compliance below.

(2) On day 1 of the inspection when the inspector arrived unannounced to the service there were 5 rooms in operation the Baby, Wobbler and Toddler Rooms and Preschool Rooms 1 and 2.

The following adult: child ratios were observed:

- Two staff in Preschool 1 with 16 children aged 2 years 10 months - 3 years and 11 months.
- Two staff in Preschool 2 with 18 children aged 3 - 5 years.
- Three staff in the Toddler Room with 17 children aged 2- 3 years.
- Two staff in the Wobbler Room with 10 children aged 1 year and 5 months – 2 years and 2 months.
- Three staff in the Baby Room with 9 children aged 10 months - 1 year and 4 months.

One registered provider was also present on the premises and provided support and cover as necessary in the Preschool Rooms. Another adult arrived at the service and provided cover in Preschool Room 2 and the Toddler Room. In addition, there was 1 member of staff present from 9:00 – 14:00 employed as cook.

Day 2:

On day 2 of inspection there were 3 rooms in operation the Baby Room, the Wobbler Room and the Toddler Room. Preschool Rooms 1 and 2 were closed.

The following adult: child ratios were observed:

- Three staff in the Baby Room with 6 children aged 10 months - 1 year and 4 months.
- Three staff in the Wobbler Room with 11 children aged 1 year and 5 months - 2 years and 2 months.
- Four staff in the Toddler Room with 15 children aged 2 - 3 years.

Both registered providers and the cook were also present in the service. The service manager was also present in a floater capacity to cover breaks and an additional member of staff was also present on cleaning duties and as a floating member of staff covering breaks.

(8)(a) Following a review of the available documentation e.g., staff rotas and children's attendance records this information demonstrated that the registered provider ensured that there were at least 2 adults on the premises at all times.

Non-Compliance Information

On day 1 of inspection:

(1) Child and adult ratios were not maintained during lunchbreaks in the following rooms from approximately 13:30 to 14:30.

1. In the Baby Room during the staff half hour lunch breaks there were 8 children with 2 members of staff when 3 were required at all times to meet the minimum adult child ratios.
2. In the Wobbler Room during the staff half hour lunch breaks there were 11 preschool children aged 1 year and 5 months – 2 years and 2 months being cared for by 1 member of staff when 2 were required at all times to meet the minimum required adult: child ratios.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1) The registered providers will ensure that an adequate number of staff are on the rota to comply with child and adult ratios.

Should there be insufficient staff available to work, the registered providers will close a room to ensure ratio levels are maintained.

Summary Comment

The registered providers' response is accepted and the non-compliance addressed. This will be for review at the next inspection.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

(1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-

(b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.

(3) A registered provider of a full day care service, a part-time day care service or a childminding service, other than such a service to which paragraph (2) applies, shall ensure that-

(a) a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the pre-school children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises,

Compliance Information

(1)(b) There were soft comfortable areas in the rooms which consisted of mats, a small sofa and cushions where a child could sit and relax on or take a break from an activity. There was an adult chair in the Baby Room where an adult could sit and nurse a baby or small child.

There was a sleep room off the Baby and Wobbler Rooms where there were 8 standard cots available for the children aged under 2 years of age to sleep. There were 2 additional standard cots set up in the Baby Room.

Additionally, there were daybeds for the children aged over 2 years to sleep on which were observed set up in a space outside the office on the first floor on Day 1 and in one sectioned off area of the Toddler Room on Day 2.

(3)(a) There was an outside area for all the children attending the service to the back of the building which some of the children were observed to access. This area was a partially covered concrete surface which was fenced and gated. Supporting poles were appropriately padded. There was a musical wall. A mud kitchen, plastic house, ride on scooters x 3, a basketball hoop, and a flower shaped blackboard. There was also a wooden car and house. Staff also reported that children in each room would take out their own toys and equipment to the outdoor area.

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

Healthy eating was promoted in the service and there was a menu on display. Food and snacks were provided by the parents for morning snacks in the preschool rooms. Dinner, morning and afternoon snacks were provided by the service for those children staying on a full day care basis. The snacks consisted of fruit, yogurts, rolls with ham and cheese plus crackers. Dinner on Day 1 of inspection was homemade vegetable soup with potatoes. Perishable food items were observed to be correctly stored in a fridge. Young children were encouraged to feed themselves and assistance was also provided if required. Drinks were freely accessible in the preschool rooms in individual cups and there was potable water available in the service. It was reported by staff that bottles of powdered infant formula are brought in ready made up by the parents and then stored appropriately in the fridge.

Non-Compliance Information

The dinners for the children attending the Wobbler Room were all pureed which was not a suitable consistency for the older children in this room.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The menu has now been reviewed regarding the age groups receiving pureed food.
All staff now communicate with parents on the suitable consistency for their children's meals.

Summary Comment

The registered providers' response is accepted and the non-compliance addressed. This will be for review at the next inspection.

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:

1. The front door to the service was open when the inspector arrived unannounced and was able to walk straight in.
2. There were a number of sharp unprotected corners observed throughout the service for example, the kitchen units, island area, wooden shelving units, white shelving units and wooden tray in Preschool 1, also the white shelving units, wooden tray and work top edges in Preschool 2 and two of the tables, plus the white unit and white wall mounted shelves in the Toddler Room. It is the registered provider's responsibility to ensure that all sharp edges in the service are protected.

Infection Control:

3. Aprons and gloves which were stored in the nappy changing area off the Baby and Wobbler Rooms were used by the staff to serve food and feed the children. This is a cross contamination and infection control risk.
4. Some of the mouthed toys in the Baby Room were not removed after use for cleaning and instead were placed back into their boxes when tidied up. This is a cross contamination risk.
5. The nappy changing unit in Preschool 1 was in a defective condition with a torn mat with exposed areas of foam and unsuitable for use.
6. A number of the pedal operated bins were not working or had broken pedals. The children were observed to have to lift the bin lids to open them in Preschool Room and 2 and the Toddler Room. The bin in the staff toilet was also broken. These are all infection control risks.
7. There was no single use paper towel in the sanitary accommodation of the Toddler Room at approximately 12:36. This is an infection control risk and does not allow for effective hand drying.

Safe Sleep:

8. On day 1 there was no thermometer in this sleep area to allow the staff members completing the sleep log to check and record the room temperature.

Corrective and Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The release button the door was accidentally activated by parent as this is a new door system, with 2 green release buttons. A message to all parents on how to use the door correctly and an arrow to show this also is in place. It has not happened since.
2. All sharp corners are now protected.

Infection Control:

3. Aprons and gloves for feeding are now stored under the sink in the rooms to prevent cross contamination.
4. There is a 'dribble box' in each room, the staff upon questioning have assured that going forward they will be used. The registered provider has acknowledged that all toys are washed on a daily basis.
5. The nappy changing mat in Preschool 1 has been removed and replaced with a new one.
6. All the bins have now been replaced.
7. The registered provider has spoken to staff regarding towel issues and a spare towel roll has now been placed in the room.

Non-compliances have been added to the relevant daily risk assessments or daily cleaning schedules to prevent reoccurrence.

Safe Sleep:

8. The room is no longer used for sleep and a thermometer was purchased on the day of the inspection.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence and copies of receipts and updated risk assessments submitted.

Summary Comment

The response and supporting information have been reviewed and the registered providers have addressed the non-compliances 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

(2)(a) and (b) There was a suitably equipped first aid box for the children in the service available at all times.

Non-Compliance Information

The registered provider did not ensure that there was a person trained as a First Aid Responder (FAR) at all times in the service e.g. on 16/1/24; and from 08:00 – 09:00 in the mornings and also when the staff member who was trained was on their lunch breaks there was no staff member available with FAR training.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The rota is checked to ensure a First Aid Responder (FAR) person is available at all times.

The registered provider will arrange FAR training.

Summary Comment

The registered providers response was reviewed and remains outstanding until additional staff are FAR trained to ensure there is a person with FAR training available at all times.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-

(c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated

(d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and

(e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.

Non-Compliance Information

All rooms were reviewed in relation to Regulation 29:

(c) There was an odour in the nappy changing area of the Toddler Room and the mechanical fan in this area had thick accumulations of dust on the fan. There was also a slight odour in the nappy changing area off the Baby Room.

- (d)
1. A number of areas throughout the service were not maintained in a proper state of repair and some of the paintwork was in a defective condition and required painting; for example the pink and yellow walls in the Toddler Room, the wall by the sink in the Preschool 1 and there was a hole in the wall within the castle area in Preschool 2. In the Wobbler Room there was a hole in the lino in the middle of the room.
 2. The castle structure and the plywood shelving in the Preschool Rooms had exposed chipboard which was not adequately sealed.
 3. There were 2 screws in the castle of Preschool 2 which had come through the wood, with the sharp end exposed and accessible to the children. These are a safety and injury risk.

- (e)
1. There was only 1 nappy changing mat between the Baby and Wobbler Rooms. One mat is required for every 11 children in nappies. On the busiest days up to 21/22 children in nappies attend these rooms therefore 2 nappy changing mats are required.
 2. There was only 1 sink in the nappy changing area off the Baby and Wobbler Rooms. One sink is required for every 11 children. Two sinks are required for the numbers attending these rooms. At dinnertime it was observed that the children from the Wobbler Room had to wait to get their hands washed while the children from the Baby Room were washing their hands.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(c) All fans have been cleaned and no odour is present and regular cleaning checks will ensure this will not happen again.

- (d)
1. A booking has been made for all rooms that require the walls to be painted. All holes have been filled in . Lino in toddler room will be changed .
 2. The shelving has been sealed.

3. The screws have been removed from the castle.

(e)

1. An extra nappy changing area will be installed during the summer.
2. The registered provider has spoken to a plumber regards the installation of an extra sink, who hopes to commence the work over the summer.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence of holes filled in submitted to the office of the early years inspectorate.

Photographic evidence of covers on sharp corners submitted.

Summary Comment

(c) The registered providers' response is accepted and has addressed the non-compliance adequately.

(d) 1, 2, and 3 The Toddler Room has been painted, flooring replaced and the room rearranged, shelving has been sealed, holes in the walls filled and screws removed from the castle. These non-compliances have been addressed.

Paint work throughout the rest of the rooms and the hole in the lino flooring in the Woddler Room remain outstanding.

(e)

The non-compliance in Regulation 29(e) have not yet been addressed and remain outstanding.