

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015MN031
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Name of Service:	Kids Korner
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Address of Service:	Lisdoonan Community Centre, Lisdoonan, Carrickmacross, Co. Monaghan
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Eircode:	A81 YV70
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Name of Registered Provider:	Margaret Cunningham
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Service type:	Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	13/11/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	30	PM	-
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Hampton Court, Cootehill Road, Drumalee, Co Cavan. H12 YY84
Inspection undertaken by:	S. Mc Kenna
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

Kids Korner is a privately-owned pre-school service, operating within a local community centre in the rural area of Lisdoonan Co. Monaghan. The part time service caters for a maximum of 44 pre-school children and operates from 8am to 1pm or 9am to 2pm Monday - Friday. A school age service is also provided.

There are two care rooms in operation with adjoining sanitary accommodation. The children have access to a designated outdoor play area. There is car parking to the front and side of the building.

Staffing

The service employs 7 staff, which includes the registered provider, one school age staff member, and one adult on work placement.

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 regulations 9, 11, 19, 23, 25, 26 and 28.

These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

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
- (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 service had a designated person in charge, and a named person in charge in their absence.
- (b) Following discussion with the registered provider, it was confirmed that at all times when the preschool service was in operation the designated person in charge or the named person in charge were on the premises.
- (2) The staff files for 7 adults were reviewed.
- (a) (b) Two written and validated references from past employers, and or reputable sources in the absence of past employments were on file for the 7 adults.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all 7 adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years for all employed staff.

(d) A review of the employment history for the 7 adults, demonstrated that 2 adults had lived outside the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months. The required police vetting for 1 adult was available on file.

(4) Documentary evidence was available to confirm that 5 adults employed to work with preschool children, held an appropriate childcare qualification at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications, or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent. The remaining adults did not require a qualification.

Non-Compliance Information

(d) The required police vetting for 1 adult who had lived outside the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months was not available on the day of inspection.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Application for police vetting was made. Amendments have been made to our interviewing process so that new staff members are asked if they have lived abroad for more than 6 months. If they have, we will request a cert from the country they resided in.

Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of the police certificate.

Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider has addressed the non-compliances in Regulation 9 (d).

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.

(4) Subject to paragraph (5), where a registered provider contemporaneously provides-

(a) a sessional pre-school service, and

(b) a full day care service or a part-time day care service, or both, the minimum ratio of adults to children applicable for the duration of the sessional pre-school service in respect of the children attending that service shall be the ratio specified in paragraph (3).

(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, provide assistance to the person in charge in operating the service is, at all times, within close distance of the service and available to attend the service to assist the person in charge in the event of an emergency.

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.

(3) The adult to child ratios were correct in the service when the inspector arrived unannounced and remained so throughout the inspection.

The following adult to child ratios were observed when the service was operating at full capacity on the day of inspection:

Two adults cared for 18 children aged 2 years 10 months to 3 years 10 months in Room 1.

Two adults cared for 12 children aged 3 years 7 months to 4 years 7 months in Room 2.

In addition to the above, the registered provider assisted across both care rooms where required.

(8) (a) Following discussion with the registered provider and a review of the staff roster, it was demonstrated that the registered provider ensured that 2 adults were present on the premises at all times.

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

(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

The following examples demonstrate how the registered provider ensured that the children's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the daily life of the service:

Basic Needs

The children attending the preschool service take in their own food and drinks from home. Morning snack occurs at 11am and an afternoon snack at 1.00/1.30pm. The registered provider advised that a child attending the service part time who required breakfast can avail of food from the breakfast club.

The children were observed to use the toilet independently, with adults remaining close by to provide assistance if needed. The children were observed to be dressed appropriately during outdoor play on the day of inspection. Aprons were available for messy play activities, and spare clothes was available.

An area of rest in both preschool rooms consisted of a soft floor mat, with folding cushioned mats, and children's own individual cushions taken in from home. Sleep mats provided an area for children who attended on a part time basis to sleep, or rest should they need to.

The atmosphere in both care rooms was warm and welcoming. The rooms were bright and spacious. The children were observed to be engaged in planned and child led activities during the inspection.

The children were observed to take part in outdoor play time twice on the day of inspection. During the second outdoor play time, the children had a choice of play areas, they could choose between the outdoor area or to play within the care room located directly of the outdoor area. The adults were observed to adequately supervise the children in both play areas during his time.

Supporting Relationships

The children were observed to engage positively with their peers and the adults. The adults demonstrated sensitivity and warmth towards the children in their tones and language used. The adults were observed to get down to the child's level and support the child when needed. Small group work settings such as adults sitting

with the children further enhanced the children's concentration levels. Many chats and discussions about the children's home lives, where they lived and what adventures they were going on was observed. No disagreements between children were observed.

The adults were aware of each child's individual needs and preferences. An adult in Room 1 was observed to notice when a child didn't want to engage in play activities, and had chosen to sit at the table after the other children had gone to play. The adult sat next to the child and chatted about their family photo, the child was observed to take comfort in the one-to-one interaction, and when the child was ready, they went to play with their peers in an area of their choice.

The children appeared familiar with the routine and played content and happy in their care environments. Strong relationships between the registered provider, staff and children were evident.

The staff team were observed to work well together in both care rooms. Opportunities for the children in both rooms to join up was facilitated outdoors, where children were observed to be familiar with the other children and staff.

Communication with parents is through a digital messaging service, emails and in person upon arrival and collection each day.

The children in both care rooms were observed to engage in themed based songs and activities. The children in Room 2 took part in a "firework" painting activity, with some low volume firework sounds played in the background during the activity.

Physical And Material Environment

The indoor play rooms were laid out with several interest areas. Both care rooms although different in size and shape were laid out quite similar. Interest areas available include well-resourced home play corners with real life materials, dress up and role play, soft rest area with books, dolls and prams, a painting easel, a creative area, sand tray, water tray, exploration trays and playdough. A floor play area with animals, cars trucks and garages, a tool bench and push-a-long trucks was available.

The table and chairs provided were suitable for the children age and stage of development, and chairs for adults to sit at tables with the children were available. The resources available in the care rooms were suitable for the number, age and stage of the children in attendance. There were surplus amounts of toys, which facilitated children to play in similar interest areas at the same time.

The rooms were bright, with coloured blinds and curtains on windows which provided a warm homely atmosphere. Creative art work by the children to include recent drawings, and painted paper plate self-portraits were on display. Family tree displays at children’s level were provided alongside weather and birthday charts. The outdoor area – located directly of one of the care rooms is secured with fencing and ground surfaces of artificial grass, concrete and tarmac. A covered area is provided for play during inclement weather conditions. In the outdoor area slides, climbing structures, kitchens, garages and ride on toys were available. An area was being developed for chickens, the area at present is secured by fencing between the children’s outdoor play 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 following safety measures were observed on the day of inspection:

- Upon the inspectors arrival the children were in the outdoor play area which was secured.
- The children were observed to be adequately supervised both indoors and outdoors during the inspection.
- The play equipment and resources available to the children were maintained in good repair.
- Daily risk assessments were on display and completed up to date.
- The kitchen area was inaccessible to the children.
- Storage areas were inaccessible to the children.
- Cleaning agents were stored out of reach of the children.
- Fire exits remained clear from obstruction during the inspection.

Infection Control:

The inspector observed the following infection control measures in practice within the service:

- There was warm running water, hand soap, pedal bins and paper towels available for handwashing. The children were observed to wash their hands prior to snack times and after using the toilet.
- Waste bins were in a secure area, inaccessible to the children.
- Tables were observed to be cleaned by the adults after messy play activities and before snack time.

- All food items taken in from home by the children were stored in the fridge until snack times.
- Cleaning schedules were completed and up to date. The care rooms and the outdoor play area were observed to be maintained in a clean and hygienic manner.

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) Following review of staff files, it was evident that the registered provider ensured that there was a member of staff trained in First Aid Response (FAR) on the premises at all times, this was evidenced by 4 staff with in date FAR training certificates on display.
- (2)(a) & (b) Suitably equipped first aid boxes were available in both care rooms, which were stored in an accessible and conspicuous location, out of the reach of children.

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

- (a) A record of fire drills that take place was available, with the most recent dated fire drill recorded on 07 October 2024.
- (b) The annual maintenance certificate for the smoke alarms was dated 28 August 2024.
- (4) The fire evacuation procedures were displayed on walls throughout the service, which contained details in relation to the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire.

Non-Compliance Information

- (b) The fire extinguishers most recent service was dated September 2023, and not annually as required.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The fire maintenance company was contacted to conduct an immediate inspection on our fire extinguishers. The maintenance company was booked to return for the end of 2025 to maintain the fire extinguishers and reminders were added to the managers notes to make sure maintenance is done and bookings with the maintenance company are followed up a month before the new certificate expires.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copy of updated service certificate.

Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider has addressed the non-compliances in Regulation 26 (1)(b).

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider had insurance cover in place for 44 pre-school children attending the service on a Part Time/Sessional basis. The policy showed that the service was insured until 27 March 2025.