

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2016CC032
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Name of Service:	Karen's Playschool
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Address of Service:	Unit 5C, Glanmire Industrial Estate, Glanmire, Co. Cork
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Eircode:	T45 N225
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Name of Registered Provider:	Karen Crowley
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Service type:	Part Time
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Date of Inspection:	31/08/2023
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No of pre-school children:	AM	22	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate Administration Building St Mary's Health Campus Gurranabraher Cork
Inspection undertaken by:	D Prendergast
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

Karen's Playschool first notified in 2016. It initially operated as a sessional service and was recently approved to provide part time care, for children aged two to six years. The Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme is facilitated from 9.00am to 12.00pm, each Monday to Friday, over 38 weeks of the year. The service is usually open from 9.00am to 1.00pm daily, however, on the day of inspection the service was operating reduced hours, as it was the beginning of the school year.

The premises is situated in an industrial estate, in an urban area of Glanmire in Co. Cork and is provided from the ground floor of a two-storey building. It consists of one care room, which has adjoining sanitary facilities and also includes a kitchen, an office and a storage area. The children have the use of a designated outdoor play space, which is available opposite the premises.

Staffing

The service currently employs four adults, all of whom are involved in the direct care of the children. This includes the registered provider and a relief staff member. All four of the adults have attained a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education.

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 the child/ safety/ premises and facilities. The inspections 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.

Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that-

- (a) the service has a designated person in charge and a named person who is able to deputise as required,*
- (b) at all times during the period when the pre-school service is being carried on, the designated person in charge or the named person referred to in subparagraph (a) is on the premises, and*
- (c) there is a clear management structure in the service that identifies the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and unpaid worker.*

(2) A registered provider shall ensure that each employee, unpaid worker and contractor is suitable and competent taking into consideration the nature of the needs of children, including by-

- (a) consideration of references from the person's past employers, if any, and in particular the most recent employer, if any,*

(b) consideration of references from reputable sources in the case of a person who has no past employers,

(c) consideration of the vetting disclosure received from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána in accordance with the Act of 2012 in respect of the person, and

(d) ensuring, insofar as is practicable, that where a person has lived in a state other than the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months, he or she provides police vetting from the police authorities in that state.

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that, without prejudice to the generality of paragraph (2) and subject to paragraphs (5) and (6), each employee working directly with children attending the service holds at least a major award in Early childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) The registered provider was the designated person in charge of overseeing the operation of the early years service. A deputy person in charge had also been identified to deputise in the event of her absence.
- (b) The registered provider was working at the childcare facility, when the inspector arrived to carry out the inspection and remained available throughout the process.
- (c) Comprehensive information regarding the management structure of the service, was displayed in the entrance area. This included the roles of each adult attached to the service.
- (2) Recruitment records in relation to one adult, whose file had not been previously assessed, were reviewed, along with the qualifications of all staff members.
- (a) Both of the required written and validated references had been sourced from past employers.
- (b) There were no written and validated references from sources other than previous employers.
- (c) A Garda vetting disclosure was available for the staff member.
- (d) Police vetting was not deemed to be required.
- (4) Records on file demonstrated that a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education, as listed on the National Framework of Qualifications, was held by each of the four staff members.

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) During the period of inspection, it was observed that there was an adequate number of adults working directly with the children in attendance.
- (2) The adult child ratio was correct and maintained. During the ECCE sessional service, there were 3 adults working directly with 22 children, who were aged two and a half to four and a half years. The part time service was not in operation on the day of inspection.
- (8)
- (a) At least two adults present at all times throughout the inspection period.

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;

(j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;

Compliance Information

(h) Information relating to the daily attendance of each child was recorded. A sample of four weeks was reviewed and deemed satisfactory.

(j) The records of medication administration in respect of one child were sampled and found to have been correctly completed. Written parental consent for staff to administer said medication was also provided.

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)

Basic needs:

- A mid-morning snack was facilitated for the children shortly after 10.00am. During this time, the adults were readily available to assist the children with opening food packaging and containers. It was also noted that this period of the daily routine was conducted at a relaxed, unhurried pace, which ensured that the children had sufficient time to enjoy their snacks.
- The children were observed to independently access the adjoining sanitary facilities, as needed. Adult supervision and verbal prompts were provided, as the children washed their hands prior to eating.
- Tissues were easily accessible to the children, which allowed them to attend to their own personal hygiene.

- The adults demonstrated kindness and patience towards the children, as they settled into the new school year. For example, children that were new to the setting were reassured and regularly advised of upcoming activities.
- There was adequate space for the children to move freely and engage with materials within the care room. The children also had an opportunity to participate in outdoor play and games, in the designated outdoor area.

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.

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) Both the indoor and outdoor environments were well equipped to cater for the number and age range of the children in attendance. The care room comprised several interest areas, each of which were suitably resourced with relevant play and learning materials. For example, the children had the use of wooden kitchen units and utensils, a large furnished doll's house, doctor's instruments, sensory toys, jigsaws, books, dress up clothes, art and craft materials, magnets, connectable shapes and threading materials. In the outdoor play space, the wide range of equipment on offer included a large slide, ride on toys, a low climbing frame, a doll's house, play kitchens, fence mounted chalk boards, a tool bench with play tools, and a good supply of footballs.
- (b) A rest area was incorporated into the main care room, for any child who wished to take time out to relax. This consisted of a large vinyl sofa, positioned next to a book shelf. A second sofa was also accessible in an adjacent area. There were two stackable beds held in storage and available for use by any child who may require sleep, while in attendance. Suitable bed linen was also provided.

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

- The service had developed a Healthy Eating policy, which was relevant to the type of service provided.
- Food for the children’s meal breaks was supplied by their parent or guardians.
- On the day of inspection, examples of the children’s mid-morning snacks included sandwiches, filled wraps, bread rolls, rice cakes, cheese, yogurts, smoothies and fruit such as blueberries, apples, oranges and bananas, with water to drink. The registered provider informed the inspector that a second snack will be accommodated for the children, when part time hours commence in the coming days.
- The children had easy access to drinking water throughout the morning, as their reusable water bottles were stored on a low-level table in the care room. Extra bottles of water were also available in the service.
- The inspector was advised that none of the children had specific allergies or dietary requirements.
- The registered provider stated that additional snacks were stored in the kitchen, as suitable alternatives, should the need arise. This was in keeping with the Healthy Eating policy.

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:

- Unauthorised access to the early years service was prevented through maintaining the security of the main entrance door, which was key locked from the exterior. On the interior, a thumb turn lock with a double locking mechanism, reduced the risk of a child exiting, while unsupervised.
- The outdoor play area was enclosed by fencing and a secured gate.
- The doors to the kitchen, office and staff sanitary facility were fitted with high-level sliding bolts on the exterior, which minimised the risk of a child gaining access to said areas, from the main care room.
- Safety plugs were in place on low-lying electrical sockets.

- Radiator covers reduced the risk of a child sustaining a scald injury.
- In addition to the artificial grass surface in the outdoor play space, rubber mats were available as a soft fall area underneath the slide.
- A high-level shelf in the care room was used to store cleaning agents out of the children's reach.

Infection Control:

- Adequate handwashing facilities were provided; warm running water, liquid soap and paper towel dispensers were available at the wash hands basins. Handwashing by the children was observed before the mid-morning snack took place.
- The care room and sanitary facilities were maintained in a clean and hygienic state. Tables used for mealtimes were sanitised before use and additional cleaning was undertaken once the children had been collected.
- The children's perishable snacks were refrigerated upon their arrival at the service.
- Individually labelled coat hooks were in use to store the children's coats and bags in the care room and in the outdoor play area.
- Disposable aprons and single use gloves were available for nappy changing procedures.

Administration of Medication:

- The administration of medication was not observed during the inspection.
- The medication which had been prescribed for one of the children was in-date and was safely stored in a location that was inaccessible to the children.

Safe Sleep:

- None of the children were observed to sleep during the inspection period.

Fire Safety:

- There were no fire safety concerns noted.

Outings:

- It was reported that outings were occasionally conducted and a suitable Outings policy was in place.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service was insured to provide part time care for up to 22 children to attend at any one time, with cover valid until 27 March 2024.