

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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| TUSLA Identifier: | TU2015WW161 |
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| Name of Service: | Kangakare Childcare Ltd |
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| Address of Service: | Woodlands, Lamberton, Arklow, Co. Wicklow |
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| Eircode: | Y14 CX34 |
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| Name of Registered Provider: | Deirdre Ronan |
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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 | 57 |
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| Address of the Early Years Inspectorate: | Loughlinstown Health Centre, Loughlinstown Drive, Loughlinstown, Co. Dublin. |
| Inspection undertaken by: | M Condon & O Quill |
| Title: | Early Years Inspectors |

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).

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| Conditions if applicable | Not Applicable. |
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Description of service

This full day care service is located in a residential area in the village of Arklow, County Wicklow. The service is registered to provide full day-care, part-time day care and a sessional service to pre-school children who are aged between 0-6 years of age. The service is open from Monday to Friday between 07.00 and 18.00. There are six care rooms in operation.

Staffing

There is a total of seventeen adults employed which includes the manager, assistant manager and the cook. On the day of inspection fifteen adults provided direct care to pre-school children. The manager and assistant manager were also present and available to give assistance in the rooms as needed. A chef and a person employed for domestic duties were also 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 and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

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 was issued to the registered provider on 10/12/2025 in relation to a non-compliance identified in relation to Regulation 9(2)(c), Garda Vetting.

A response from the registered provider was received on 11/12/2025 and accepted.

Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the 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

(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)(b) The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required who were both on the premises throughout the inspection.

(2) A total of eighteen files were reviewed in respect of the following adults:

- Fifteen new adults were employed since the last inspection, three of these adults do not work directly with the children.
- Files for three students who attend the creche on work placement were also reviewed.

(a)(b)

There were two written and validated references available for eighteen adults.

(c) Documentary evidence of a processed Garda Vetting Disclosure was available for seventeen 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 for three adults employed who had lived in another state for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months as an adult.

(4)
Twelve adults who were involved in the direct care of children had 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.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)
(c) Documentary evidence in relation to Garda Vetting Disclosure for one adult employed was not available. An Immediate Action Notice was issued to the Registered Provider on 08/10/2025 in relation to this.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The staff member was immediately removed from direct contact with Children. The registered provider obtained the outstanding Garda Vetting Disclosure for the identified adult. Relevant management staff will receive refresher training on safe recruitment and Garda Vetting requirements.

The person in charge will conduct quarterly audits of all staff files to ensure ongoing compliance with Garda Vetting requirements. A centralised Garda Vetting Register will be implemented to track application dates, receipt dates, and renewal requirements for all staff.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copy of Garda Vetting disclosure.

Summary Comment

The registered provider has addressed the non-compliance as identified on inspection in relation to Regulation 9.

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) Throughout the inspection there was an adequate number of adults working directly with the pre-school children.

(2) The adult/child ratios were maintained throughout the inspection. There were fifteen adults providing direct care to sixty-two pre-school children who were cared for in 6 care rooms. The person in charge and the deputy person-in-charge were present to provide assistance in rooms when needed.

(8)(a) There were at least 2 adults on the premises during the inspection and the staff roster indicated that there are at least 2 adults 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:

- (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 registered provider ensured that a record in writing was kept of the information listed above (1)(h) - (k) in relation to the service.

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 external doors were appropriately secured to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the pre-school.
- The designated emergency exit doors were clear and unobstructed.
- The cleaning agents were stored on high shelving and were inaccessible to the pre-school children.

Safe Sleep:

- On the day of inspection, a sleep log was maintained every 10 minutes by staff detailing the physical checks carried out on sleeping children under 2 years of age.
- The temperature of the sleep room and the care rooms where children slept was in the acceptable range.

Infection Control:

- Children were encouraged to wash their hands regularly including before lunch and after using the toilet. Effective hand hygiene practices were observed and in accordance with the services infection control policies and procedures. Pedal operated bins were available in the sanitary areas and in the care rooms.

- The premises play equipment, and materials were in a clean and hygienic condition.
- Each child's soother was stored in individual containers.
- Cleaning schedules were maintained in each care room and the environment was clean.

Administration of Medication

Medication was not given at the time of the inspection. Written parental consent was available should medication be required to be administered to a child. Medication was stored safely

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. In the baby and in the fledgelings rooms inflated balloons were accessible to the children who were aged 13 months- 22 months. This posed a risk of choking and inhalation. Balloons are not advised for children aged 3 years or less.
2. In the fledgelings room five cord blinds on windows were not secured.
3. In the playschool room a trailing flex from Christmas tree was on the floor posing a hazard.
4. In the outdoor area the following was observed:
 - A metal hook was protruding from a low position on the side wall. This posed a hazard as a child could fall onto it causing an injury.
 - There were sharp edges at the top of a low wall where plastering had been damaged. This posed a risk of injury if a child fell onto it or scraped against it.

Safe Sleep:

5. In the Fledgelings room one baby aged 13 months was put to sleep on a "Cocoon bed". No written risk assessment and parental consent to support this decision was available. It is acknowledged that when this was brought to the attention of the manager, this child was immediately changed to sleep in a standard cot.

Infection Control:

6. In the baby room the infection control measures for the cleaning of toys which children have put into their mouth was unsatisfactory. This increases the risk of infection spreading from one child to another.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. All inflated balloons were removed immediately from the baby and fledgelings rooms. Staff were reminded that balloons are not permitted for children under 3 years, and this will be reinforced during room safety checks. The

service's risk assessment and safety checklist will be updated accordingly, and a use of balloons' s policy was developed.

2. The five unsecured cord blinds were secured using appropriate safety cleats on the day of inspection. A full environmental safety check of all rooms was be completed to ensure all window blinds comply with safety standards.

3. The inflatable Christmas tree and trailing flex was removed from the floor immediately

All staff were reminded to ensure that all electrical items are safely positioned and flexes secured or removed when not in use.

4. Access to the affected outdoor area was restricted immediately. The protruding metal hook was removed, and sharp edges filled, and temporary measures were put in place to prevent children accessing the damaged wall area. The wall will be repaired and made safe, including smoothing and sealing sharp edges. Outdoor risk assessments will be reviewed and included in routine premises checks.

Safe Sleep:

5. The child was immediately transitioned from the cocoon bed to a standard cot, in line with safe sleep guidance. All staff will be reminded of safe sleep policies, and compliance will be monitored through routine room checks and sleep audits.

6. Infection control:

On the day of inspection, staff were instructed to remove all toys that had been mouthed by children and to clean and disinfect them immediately using an approved cleaning method before reuse. A separate labelled container was introduced for toys awaiting cleaning. All staff received refresher training on infection prevention and control. A nothing toy policy was developed, and compliance will be monitored through daily room checklists and monthly audits by the person in charge.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copies of the following:

New policy regarding the use of balloons in the service.

Updated risk assessments.

Daily risk checklist.

Photographic evidence of:

Blind cords secured using safety cleats.

Garden wall made safe with hook removed

Infection Control:

Copy of new policy drawn up for the management of mouthing toys.

Photograph of new box for mouthing toys.

Summary Comment

The registered provider has addressed the non-compliance as identified on inspection in relation to Regulation 23.

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.

(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.

Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider ensured that a record was kept of all children entering and leaving the service on a daily basis.

(3)(a)(b) A visitors' book was used to record all persons, other than those listed above, who enter the premises.

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) Two staff members, who were trained in first aid response (FAR), were available to the children on the day of inspection.

(2)(a) The first aid box for children was safely stored in an accessible position.

(b) At all times the first aid box was available to the children attending the pre-school service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.

Compliance Information

The children present were supervised when indoors and outdoors at all times during the inspection.