

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WH066
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Name of Service:	Kids Kottage
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Address of Service:	Main Street, Tyrrellspass, Co. Westmeath
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Eircode:	N91 WV8F
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Name of Registered Provider:	Deirdre Raleigh
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	10/12/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	62	PM	45
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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
Inspection undertaken by:	C.O' Connor Hughes
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 registered to offer sessional, part time and full day care places to sixty- five children. The age range of children enrolled in the service is 0 to 6 years of age. The service is currently operating from 08:00 to 17:30. The Early Years' Service is located in a two storey adapted premises and provides four pre-school rooms. The Coop room (aged 0-1 years), the Den room (aged 1-2 years), the Burrow room (aged 2 years), two sleep rooms, a kitchen and an office are located on the ground floor. The Nest room (aged 3-4 years) is located on the first floor. A fit for purpose inspection was carried out on the 4 June 2025 following the completion of a new extension to the premises which provided two additional pre-school rooms the Hive room (aged 3-4 years) and the Clubhouse (aged 3-4 years). An outdoor play area is located between the two buildings.

Staffing

Twenty-one staff members are employed in the service. Thirteen staff members were working directly with the children on the 10 December 2025. The cook and an administrator were working in the service. Four students were on work experience placement in the service. A student working on a part time basis was present in the service.

The registered provider arrived at the service after the inspector's arrival and stayed on site for the duration of the inspection and the closing meeting. The registered provider works directly with children.

Methodology

Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate is the independent statutory regulator of early years services in Ireland. The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 define the duty of a registered provider to ensure the safety and well- being of children and to comply with these regulations. This Act also gives Tusla the authority to assess compliance with the regulations. The purpose of regulation in relation to early years services is to ensure that the care, safety, and well-being of children attending such services is upheld. Inspections of early years services are planned based on the following:

- Previous inspection history
- Any information received in relation to the service

The findings on inspection are based on:

- Information obtained through examination of documentation
- Direct observation
- Discussion with relevant staff

This inspection was unannounced and focused on the area of governance/ health, welfare and development of child/ safety/ premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

Regulation 8 – Change in Circumstance

Regulation 9- Management and recruitment - (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(c)(d) (4)

Regulation 11 -Staffing levels - (1) (2) (8)(a)

Regulation 19- Health, welfare and development of child - (1)(a)(b)(3)

Regulation 20 – Facilities for Rest and Play

Regulation 23- Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

Regulation 26 -Fire Safety Measures

Regulation 28 – Insurance

Regulation 29- Premises

Regulation 30 – Space Requirement

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under

Regulation 19- Health, welfare and development of child - (1)(a)(b)(3)

Regulation 23- Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child.

As a result, the scope of the inspection included the Clubhouse room and the Hive room in the new extension.

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

An immediate action notice in respect of Regulation 9 Management and Recruitment was issued to the registered provider on 12 December 2025. The response submitted by the registered provider on the 15 December 2025 was accepted by Tusla.

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 II - Registration and Register

Regulation 8 - Notification of change in circumstances

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a temporary pre-school service shall, subject to paragraph (3), notify the Agency in writing of any proposed change in the details in relation to the pre-school service contained in the register pursuant to section 58C(2) of the Act or Regulation 7(2) at least 60 days before it is proposed that the change would take effect.

Compliance Information

The registered provider submitted a change in circumstance for a new extension which was approved by the Tusla registration office on the 20 June 2025.

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.

(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 person in charge and deputy were available in the service.

(b)

The person in charge was present for the duration of the inspection. The registered provider arrived to the service shortly after the inspector's arrival in the service.

Following a review of previous inspection information, information available on inspection and discussion with the registered provider it was determined that eight new staff members had commenced in the service since the last inspection on the 7 August 2024. Four students were on work experience placement in the service. The eight new staff files and four student files were reviewed and the following was noted;

(2)(a)(b)

Two written validated references were available for two new staff members from previous employers.

Two written references were available for six staff members and four students from past employers and from a source other than a past employer.

(c)

A Garda Vetting disclosure was available in respect of the eight staff files reviewed. Garda vetting disclosures were available for the four students on work placement. The service 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 three adults who had lived outside the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

(4)

Staff members working directly with children attending the service held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at levels 5 to 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications or a letter of eligibility.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a)(b)

Twenty written references were not validated in respect of new staff members and students prior to their employment and work placement.

(2)(c)

Garda vetting procedures were not carried out by the service in respect of one staff member who was working part time in the service and as a relief worker while completing their student training.

An immediate action notice was issued to the registered provider on the 12 December 2025 by the Early Years Inspectorate. The registered provider response submitted on the 15 December 2025 was accepted by TUSLA.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(a)(b)

All References have now been validated.

Our recruitment policy and student policy has now been revised to include validating references.

Our recruitment checklist now includes the validation of references.

(2)(c)

Application for Garda vetting currently been processed on behalf of the service for the student.

Student removed from relief panel until vetting is in place.

Recruitment and student policy revised to highlight the need to have students on paid relief Garda vetting by kids cottage and education.

Supporting documentation submitted

Validated References.

Recruitment and student policy.

Summary Comment

The non compliance has been addressed with the exception of the Garda Vetting that has been applied for the student. The registered provider shall submit the Garda Vetting disclosure to the Early Years Inspectorate upon receipt.

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)

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

(2)

There were sixty-two children attending the service supervised directly by fourteen adults in the morning.

There were forty-five children present in the afternoon supervised by thirteen adults.

(8)(a)

The staff roster reviewed indicated that two adults are on the premises during the hours of operation.

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.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that no practices that are disrespectful, degrading, exploitive, intimidating, emotionally or physically harmful or neglectful are carried out in respect of a pre-school child whilst attending the service.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)(b)

The Clubhouse and Hive room

Older children enjoyed the freedom of movement from the indoor and outdoor play environments and were happily engaged in various play activities supported by staff. Small group work was observed as the staff sat with and supported a small number of children at creative play. Children engaged in story time and staff stated the children were looking forward to performing in their Christmas play that night.

Children were encouraged to be independent as they washed their hands and went to the toilet supported by staff. Children attending on a sessional basis were provided with a healthy snack by their parents which included sandwiches, yoghurt, a selection of fruit and water to drink. The service provides the meals to children attending on a full day care basis. A menu with the information on meals and allergens was displayed in the service.

A little helper system was in place for children to hand out lunches to their peers at snack time and to line up to go to the toilet. Transitions were smooth as children were given notice to change from one activity to another.

Good communication was observed between staff and children as the staff used individual names, maintained eye contact and conversed with the children during play activities, toileting and snack time. Staff were familiar with each child, their personality and their individual care needs.

The two pre-school rooms were bright and colourful with children's art and photographs on display. A range of developmentally appropriate experiences to meet children's learning needs were available in the pre-school rooms. Areas of interest included a home area, dress up, construction area, a Christmas tree and Santa's letter box. Age and stage appropriate toys and materials were accessible to children on low level shelving in the rooms.

Partnership with parents is in operation in the following ways; Staff stated a verbal handover is given to parents at collection time. Daily communication to parents is managed through an electronic system maintained within the service. A monthly newsletter is sent to the parents. The child's learning journal depicting the child's play and work activities are shared with parents at the end of the pre-school term. The registered provider stated that staff have recently commenced working on the child's letter about a particular area of child development which will be shared with parents regarding their individual child/children.

(3)
Staff were kind to children, encouragement and positive praise was given to children. Staff were respectful towards children during the inspection. Staff discussed positive strategies on how to manage children's behaviour appropriate to their age and stage of development with the inspector.

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-

(a) having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day, and

(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) 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, or

(b) Where no such space is provided, the pre-school children attending the service have access on a daily basis to a suitable outdoor space.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

Suitable play equipment was provided indoors and outdoors which included toys and equipment for construction, tabletop activities, arts and crafts and home corners.

(b)

Two sleep rooms were attached to the Coop and Den rooms providing nine cots for younger children to sleep in. Sleep mats were available for children to sleep and rest. Cosy rest areas were provided in the pre-school rooms.

(3)(a)

A refurbished outdoor play area was noted located between the two buildings since the last inspection on the 7 August 2024. The outdoor play area was safe and secure surrounded by high walls and fencing. A synthetic surface area was noted. Toys and equipment included a swing set with two swings, a playhouse with slide, play water funnels, tricycles and bicycles.

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. Access is gained through a bell and coded system at the automatic gate allowing entry into the service. The inspector signed the visitors book on arrival. The service met the necessary safety requirements in respect of the indoor environment, toys and equipment and the safe storage of cleaning agents in the Clubhouse room and the Hive room.

Infection Control:

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

Toys and equipment were easily cleanable. Cleaning schedules were available for review. The wash hand basins were plumbed with an instantaneous supply of hot and cold water. The water temperature recorded at wash hand basins was 41.4 degrees Celsius.

The sanitary accommodation was stocked with a sufficient supply of liquid soap and electric hand dryers.

Mechanical ventilation was in operation in the sanitary accommodation.

Windows were open to allow for natural ventilation in the pre-school rooms.

Refrigerators were available in each room for the storage of perishable goods. A record of the refrigerator temperatures was maintained.

Administration of Medication:

A temperature reducing medication was available if a child should present with a high temperature.

Fire Safety:

Fire exit routes were unobstructed in the Clubhouse room and the Hive room.

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 3 December 2025.

(b)

A record was available demonstrating the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises. The firefighting equipment and the smoke alarms in the premises were serviced in August and November 2025 respectively.

(4)

A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in a conspicuous position in the service.

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 2026.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-
(e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.

Compliance Information

Further to a corrective action stated on the last inspection on the 7 August 2024, there was sufficient and suitable sanitary facilities to accommodate the sixty-two children present in the main crèche building and the new extension.

Main crèche building

There are three nappy changing units with three wash hand basins on the ground floor to provide nappy changing facilities for the children attending the Coop room, the Den room and the Burrow room.

There is one toilet and wash hand basin for children if required on the ground floor.

There is one toilet and wash hand basin for children attending the nest on the first floor of the main building.

A wash hand basin for children's use was noted in the Coop room and the Den room.

New Extension

In the new extension there are three toilets and three wash hand basins for children's use in the sanitary accommodation. A wash hand basin for children's use was noted in both pre-school rooms.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 30 - Minimum space requirements

(2) A registered provider of a full day care service or a part-time day care service shall ensure that the minimum amount of clear floor space specified in column (3) of Schedule 7 opposite a particular reference number specified in column (1) of that Schedule in respect of the age range of children specified in column (2) thereof at that reference number is available for each child in that age range attending the service.

Compliance Information

(2)

Further to a corrective action stated on the last inspection on the 7 August 2024 there was sufficient space for children present in the service on the 10 December 2025 in the following pre-school rooms, based on measurements recorded on the floor plans of the service, the inspection on the 7 August 2024 and the fit for purpose inspection carried out on the 4 June 2025.

Main crèche building

The Coop room with an area of approximately 26 m² ensured that the minimum amount of clear floor space was available in respect of the 5 children attending on a full day care basis.

The Den room with an area of approximately 31.02m² ensured that the minimum amount of clear floor space was available in respect of the 6 children attending on a full day care basis.

The Burrow room with an area of approximately 21 m² ensured that the minimum amount of clear floor space was available in respect of the 9 children attending on a full day care basis.

The Nest room with an area of approximately 28.7 m² ensured that the minimum amount of clear floor space was available in respect of the 11 children attending on a full day care basis.

New extension

The Hive room with an area of approximately 38.64m² ensured that the minimum amount of clear floor space was available in respect of the 14 children attending on a full day care basis.

The Clubhouse room with an area of approximately 28.7 m² ensured that the minimum amount of clear floor space was available in respect of the 14 children attending on a sessional basis and 2 children attending on a part time basis.