

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2017FL505				
Name of Service:	Kidology				
Address of Service:	Unit 8, Junction 6, Castleknock, Dublin 15, Co. Dublin				
Eircode:	D15 EA43				
Name of Registered Provider:	Deirdre Finnegan				
Service type:	Full Day				
Date of Inspection:	15/11/2023				
No of pre-school children:	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>AM</td> <td>32</td> <td>PM</td> <td>26</td> </tr> </table>	AM	32	PM	26
AM	32	PM	26		

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	<p>Early Years Inspectorate 2nd Floor, Unit 4/5 The Nexus Building Blanchardstown Corporate Park Ballycoolin Dublin 15 D15 CF9K</p>
Inspection undertaken by:	T. Nelson and S. Murray
Title:	Early Years Inspector and Inspection and Registration Manager

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.

Description of service

Kidology is a full day care service located in a retail business park in Dublin 15 and is registered to provide early childhood education and care to a maximum of 50 children aged 1 to 6 years Monday to Friday, with current operating hours from 8.00am to 5.30pm. The service also participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme which is delivered on a sessional basis from 9.30am to 12.30pm. The service is one of three services operated by the registered provider.

Kidology operates from a retail unit with three care rooms on the ground floor to include the Toddler room (1 to 2 years old), the Playschool room (2 to 3 years old) and the Montessori room (2 years and 8 months – 5 years old). There are sanitary facilities located off each of the care rooms and a cot room located off the Toddler room. The kitchen is located on the ground floor and an office and staff room located on the first floor. There is a fully enclosed outdoor area is located to rear of the premises which is directly accessed from each of the care rooms.

Staffing

There are currently eight staff employed by the service including the registered provider and seven childcare staff who work directly with the children. The registered provider manages the oversight of the three services and provides cover where needed. Present on the day of the inspection was the registered provider, a co-director, six childcare staff, a student and a staff member from one of the other services operated by the registered provider who provided cover across the rooms.

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:

- Regulation 9(1),(2)(a)(b)(c)(d),(3),(4),(7) Management and Recruitment
- Regulation 11(1),(2),(8) Staffing Levels
- Regulation 16(1)(h)(i)(j)(k) Records in relation to Children
- Regulation 19(1)(a) Health, Welfare and Development of child
- Regulation 23 Safeguarding the Health, Safety and Welfare of the Child
- Regulation 25 First Aid
- Regulation 32 Complaints

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under:

- Regulation 16(1)(h)(i)(j)(k) Records in relation to Children
- Regulation 19(1)(a) Health, Welfare and Development of child
- Regulation 23 Safeguarding the Health, Safety and Welfare of the Child

As a result, the scope of the inspection included the Playschool room and did not include the Toddler or Montessori room. Regulation 11 was assessed across all rooms.

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

This inspection was triggered as a result of information received to the Inspectorate on the 25 October 2023.

Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the children, registered provider and staff 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.*

(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.

(7) A registered provider shall ensure that all employees, unpaid workers and contractors are appropriately supervised and provided with appropriate information, and where necessary training, including in relation to the following:

- (a) the policies, procedures and statements of the service specified in Schedule 5;*
- (c) these Regulations.*

Compliance Information

(1)(a) The service had a designated person in charge and named person to deputise as required.

(b) The person in charge was present during the inspection.

(c) There was a clear management structure in place, there was a poster available clearly detailing the roles and responsibilities on the notice board in the entrance hall.

(2) The files of three new staff who were new to the service since the last inspection held on the 9 November 2022 and a student who was present on the day were reviewed. The following checks had been completed:

(a) Five validated written references were available from recent past employers.

(c) Completed Garda vetting disclosures were available in respect of the four adults.

(d) Documentary evidence was available that three of the four adults had lived outside of the state for six months or more as an adult and there was international police vetting from that state available for inspection.

(3) Documentary evidence was available that Garda Vetting and international police vetting had been carried out prior to any of the adults commencing in the service.

(4) The three staff who worked directly with children attending the service held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification that was verified as being eligible by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth Affairs.

(7)(a)(c) Discussion with staff and a review of documentary evidence showed the registered provider ensured that adults were appropriately supervised and provided with appropriate information. For example:

- There was an induction record and new staff member checklist available for all new staff.
- Regular communication via an online platform was shared with staff. This information was in various formats such as text or video. Examples of recent topics:
 - An update reminding staff on the ongoing safety of children at drop off and collection.
 - An update on room set up to support the transition of children into the service in the mornings.
 - A video clip promoting positive behaviour management, including biting.
 - An update on the provision of appropriate nutrition for alternative meals.
 - An update on the appropriate supervision of children.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(b) Three written references that were from a reputable source had not been verified by the registered provider.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Corrective action: The reference of the staff member has been validated.

Preventive action: The service will ensure all student references are validated going forward before placement.

Supporting documentation submitted

No evidence submitted.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the corrective and preventive action submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 9(2)(b) has been addressed.

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,

(9) In assessing compliance with the adult: child ratios specified in Schedule 6, unpaid workers and, where applicable, the person referred to in Regulation 24(2), shall not be taken into account.

Compliance Information

(1) On the day of inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the service to meet their basic care needs. There were eight staff including the registered provider available to the 32 children who were present on the morning of the inspection and six staff including the registered provider available to the 26 children who were present on the afternoon of the inspection.

(4) The adult to child ratios were correct when the inspectors arrived unannounced to the service and throughout the inspection. Six staff were allocated to work directly in the rooms with the 32 children who were present on the morning of the inspection with a breakdown as follows:

- Toddler room – 1 adult to 4 children aged between 1-2 years old.
- Playschool room - 3 adults to 13 children aged between 2-3 years old.
- Montessori room - 2 adults to 15 children aged between 2 years 8 months -5 years old.

(8)(a) The registered provider ensured that 2 adults were present on the premises at all times.

The staff roster provided for a minimum of two adults to be on the premises during the operational hours of the service.

(9) A student who was present on the day of the inspection was not included in the adult child ratios of the room.

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 following was reviewed and observed to be compliant:

- (h) Attendance records detailing the arrival and departure of the children on a daily basis were maintained.
- (i) A record was maintained of the staff roster which was reflective of the staff present on the day.
- (j) Following a review of a sample of eight records, the registered provider ensured a full record in writing was maintained for the administration of medication.
- (k) Following a review of a sample of 25 records, the registered provider ensured a full record in writing was maintained for accident and incidents, including any corrective actions where required.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 17 – Information for parents

A registered provider shall ensure that a parent or guardian of a child proposing to attend the service is provided with the information referred to in subparagraphs (a) to (g) of Regulation 16(1).

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured the following information was available to parents.

- Information on the staff, type of service, age range of children, type of care programme, facilities and the opening hours were available in the parents' handbook and displayed on notice boards throughout the service.

- A synopsis of the required policies was available in the parents' handbook and on the service website with full copies available on request via email.

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) The registered provider ensured the child's learning, development and well-being was facilitated in the Playschool room, for example:

Basic Needs:

- Children were provided with regular meals including a hot meal supplied by an external catering company and snacks provided by the service and prepared in the service kitchen. On the morning of the inspection children in the Playschool room were served a snack of ham sandwiches and a drink of water. Crackers and cheese was offered as an alternative to a child who refused the ham sandwich, and staff reported this is the procedure when a child does not eat the meal offered. The transition to mealtime was observed to be a timely experience for the children, at a pace suited to their needs.
- Nappy changing was completed on a regular basis, and this was observed to be a timely, pleasant experience with warm respectful interactions.
- Sleep was observed to be according to the children's needs for sleep, and there was a cot room available with a sufficient number of cots and low beds to allow for this. There was a rest area available in the care rooms if the children needed to engage in more restful activities.
- Children were provided with appropriate clothing for both the indoor and outdoor play environments. Slippers or indoor shoes were provided for indoors, and hats and waterproof trousers for outdoors. This facilitates comfort in play experiences.
- Strategies such as observation, distraction, clear instruction on what was unacceptable, and appropriate supervision was used to support children's behaviours, and these were in line with the service policy on Behaviour Management. Staff were able to inform the inspectors of the strategies used to assist children manage negative behaviours in a positive child-centred approach.

Supporting Relationships:

- The adults in the service were observed to interact with the children in a responsive, warm, respectful manner.
- Staff reported that information such as toileting, food, and sleep is shared with parents daily via an online software application, and through conversations at drop off and collection. Staff reported being aware of the constraints on parents during drop off and collection. These updates keep parents informed about the daily life of their child.
- There was a communication book maintained where updates relevant to the family life of the children was reported, such as the birth of new siblings or other important milestones in a child's life. These updates can facilitate familiarity and reinforce a sense of belonging and therefore comfort in a service.

Physical and material environment:

- The furniture provided in the room was low level and appropriate for children attending with toys, equipment and play materials easily accessible and visible to the children on low-level units which nurtured independence and facilitated choice.
- There was a range of equipment available including mark making, a home corner with associated props to facilitate imaginative play experiences, stacking, building, connecting and threading toys to facilitate creative play, cars and tracks for transporting and books to facilitate language and early literacy development.
- Images of the children and their families were displayed throughout the room which promoted a sense of identity and belonging.
- The children had access to the outdoor play environment on two occasions in the day. This area had an undulating surface which supported fundamental movement skills such as running, stopping and balance.

Programme of activities:

- There was a learning plan displayed in the room and the activities and artwork displayed on the walls throughout the room reflected this plan.
- Evidence of children's activities was recorded in a learning journal, and photos of the process and products of the activities were shared with parents via the online software application.

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

The following measures were taken to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of children in the service:

General Safety:

- The entrance to the service was monitored and managed by staff to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the premises and to prevent children from exiting the service unsupervised.
- All internal doors were secured with an electronic door release system which was up high out of reach to the children.
- Cleaning products were observed to be stored up high out of reach of children.
- Tall shelves were observed to be secured.
- There was stickers and posters displayed on all windows to make the glass visible.
- There was an up-to-date risk assessment in place where the room was checked for hazards.
- The room temperature was maintained between the recommended ambient temperature of 18-22° C in a care room.
- A record was maintained of any incident or accidents in the service, with preventative actions noted where necessary.

Infection Control:

- The premises were maintained in a clean and hygienic condition and documented up to date cleaning records were available and displayed in the premises.
- Thermostatically controlled warm water, liquid soap and single use hand towels were available at all wash hand basins used by the children and the staff members.
- Staff were observed supporting children to hand wash before mealtime.
- The tables were wiped down before mealtime.

Administration of Medication:

- No medication was observed being administered on the day of inspection.

Safe Sleep:

- Children were observed sleeping in cots or on low level sleep beds in the sleep room of the service. The room was darkened and a speaker used to emit soothing sounds of nature.

- 10 minutes sleep check observations were recorded on all sleeping children. The temperature of the sleep room was recorded at 20.0°C this was within the required range between 16-20°C.

Fire Safety:

- Emergency exits were unobstructed.
- Fire drills were carried out on a monthly basis.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. A wooden truck structure which was damaged and had protruding nails and splintered wood was accessible to the children and posed a risk of injury. It is acknowledged that plastic tape was tied across the entrance to the structure to restrict access on the day of the inspection however this was still accessible to the children. It is also acknowledged photographic evidence was submitted to the inspectorate on the 16 November 2023 that the damaged areas of the structure were removed, eliminating the risk of injury to the children.

Infection Control:

2. The following practices were observed during the course of 9 nappy changes observed that increased the potential risk of infection:
 - The box of disposable gloves used for nappy changing was placed and stored on the floor of the sanitary accommodation for the duration of the nappy changes.
 - The packets of baby wipes for use during each nappy change were placed on the floor of the sanitary accommodation.
 - There was repeated hand contact with the lid of the nappy disposal unit while disposing of the nappy at each nappy change.

These practices increased the potential risk of cross contamination, and therefore the risk of infection.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. Corrective action: this was addressed on inspection.

Infection Control:

2. Corrective action: The non-compliance was addressed with staff.
Preventive action: Staff were reminded to familiarise themselves with the nappy changing policy which highlighted nappy, wipes, and gloves to be kept on the changing unit.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. Photographic evidence submitted.

Infection Control:

2. Memo to staff on nappy changing practices.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions taken and evidence submitted. The non-compliances identified under Regulation 23 has been addressed. Regulatory compliance has been met.

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

(2)(a) and (b) A suitably equipped first aid box was available and safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position on the premises.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider did not ensure that a person trained to First Aid Responder level was available to the children attending at all times during the operational hours of the service should a medical emergency occur. For example, a review of the roster demonstrated the following:

- On the Friday of the week prior to the inspection, of the three staff members trained to First Aid Responder level, one staff member was on leave, one staff member finished at 1.00pm and one staff member finished at 2.00pm leaving no person after this time trained to First Aid Responder level available to the children.
- On the week of the inspection, of the three staff members trained to First Aid Responder level, one staff member was on leave, one staff member finished at 1.00pm and one staff member finished at 4.00pm leaving no person after this time trained to First Aid Responder level available to the children.

This was identified as a non-compliance on the previous inspection dated the 9 November 2022.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Corrective action: eight further staff members are booked in for FAR training in Jan '24.

Preventive action: the service plan to have all staff trained in FAR by August 2024 instead of basic First Aid to ensure the cover can extend to holidays and unplanned leave such as sick leave etc.

Supporting documentation submitted

No evidence submitted.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 25 has been addressed and will be reviewed on the next inspection.

Part VIII - Notifications and Complaints

Regulation 32 – Complaints

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that the complaints policy of the service specifies-

- (a) the procedure to be followed by a person for the purposes of making a complaint in relation to the service,
- (b) the manner in which such a complaint shall be dealt with, and
- (c) the procedures for keeping a person who makes such a complaint informed of the manner in which it is being dealt with.

(2) A registered provider shall ensure that-

- (a) a record in writing is kept of a complaint made to the provider in respect of the pre-school service, and
- (b) the complaint is duly dealt with in accordance with the provider's complaints policy.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)(b)(c) There was a complaints policy available detailing the procedures to be followed for making a complaint; the manner in how the service deals with a complaint and the procedures for keeping the complainant informed of this process.

(2)(a)(b) There was a record available of any complaints made to the service, and there was evidence available that complaints were dealt with according to the service complaints policy.