

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Tusla Identifier:	TU2015MO059
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Name of Service:	Kilkelly Footsteps Childcare Co. CLG
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Address of Service:	Upper Main Street, Kilkelly, Co. Mayo
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Eircode:	F35 YX77
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Name of Registered Provider:	Anne Glavey
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	13/10/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	22	PM	16
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, TUSLA, Child and Family Agency, 2nd Floor, St. Mary's HQ., Castlebar, Co. Mayo.
Inspection undertaken by:	M Farrell
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

The service is a non-profit, community-based service located in a residential area of Kilkelly, County Mayo. The service is registered to provide full day care, parttime and sessional service to children aged from 2-6 years old from 08:00 to 18:00 hours. Sessional services are provided from 9:30 to 12:30 hours. The service is registered to provided school age services. The premises was purpose built for the provision of childcare services and there are three playrooms, a large lobby area, kitchen, dining area, office and sanitary facilities in the premises. Two enclosed outdoor areas are provided on the premises located to the rear and side of the building. All playrooms have direct access to an outdoor area.

Staffing

There are eight staff employed in the service including a manager, childcare staff and a cleaner. The registered provider is involved in the day to day running of the service and was present during the inspection.

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. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 15, 16, 19 and 23. 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 reoccurring. 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

(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

- (2) There were 9 adults including the registered provider in the service at the time of the inspection. The following vetting documents were available for the adults:
- (a) There was one written validated reference from a past employer available for one of the adults.
 - (b) Two written validated references from sources other than past employers were available for one adult.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all 9 adults. However, the service did not always adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. Please refer to the information outlined under regulation 23 of this report.
 - (d) International police vetting documentation was available for one adult who had lived outside of the State for periods longer than six consecutive months as an adult.
- (4) Evidence of the required qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education or equivalent was available for seven staff who worked directly with the preschool children.

Non-Compliance Information

The following vetting information was unavailable for inspection:

- (2)
- (a) There were no written validated references from past employers particularly their most recent employer available for two adults.
A second written validated reference was required for three adults.
There was no evidence of the validation of two written references from past employers for three adults.
There was no evidence of the validation of a written reference from a past employer for two adults.
 - (d) There were no international police vetting documents available on file for one adult whose vetting documentation indicated that it was required.
There were gaps in the employment histories available for two staff and it was unable to be confirmed if international police vetting was required for these individuals.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The service advised in a written response that:

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(a)

All staff now have two validated references each and one of these is from their most recent employer before starting with in the service.

The registered provider will ensure to validate every reference for any new staff starting in the future and will ensure that they have a reference from their most recent employer.

(d)

The staff member requiring international police vetting has now applied for the international police vetting. A staff member who had gaps in employment history has updated their curriculum vitae. The second staff member with gaps in their employment history has left the service.

In the future the registered provider will ensure that any staff starting in the service who has worked abroad will obtain their international police vetting before commencing work in the service.

The registered provider will ensure that employment histories are complete for any new staff starting in the service.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copies of international police vetting, references, validations and curriculum vitae submitted.

Summary Comment

The actions taken and evidence submitted by the registered provider to the Inspectorate has been reviewed and deemed to have addressed the non-compliance found under Regulation 9 on inspection.

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) There were 6 staff working directly with 22 children on the inspector's unannounced arrival to the service.

Sufficient staff were available during the inspection to work directly with the children and provide relief cover for breaks ensuring that adequate numbers of staff were always available.

(2) The minimum adult to child ratios were maintained during the unannounced inspection as follows:

Toddler playroom: Two staff cared for 4 children aged two years of age attending full day care services. An additional 5th child was settling into the service and was present for a short time at the beginning of the inspection.

ECCE 1 playroom: One staff cared for 4 children aged from 3 to 4 years of age in the morning. Two of the children left following sessional services. The ECCE 1 playroom was used to provide school aged services in the afternoon with the two children staying on for full day care services catered for in the ECCE 2 playroom.

ECCE 2 playroom: 3 staff cared for 13 children on the morning of the inspection. At dinner time the ECCE 1 and ECCE 2 room children joined together with a total of 12 children in the afternoon and two staff.

The designated person in charge was available for break and relief cover if needed.

(8)

There were always at least two adults on the premises during the inspection. Staff rosters showed that two adults were present during service opening hours.

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;*
- (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.*

(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-

- (c) an authorised person.*

Compliance Information

- (1)
- A sample of 10 children's records were randomly selected for review from children currently enrolled in each of the playrooms in the service. The following details were recorded on the sampled children's enrolment forms:
- (a) The names and date of birth of the children.
 - (b) The date on which the child first attended the service.
 - (d) The name, address and contact details for parents/guardians when the child was present in the service.
 - (e) Details regarding authorisation for collection of the child.
 - (f) Information regarding any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child.
 - (g) The name of the child's registered medical practitioner with their telephone numbers.
 - (h) Details regarding immunisations received by the child.
 - (i) Consent in writing from parents for appropriate medical treatment of the child in an emergency.
- (3)
- (c) The written records were made available for inspection to the inspector on request.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:

- (a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;*
- (b) details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services;*
- (c) details of the adult:child ratios in the service;*
- (d) the type of care or programme provided in the service;*
- (e) the facilities available;*
- (f) the opening hours and fees;*
- (g) the policies, procedures and statements the service is required to maintain in accordance with Regulation 10;*
- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*
- (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

(3) A record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection on the premises, and the documents and records referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall be open to inspection whether on the premises or elsewhere, by an authorised person.

Compliance Information

- (1) The registered provider ensured written records were kept of the following information in the service:
- (a) The name, position, qualifications and experience of the staff members.
 - (b) Information on the service types and ages of children that the service is registered to provide in the service’s statement of purpose and function.
 - (c) Details of the adult to child ratios in the service.
 - (d) Information on the type of care or programme provided in the service.
 - (e) Details of the facilities available in the service.
 - (f) Information regarding the service’s hours of opening and fees.

- (g) The service’s policies, procedures and statements as required under Regulation 10 that were kept in a service policy folder available in the entrance hall.
 - (h) Details of the attendance of each pre-school child recorded daily in attendance books.
 - (i) Details of the staff daily working hours on a staff attendance record/roster.
 - (j) A medication record book to record medication administration should it be required to be given to a child.
 - (k) An accident and incident record book recording details of accidents and incidents that had occurred in the service.
- (3) The records were made available to the inspector in the service by the designated person in charge.

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)

Children were observed to eat their morning snacks and main meal in the dining room during the inspection. Children from two of the playrooms were together in the dining-room at one stage giving some siblings an opportunity to meet each other during the day. The children’s morning snacks were provided from home and stored in refrigerators with healthy foods provided in accordance with the service’s healthy eating policy. The main meals were sourced from a local catering company and on the day the children were observed to be provided a meal of pasta bolognese and broccoli. The staff sat with the children at tables in the dining room to supervise them and encouraged conversations between the children. A menu was available for parents to provide information on the meals provided. Drink stations with individual drink containers were set up in playrooms for children to access when they wanted a drink.

A child was in the process of settling into the service in the Toddler playroom. The staff informed the inspector that they were working in partnership with their parents to gradually extend the length of time they spent in the service. The staff described that a keyworker system was in place in the service with the children assigned to keyworker groups. The keyworkers undertook the recording of written observations on the children assigned to their groups and mostly communicated with the children’s parents. A sample of individual scrap books in the ECCE 1 playroom shown to the inspector had been viewed by parents and signed. Younger children in the Toddler playroom had daily communication books that were used to inform

parents of their child's day in the service. The communication books held details in relation to food and drink intake, nappy changes and sleep. Staff included information such as personal items that the child may need like additional nappies in the communication books. The service had developed Autumn newsletters for each playroom that were displayed on an information board in the hallway for parents to view.

There was a structured rest/sleep time for children that needed it before dinner in the service. The Toddler and ECCE 1 playrooms were set up with stackable beds and the window blinds closed to darken the areas and create a restful atmosphere. Older children who did not need to sleep were moved from the ECCE 1 to the ECCE 2 playroom where they went outside to play in the outdoor sheltered space adjacent to the ECCE 2 playroom. The sheltered space had a range of toys and play items such as a farm table with animals and dolls with carriers that children were observed to enjoy playing with.

The children's personal care needs were responded to promptly by the staff. There was a regular nappy change system and children's nappies were also changed depending on their individual needs. Staff were observed to talk with the children during nappy changes and include them in the process. Children were observed to be reminded and supported by staff to wash their hands at times during the inspection. The staff were observed to promote independence with the children. In the ECCE 2 playroom the staff were observed to encourage the children to put on their outdoor coats and clothes before playing outside. Help was given to the children by the staff where needed.

There were family trees with photographs of the children and their families in playrooms creating a link with the service and the children's home. The staff and children were preparing to celebrate Halloween and had decorated playrooms with Halloween and Autumn themed artwork. The children in the Toddler playroom were observed to make autumnal coloured scarecrows with the staff, and the children in the ECCE1 playroom coloured in pictures of witches.

The children's behaviour was managed in a positive way by the staff in the service. Coloured sand timers were available in areas to help children visualise time and used for example in relation to turn taking and to help with transitions between activities. There was a poster with a range of 'calming strategies' that could be used to manage behaviour on display in the ECCE 1 playroom.

The age-appropriate toys and play equipment in the playrooms and outdoor sheltered space were positioned at low levels and accessible to the children allowing them to choose their preferred play activities. Books were available in all the playrooms and staff were observed at different times to read stories to the children encouraging them to comment and join in the storytelling. Daily playroom routines were on display and followed during the inspection. The staff in the ECCE 2 playroom used a matching

exercise as a learning opportunity where the children matched baby animals to their parents. There was a large amount of discussion between the children and staff regarding the correct terms for baby and adult animals.

Non-Compliance Information

- There was no soft seating in the ECCE 1 playroom for children to rest on if they needed to during the day.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider advised in a written response that:

Corrective and Preventive Action

The service has ordered two new soft seating couches for the ECCE 1 playroom and hope to have them delivered at the end of November/start of December.

The registered provider will ensure that every playroom always has soft seating available to provide rest and relaxation for the children.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copy of ordering details submitted. Photograph of new couches installed in the ECCE 1 playroom subsequently submitted.

Summary Comment

The regulatory non-compliance found on inspection has been addressed by the actions taken and evidence submitted to the Inspectorate by the registered provider.

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 main entrance was secured on the inspector's unannounced arrival to the service with access controlled by staff throughout the inspection. The inspector was admitted to the service following production and review of identification documents by the designated person in charge. The internal doors had handles positioned at high levels to prevent children from leaving areas unnoticed. The outdoor area was enclosed with the entrances/exits secured. The toys and play equipment were suitable for age range of the children using them. Cleaning products were stored in the secured storage area off the ECCE2 playroom or at high levels out of reach of the children in

playrooms. Sharp items, for example scissors, were stored out of reach of children on high shelving. There was soft padding in place on the outdoor shelter uprights to reduce the risk of injury if a child collided with them.

Infection Control:

The staff kept records of cleaning carried out in the service in accordance with the cleaning schedules on display in rooms/areas. The staff were observed to wear aprons and gloves when changing nappies and to clean down the nappy changing units before and after use. Children's hands were washed and dried at key times for example after nappy changes and using the toilet. Warm water, liquid soap and paper towels were provided at wash hand basins throughout the service for handwashing and drying purposes. Foot pedal operated bins were provided for waste disposal.

Administration of Medication:

The staff informed the inspector that none of the children required medication to be administered to them while in the service. Through discussion, the staff showed awareness of the policies and procedures in place in the service if medication was required to be administered

Safe Sleep:

Staff were always present in the Toddler and ECCE 1 playrooms when children rested or slept on stackable beds during the inspection. The staff kept signed written records of the children's skin colour, position and breathing patterns at 10-minute intervals when they were sleeping.

Fire Safety:

The emergency exits and escape routes were observed to be free from obstruction during the inspection.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Garda vetting was available for nine adults. However, one of these vetting disclosures was not dated within the previous three years and was not in adherence to the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.
2. Two rodent bait boxes labelled 'Caution do not touch' were potentially accessible to children in the outdoor area.
3. There was a wooden mud kitchen that was damaged with potential pinch points that could injure a child accessible to children in the outdoor area.

Infection Control:

4. A waste bin in the ECCE 1 sanitary unit was damaged and had a lid that did not close properly posing a potential infection control risk.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider advised in a written response that:

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The service has received the updated garda vetting for one staff member and in future will ensure to keep track of all garda vetting applications and re-apply in good time before they expire.

Infection Control:

2. The pest control company has moved the rodent boxes out of reach of children. The service will ensure that no rodent boxes are accessible to children in the future.
3. The wooden mud kitchen has been removed from the garden. The staff will ensure to inspect all outdoor toys for pinch points in future.
4. The bin in the ECCE 1 bathroom has been replaced. The staff will replace any bins in the bathrooms/ playrooms if they are damaged.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

A copy of the Garda Vetting renewal document.

Infection Control:

Photographic evidence.

Summary Comment

The actions taken and evidence submitted by the registered provider has been reviewed by the Early Years Inspectorate and been found to have addressed the regulatory non-compliance found on inspection.