

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

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| <b>TUSLA Identifier:</b> | TU2021DL001 |
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| <b>Name of Service:</b> | Kids Cove Creevy |
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| <b>Address of Service:</b> | 1 Ballymacaward, Creevy, Ballyshannon, Co. Donegal |
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| <b>Eircode:</b> | F94 K859 |
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| <b>Name of Registered Provider:</b> | Amanda Finnerty |
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|                      |                      |
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| <b>Service type:</b> | Sessional, Part Time |
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| <b>Date(s) of Inspection:</b> | 31/05/2023 |
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| <b>No of pre-school children:</b> | AM | 19 | PM | 8 |
|-----------------------------------|----|----|----|---|

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| <b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b> | Early Years Inspectorate.<br>Primary Care Centre,<br>Church Avenue,<br>Tullamore,<br>Co. Offaly. |
| <b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>                | Ann Spain.   |
| <b>Title:</b>                                   | Registration Support 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

Kids Cove Creevy is a privately run service in operation since 2018 in predominately an outdoor environment attached to the registered providers private residence. The service is located in a rural area which is close to Ballyshannon town in south Donegal. Children are cared for in a spacious outdoor area at the front of the registered providers residence and with direct access from a parking area. A polytunnel provides both an additional sheltered play area and storage for childrens bags, clothing, portfolios and take home creative work. Childrens sanitary accommodation is located in a separate building close to the outdoor play area. Children have access to a playroom also located in this building. A staff area and sanitary accommodation is provided at the rear of the residence. Children are cared for between the ages of 2 and 6 years. A sessional service is provided between 9.30am and 12.30pm. Children can avail of part-time childcare between 9.00am and 2.00pm. A school age service is provided between the hours of 2.00 and 6.00pm.

### Staffing

The service is staffed by four adults who work directly with the children. The registered provider does not work in the service.

### 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 announced and focused on the area of governance, health, welfare and development of child *and* safety. The inspections may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9 Management and recruitment, regulation 11 Staffing levels, regulation 19 Health, welfare and development of child, regulation 22 Food and drink, regulation 25 First aid, regulation 26 fire safety and regulation 28 insurance. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

The scope of the inspection included an outdoor enclosed area and the rooms in use in the service.

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 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
- (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 service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required. Both staff members worked directly with the children in attendance in the service.

(b) Both the designated person in charge and the named person to deputise as required were present on arrival of the inspector and for the duration of the inspection.

(c) There was a clear management structure evident in the service. The staff members were observed to work as a team as they moved to different groups of children engaged in child led activities with staff assistance, participation and supervision as necessary.

(2)(a) There were four staff employed to work in the service.

Two validated references from reputable sources were held on file in respect of two of the staff members in the service. One reference from a past employer was held on file in respect of one staff member.

(b) Two validated references from sources other than past employers were held on file in respect of one staff member. A second reference from a source other than a past employer was held on file in respect of one staff member.

(c) A vetting disclosure from the National Vetting Bureau as conducted in August 2021 was held on file in respect of two staff members. The remaining two vetting disclosures from the National Vetting Bureau were conducted in November 2021 and June 2022, respectively.

(d) A police clearance was held on file in respect of one staff member who had lived outside of the state for over six consecutive months as an adult.

(4) Staff working in the service had childcare qualifications varying from Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) levels 6 to level 8.

### 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.*

*(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).*

### Compliance Information

(1) An adequate number of adults were working directly in the service as 3 staff were present to work with a total of 19 children during the sessional service. One staff member was rostered to care for a total of 8 children in the age range 3 to 5 years that remained after sessional hours to avail of part-time childcare.

(4)(a)(b) The service register confirmed that the maximum number of children in daily attendance in the sessional service was 22 with 3 staff members present. The register also confirmed that the maximum number of children remaining in the service for part-time childcare was 8 children with one staff member present.

## 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

The following measures were observed on the day of inspection to facilitate each child's learning, development and welfare within the daily life of the service.

#### Basic needs.

Children were observed to wear sun hats and sun cream applied accordingly as temperatures rose outdoors. An outside tap and a basin of water was used to facilitate hand washing after messy play which included painting and playing in the mud kitchen.

Picnic tables and benches were used outdoors for children to sit for table top activities and breaks as required.

Morning break was signalled by a child ringing the bell for "line up" time.

Children were supported to line up in pairs for break time at the gate leading from the outdoor play area to the childrens sanitary accommodation indoors. Both toileting and hand washing prior to break time was supervised by

the staff in a calm manner . Two separate toilet cubicles and two washhand basins with a supply of hot water , liquid soap and disposable paper towel dispensers were provided for childrens hand washing and drying. Children returned to the outdoor play area for break time with staff guiding them back to the gates leading to the outdoor space.

Break time in the service was social . Children chose where to sit and have their lunches after taking their lunch boxes and drinks from their bags held in storage in the polytunnel. Staff sat with groups of children in tyres under an open canopy, on a mat under the climbing frame and at the picnic tables. Children were observed to engage in conversation with the staff about the foods they enjoyed, their siblings and where they go during hot weather. Food supplied for lunch included sandwiches, crackers and cheese, peppers, yogurts and a variety of fruits. A jug of water and beakers to drink from were provided by the service for children to avail of drinking water during the course of the day in the service.

Staff were observed to encourage children to return their lunch boxes to their bags after lunch. It was observed that each child was given individual time to take a break and eat their lunch.

Each child brought their outdoor clothing, lunches , coats, hats and suncream to the service daily in their bags. A reserve supply of both foods for snacks and sun cream if needed was supplied by the service.

A rest area comprising of soft cushions anchored in place between timber frames was provided outdoors. Books in an open container were located in the rest area. In addition matts were provided for children to place on the all-weather surface and in areas of their choice to sit and rest as required. Plastic sheeting was used to provide shelter from both the sun and in poor weather conditions for children to sit and rest outdoors.

### **Supporting relationships.**

A calm atmosphere prevailed in the service on the day of inspection. Play activities were guided by the childrens choices with staff moving to different groups to both participate in play activities and to talk to the children giving them time to answer their questions as required. Children were observed to enjoy “breaking ice” at a water station as a staff member poured vinegar and sodium bicarbonate over ice pieces and participated with the children using toy hammers to break the ice.

A planting area and planting boxes were provided both outdoors and in the polytunnel. Children had planted lettuce, carrots, beetroot, seeds and flowers. It was observed that the planting pots used to grow sunflowers in the polytunnel were labelled with the children’s names to allow them watch and monitor their growth.

Hens roamed the outdoor play area and a staff member was observed to thank a child for collecting an egg and handing it to the staff member for safe keeping.

Staff interactions with the children were kind and friendly. A staff member was observed to partner a child who had to partner for line up for hand washing and toileting . Staff were observed to participate with the children in song time to movement indoors and blowing water bubbles to run and catch outdoors. A staff member was observed comfort an upset child who fell outdoors and to check the child for any possible injury. Story time before home time for sessional children provided an opportunity for children to sit and listen to a story. A Staff member engaged the children by showing them pictures from the story book and waiting for children to answer open ended questions.

“Learning journals” were held in storage in the polytunnel and both pictures and observations were used to illustrate the child learning and developmental journey in the service. Parents were requested to view and sign the journals on a monthly basis. A portfolio was provided at the end of the year for children to have and take home. The service also used an electronic communications application for ongoing communications between the service and home settings.

### **Physical and material environment.**

The outdoor play space was spacious and focused on the use of natural materials to promote childrens play and development needs in an outdoor environment. A rabbit hutch was fenced into a grass area. A tunnel supported by a large pipe was built into a grass mound for children to climb through. Wall mounted water features, pots, pans and utensils for pouring were provided to create imaginative play areas outdoors.

Children had space to climb through anchored tyres, play on swings, sea saws , climbing frames and with balls outdoors. Stone bricks were provided for construction play. An area surfaced with chippings provided a suitable surface for toys on wheels. Musical instruments were anchored to a timber pallet wall. The pretend restaurant was located in a timber house and had pictures of food on the walls, a counter, a cash register, delph and cuttelry. Seats were secured to timber pallets depicting transport vehicles. Areas were surfaced with grass and gravel to facilitate a combination of open space for physical play and areas to site play equipment. A range of toys including animals, miniature toys, connecting toys, beads, shapes of different sizes and dimensions , puzzles, jigsaws and a supply of arts and crafts materials were located at low level in the polytunnel and within easy reach of children.

The outdoor play area was safely secured by heavy duty plastic fencing and a gate which was secured to prevent unsupervised exit. A timber fence denied children access from the building in which sanitary accommodation was located to a back garden behind the registered provider, s residence.

### 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 childrens lunches, meals and snacks as provided by parents and guardians were observed to be in keeping with the service healthy eating policy. The person in charge confirmed that a backup supply of water to drink, fruit and a snack were provided for children cared for part-time childcare if required. Water, fruit and croissants were available on the day of inspection should a child in attendance for part-time childcare require an alternative food before home time. Food supplied by the service was held in storage in the utility room and staff area of the service if required.

#### Non-Compliance Information

Childrens perishable foods requiring refrigeration were stored in their bags in the polytunnel and in a room temperatures exceeding 22°C. Refrigerated storage was not provided for the childrens perishable foods and snacks.

#### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

##### Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider submitted written confirmation on 22 June 2023 to indicate that all perishable foods were placed in zip lock bags by parents and stored in a refrigerator by a staff member as children arrive to the service. Lunch bags are removed at break times.

##### Supporting documentation submitted

Picture evidence was submitted of the refrigerated used for storage of perishable foods and snacks as located in the staff area of the service.

#### Summary Comment

The actions taken by the registered provider as reviewed by the inspector addresses the non-compliance identified.

## 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 working in the service had up to date first aid responder training with expiry dates of September 2024 in respect of one staff member and October 2024 in respect of the second staff member.

(2)(a)(b) First aid boxes were held in storage in the office off the playroom in the building and in the toy storage shed in the outdoor play area.

## 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 firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.*

*(3) A registered provider shall ensure that a record referred to in paragraph (2) is retained for a period of 5 years after its creation*

*(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 record of fire drills as conducted was maintained in the service. The last monthly fire drill was recorded on 10 May 2023.

(b) The maintenance record for the firefighting equipment located outside a playhouse and in the building confirmed that an annual service was conducted in October 2022. The maintenance record for the building smoke alarm system indicated that a service was also conducted in October 2022.

(4) The fire evacuation procedure was on display in the indoor playroom. A fire assembly point for the service was posted on a timber fence adjacent to the residence and outside of the outdoor play area.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

## Compliance Information

Insurance available in the service confirmed cover for a total of 22 children in daily attendance at any one time in a part-time childcare service. Insurance was valid from 28 March 2023 to 27 March 2024.