

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WH009
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Name of Service:	Killucan Care Ltd
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Address of Service:	St Joseph's Gardens, Rathwire, Killucan, Co. Westmeath
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Eircode:	N91 KN34
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Name of Registered Provider:	Ita Copley
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date of Inspection:	27/05/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	55	PM	22
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla, Child and Family Agency, SAP Office, St. Loman's Campus, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath.
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Inspection undertaken by:	C. O' Connor Hughes & K. Murphy
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Title:	Early Years Inspectors
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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

This community service provides a full day care service offering fulltime, part time and sessional places. The age range of children that can attend the service is 1 to 6 years of age. The service operates between the hours of 08:00 – 18:00 on a Monday to Friday basis.

The Early Years' Service is located in a purpose-built single storey premises consisting of six pre-school rooms, two sleep rooms, a kitchen, a staff room and an office. One of the pre-school rooms is not currently in use. Outdoor play areas are attached to the front and side of the service. On-site parking and set down facilities are available.

The service is located in a rural area in Killucan, Co. Westmeath.

Staffing

The designated person in charge and thirteen adults were working directly with children on the 27 May 2024. A cook, cleaner and student were present in the service. The registered provider does not work directly with children and was not 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/ premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under

Regulation 19 (1)(a) Health, Welfare and Development of Child.

As a result, the scope of the inspection included the Bumble Bee Room (aged 2-3 years) and the Dragon Fly room (aged 1-2 years.)

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 co-operation of the designated 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.*

(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.

(6) Paragraph (4) shall not apply before 1 September 2021 to a person who-

- (a) has signed a declaration on or before 30 June 2016 to the effect that he or she intends to retire from employment in a pre-school service before 1 September 2021, and*
- (b) is in possession of a letter from the Minister confirming that paragraph (4) shall not apply to him or her before that date.*

(6A) is inserted by S.I. No.632 of 2016 CHILD CARE ACT 1991 (EARLY YEARS SERVICES) (AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS 2016 which states; Regulation 9 of the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations (S.I. No. 221 of 2016) is amended - in paragraph (4), by the substitution of “paragraphs (5), (6) and (6A)” for “paragraphs (5) and (6)”, and (b) by the insertion of the following paragraph after paragraph (6): “

(6A) Paragraph (4) shall not apply to an employee of a registered provider where - (a) the registered provider receives funding for the employment of the employee pursuant to a scheme funded by the Minister and known as the Access and Inclusion Model, and (b) the employment of the employee is for the purpose of providing support, pursuant to the scheme referred to in subparagraph (a), for a child attending the service to enable the child to participate in the programme known as the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) funding Programme.”

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

The designated person in charge and a named person to deputise were available as required.

(b)

The designated person in charge and a named person to deputise were present for the duration of the inspection.

The designated person in charge stated the board of management do not have contact with children in the service. Twenty-one files were reviewed including the registered provider and the student on work placement and the following was noted:

(2)(a)(b)

The required number of written validated references were available from past employers or from a source other than a past employer in respect of the twenty-one files reviewed.

(c)

A Garda Vetting disclosure was available in respect of the adults.

The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d)

Police vetting was available in respect of one staff member who had lived outside the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

(3)

The designated person in charge ensured that all staff were vetted prior to commencing employment in the service.

(4)

All staff members working directly with children attending the service and held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Levels 5 to 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

(6) (a)

No employee had signed a declaration on or before the 30th of June 2016 to the effect that they intended to retire from employment in a pre-school service.

(6A)

One employee present was working directly with children under the Access and Inclusion Model.

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.

(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.

Compliance Information

(1)

The minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained during the inspection.

(2)

There were fifty-five children attending the service supervised directly by thirteen adults.

(4)(a)(b)

An adequate number of adults supervised children attending on a sessional, part time and full day care basis on the day of the inspection.

(8)(a)

The staff roster indicated that two adults are on the premises at all times.

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;*
- (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.*

Compliance Information

(1)

The service kept and maintained written records of information in relation to the service in accordance with Regulation 16 (1) (a)(b) (c) (d) (e) (f) (h) (i) (j)and (k).

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)

Bumble Bee Room and Dragonfly Room

There was a calm and happy atmosphere in the Bumble Bee and Dragonfly rooms. Children enjoyed free play, singing songs with actions, story time and various activities in the outdoor play areas.

Children were encouraged to be independent as they washed their hands before snacks and mealtimes. Bibs were worn to protect children's clothes. Younger children were observed to explore their environment and play on the soft matting provided in the cosy rest area in the Dragonfly room. Younger children slept in a in a restful atmosphere in the sleep rooms and were physically checked every ten minutes by staff. Regular nappy changes were carried out as required. Children were supported and encouraged with toilet training in the Bumble Bee room. Good communication was observed between the staff members and children during nappy changing.

A key person system was in operation in the service. The staff were positive towards children and were familiar with each child, their personalities and their daily routines. Children were happy and content with their carers. Staff used children's individual names, maintained eye contact and conversed with the children during play activities, nappy changing, toileting and mealtimes. Good teamwork was observed amongst staff.

Both rooms were bright and colourful. Children's artwork and family photographs were displayed. A range of developmentally appropriate experiences were available to children. Age and stage appropriate toys and materials were accessible to children on low level shelving. Children were observed to relax in the cosy rest areas established in rooms since the last inspection on the 10 August 2022.

An adult chair was available to support the comfort and nurturing of the young children in attendance.

Children had access to their individual outdoor play areas. An absorbent surface was noted. Toys and equipment included sand play, tricycles and cars, a playhouse and small child sized benches.

The service works in partnership with parents. A parent notice board is displayed in the reception area of the service. The parents drop and collect children from the Bumble Bee and Dragonfly rooms and a verbal handover is given to parents at these times. Communication between parents and the service is also shared via electronic mail, social media platform and one to one telephone calls as required.

Each child had their own learning story depicting their play and work activities. This learning story is shared with parents at the end of the year. A group learning story showcasing the children's group activities was also noted in both rooms.

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

A four-week menu plan was available for review with allergens noted.

The service provides the meals and snacks to the children attending on a full day care basis.

At approximately 10:30 children enjoyed a snack of potato cake and fruit with water to drink. For the main meal the cook served spaghetti bolognese with pasta, cheese and garlic bread.

Refrigerators were available for the storage of perishable foods. A record was available of fridge temperature maintained at the correct temperature of 5 degree Celsius or less.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

A registered provider shall ensure that all reasonable measures are taken to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of a pre-school child attending the service and that the environment of the service is safe.

Compliance Information

General Safety:

The entrance to the service was secure to ensure the safety of the children within the service. The service is accessed through a bell and coded system in the outdoor play area to the front of the service.

The service met the necessary safety requirements in respect of the indoor environment, toys and equipment and the safe storage of cleaning agents.

Monthly safety checklists were reviewed in the Bumble Bee and Dragonfly rooms.

The inspectors signed the visitors book on arrival.

Infection Control:

The premises were visually clean. All toys and materials were easily cleanable. Cleaning schedules were available and reviewed in the Bumble Bee and Dragonfly rooms. Warm water, paper hand towel and liquid soap was available in the sanitary accommodation.

Children were observed to wash their hands before snacks and after using the toilet.

The nappy changing procedure observed was carried out as per the services' nappy changing procedure.

Soothers were stored in individual containers named for each child.

Foot operated pedal bins were available in the sanitary accommodation and in the pre-school rooms for the hygienic disposal of waste.

Natural ventilation was available through openable windows in the pre-school rooms and in the sanitary accommodation and nappy changing room.

Children's nappies and creams were stored in individual named baskets in the nappy changing area.

Administration of Medication:

Temperature reducing medication was available in the service if a child presented with a high temperature and stored safely in the service. Medication was stored correctly in the service. The medication documentation was available and reviewed.

Safe Sleep:

A record of the colour, position and breathing of sleeping children was noted in a sleep log. A staff member was observed to physically check sleeping children every ten minutes in the Dragonfly sleep room.

Air conditioning units are in place in both sleep rooms.

The environmental temperature recorded was degrees 17.8 Celsius on the service's thermometer.

Fire Safety:

Fire exit routes were unobstructed in the service. A fire assembly point was noted to the front of the premises.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.

(2) Where there are more than 15 children attending a pre-school service in a drop-in centre, the registered provider shall ensure that one employee or unpaid worker is assigned responsibility for the checking in and out of children.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) no person other than-

(i) pre-school child attending the service,

(ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,

(iii) an employee, or

(iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and

(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (3)(b) is retained for a period of one year from the date to which it relates.

Compliance Information

- (1)
The records of arrival and departure reviewed verified that each child attending the service was checked in and out of the service by a staff member.
- (3)(a)(b)
All entry to the service with the exception of (i), (ii), (iii) and (iv) was approved by a staff member.
- (4)
The visitor log is retained throughout the annual operation of the service.

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)
Five adults were qualified in First Aid response (FAR) and available on the premises during the hours of operation.
- (2)(a)
First aid boxes were available in the pre-school rooms.
- (b)
A first aid box was accessible to children in the pre-school service.

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 written record for the completed monthly fire drills was available on the premises. The last fire drill was recorded as taking place on the 30 April 2024.

(b)

A record was available demonstrating the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises. The firefighting equipment was serviced on the 09 May 2024.

The smoke alarms in the premises were serviced on the 13 May 2024.

(4)

A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in a conspicuous position in the pre-school rooms.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

There was evidence of current insurance cover for the number of children attending the service. The expiry date noted was 27 March 2025.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

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

- (a) of sound and stable structure,*
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

Compliance Information

- (a)
The service had carried out the remedial works required to fix the external cracks on the outside wall and in the sanitary accommodation noted on the last inspection on the 10 August 2022.
- (d)
The service had undergone a deep cleaning, filling in cracks on floors and painting of the required areas since the last inspection on the 10 August 2022. New linoleum covering was in put in place on the ECCE corridor. The couch was replaced in the main reception area.
- (e)
Hand towel dispensers were in place in the sanitary accommodation since the last inspection on the 10 August 2022.

Part VIII - Notifications and Complaints

Regulation 31 - Notification of incidents

A registered provider shall notify the Agency in writing within 3 working days of becoming aware of any of the following incidents occurring in the preschool service:

(d) a serious injury to a pre-school child while attending the service that requires immediate medical treatment by a registered medical practitioner whether in a hospital or otherwise;

Compliance Information

A notification of incident form was submitted to TUSLA Early Years Inspectorate on the 28 March 2023 in respect of children sustaining an injury requiring medical treatment.