

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2021GY005
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Name of Service:	Creative Kids Childcare Services
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Address of Service:	St John the Apostle, Knocknacarra N.S, Western Distributor Road, Knocknacarra, Co. Galway
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Eircode:	H91 R3N1
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Name of Registered Provider:	Gemma Holland
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Service type:	Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	10/02/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	18	PM	10
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla-Child and Family Agency, Early Years Inspectorate, Quality and Regulations Directorate, Clinical & Administration Building, Block A, Merlin Park, Co. Galway.
Inspection undertaken by:	S. Meehan.
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 in St. Johns the Apostle national school in Knocknacarra in the suburbs of Galway city. This childcare service provides a part-time care programme for children aged 2 to 6 years. The pre-school operates a part-time service from 08.30 to 13.15 and a sessional service from 08.30 to 11.30, Monday to Friday. The service has one large playroom on the first floor of the building and sanitary facilities are available for children down the corridor from the playroom. There is a secured play area at the main entrance of the service for children to play and explore which has been renovated in the last year.

Staffing

The registered provider does not work on the premises daily. There is a named person in charge and a named designated deputy and another adult. Three adults were working directly with the children on the day and the four adults which includes the registered provider hold at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 to 8 on the National Qualifications Framework.

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.

On inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 23. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

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.

(6A) Paragraph (4) shall not apply to an employee of a registered provider where - (a) the registered provider receives funding for the employment of the employee pursuant to a scheme funded by the Minister and known as the Access and Inclusion Model.

Compliance Information

- (1) (a) The manager was the designated person in charge and there was a named person available to deputise in the service. The registered provider was present and working with children during the inspection.
- (b) The manager, registered provider and another adult were on the premises when the early years inspector arrived and remained on site for the duration of the inspection. Staff rosters indicated that either the designated person in charge or deputy were available, on the premises, when the pre-school children were present.
- (c) There was a clear management structure in the service, which identified the lines of authority and accountability within the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee.
- All four adult files were reviewed including which included the registered provider, manager, deputy manager and another adult:
- (2)(a) Six of the eight validated references on file in respect of four adults were from a past employer.

- (b) Two of the eight validated references were from a source other than a past employer.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures from the National Vetting Bureau were available for the four adults however, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting time frames as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew garda vetting every three years. Please refer to the information outlined under regulation 23 of this report.
- (d) Documentary evidence indicated that none of the 4 adults had lived outside the jurisdiction for longer than 6 consecutive months while over the age of 18 years and therefore no adult required police vetting.
- (4) Four adults held a Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) at a minimum of Level 5 to a level 8, in Early Childhood Care and Education. Copies of qualifications were on file for the three adults.
- (6) There was one adult employed under the Access and Inclusion Model.

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.*

Compliance Information

- (1) At all times during the period of the inspection, the registered provider ensured that an adequate number of staff were working directly with the children.
- (2) The registered provider ensured that the minimum ratio of adults to children specified was maintained. On the morning of the inspection, there were 18 children present and in the afternoon 10 children present with 3 adults.

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

(19)(1)(a)

BASIC NEEDS:

- Healthy eating was promoted within the service and the food observed was healthy and nutritious and consisted of a selection of sandwiches, fruit, crackers and cheese.
- The children were afforded plenty of time to enjoy their snack in a relaxed and unhurried manner. Crockery and plates were given to children during snack times, laid out on low tables in the outdoor play area.
- Perishable items belonging to children were stored in the service fridge.
- The children had access to a water on a low-level table, that allowed them the opportunity to take a drink if thirsty. Each child also had their own water drinking bottle.
- Children were encouraged and supported to manage their own personal care appropriate to their own level of independence.
- Children either toileted independently or with some assistance as required. All children were toilet trained that were in attendance on the day of inspection.
- The children had the opportunity to rest or relax on soft seating in a designated rest and relaxation area in the playroom. Sleep mats and linen were available for children attending on a part-time basis.
- The children were observed playing in a variety of special interest areas, free play, tabletop activities, circle time and group games.
- The theme for the week was 'Valentines' and children spoke in the group about how do you tell or show someone you care.

SUPPORTING RELATIONSHIPS AROUND CHILDREN:

- A key person system was in place for each child to support their development and to inform curriculum planning. The role of the key person was to liaise with parents and guardians. Individual care programmes were in place where required.

- Communication with parents was provided at collection and drop off times, via text messages, multimedia application, weekly newsletter and by phone calls.
- Each child had a learning journal identifying their likes preferences and showing their art and craft work.
- Adults were observed to pick up on children's cues, showing them empathy and encouraging children throughout the day.
- Adults were observed to communicate effectively with one another to complete and organise activities. This made transitions calm and relaxed for the preschool children.
- Adults worked in partnership with families and were observed giving feedback to parents on how their child got on for the day.
- Children were familiar with the adults. This supported children to form positive relationships with adults.

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 service was secured upon arrival to allow for the safe entry and exit of the children and to prevent unauthorised adults from entering.
- The outdoor areas were secured with fencing and a wall to protect the children within.
- Cleaning agents, mops, brushes and medication were secured out of reach of the children.
- Storage facilities were inaccessible to the children.
- The emergency exits were unobstructed to allow easy exit in the event of an emergency.
- All toys and equipment were maintained in good condition to prevent any safety issues for preschool children.
- All cleaning agents were stored in the kitchen out of reach of children.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

- Garda vetting was available for four adults, however one of these vetting disclosures were not dated within the previous three years in adherence to the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting' posing a potential risk for children.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider stated in their response that:

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

All vetting, re-vetting of staff files will be scheduled to be checked and an audit carried out monthly. We will ensure all staff vetting is up to date and reapplied for within the 3-year time frame required.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

A copy of the re-vetting for one adult was submitted to the office of the Early Years Inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The Early Years Inspector reviewed the evidence submitted and has deemed it has met the requirements of this part of the Regulations.

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) The service provided evidence that a person trained in first aid responder for children was available to the children attending the pre-school service. There were two adults present on the day with a first aid responder with in date certification.
- (2)(a) The first aid box was accessible and in a conspicuous position in the playroom.
- (b) The first aid box was fully equipped and available to the children attending the pre-school service.