



Name of Service:	Kids at Play
Address and contact details of service:	Carn Glas Court, Gracedieu, Waterford
TUSLA Identifier:	TU2022WD004SA
Type of Service and age profile:	School Age Service for children aged 4-15 years
Name of Registered Provider:	Aoife Lynch
Inspection Date:	28 August 2023
Previous Inspection Date(s):	Not applicable
Inspectors:	A. Bradshaw- Early Years Inspector C. Whelan- Inspection and Registration Manager
Registration Status:	Registered School Age Service
Date of Registration:	23 September 2022
Conditions Attached to Registration:	None attached
Additional Information:	This inspection was triggered following the receipt of a feedback and concern received by the Inspectorate.

Legislation:	Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate is the independent statutory regulator of School Age Care Services in Ireland, and its role is to promote and monitor the safety and quality of school age care provision in accordance with the following legislation: • The Child and Family Agency Act 2013 Part 12 58 (G). • The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Registration of School Age Services Regulations 2018 (S.I. 575 of 2018). A School Age Care Service is one which caters for children under the age of 15 years enrolled in a school providing primary or post primary education. The service may provide a range of activities that are developmental, educational and recreational in manner, which take place outside of school hours, the primary purpose of which is to care for children where their parents are unavailable. It is the responsibility of a registered provider to ensure the safety and well-being of school age children and the above legislation authorises Tusla to assess compliance with the Regulations.
Inspection Methodology:	The inspection was unannounced to assess compliance with the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Registration of School Age Services Regulations 2018 (S.I. 575 of 2018) and the Child Care Act 1991, Section 58 as amended by Part 12 of the Child and Family Agency Act, 2013. The findings on inspection are based on: • Information obtained through examination of documentation • Direct observation • Discussion with relevant staff This inspection aims to determine the extent to which service is appropriate for the care, safety and wellbeing of children in accordance with the regulations cited above. 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 corrected the non-compliance and will prevent them 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.
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Description of Service:

Kids at Play is based in an adapted unit in a residential area of Waterford City. It is a standalone school age service with two main care rooms and a large hallway. There are sanitary areas for both children and staff along with a small kitchen and office area. There is an outdoor area at the front of the service.

The service is registered to accommodate up to 30 school age children between the ages of 4 to 15 years. On the day of inspection there were nine children between the ages of six and nine years. The service's registered operating hours are from 1-6.00pm during school terms and from 9-6.00pm outside of school terms.

Staffing:

On the day of inspection, there were three staff members present, including the registered provider. There were three other staff members employed, but not rostered to work that day. The registered provider works in the service.

Acknowledgements:

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

Summary of Findings:

On the day of inspection, the registered provider was found to be compliant in:

- Regulation 8(1)(c): Vetting disclosures;
- Regulation 9(1)(2)(4): Staffing levels;
- Regulation 10: Policies etc. of a school age service;
- Regulation 11(a): Premises;
- Regulation 12: Insurance;
- Health, Safety and Welfare of children, Child Care Act 1991, Section 58 as amended by Part 12 of the Child and Family Agency Act, 2013.

Non-compliance was found on the day of inspection in relation to:

- Regulation 8(1)(a)(b)(d) (2): Vetting disclosures;
- Health, Safety and Welfare of children, Child Care Act 1991, Section 58 as amended by Part 12 of the Child and Family Agency Act, 2013.

Conclusion and follow-up actions:

The inspectors reviewed the actions and evidence that the registered provider submitted as part of the CAPA process. The non-compliance under Regulation 8(1)(d) which was found on inspection remains outstanding. This will be reviewed on the next inspection.

Regulation 8: Vetting disclosure
Purpose As the registered provider, you must ensure that an effective management structure is in place, and appropriate people are recruited to ensure the quality and safety of the care provided to the children attending the service. Core Regulatory Requirements Does the service have clearly defined governance arrangements and structures?
Regulatory requirement met
(1)(c) The inspector reviewed six staff files. This included the staff files of the registered provider, two Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) support staff, and three staff who were not rostered to work on the day of inspection. There was a Garda Vetting disclosure in place for all six staff. This was reviewed on the day of inspection.
Regulatory requirement not met
(1)(a)(b)(d) The registered provider had not ensured that validated references were available for five staff members. Records available demonstrated that police vetting was required for one staff member who had resided outside the State for more than six consecutive months, and this was not available on the day of inspection. (2) Documents reviewed demonstrated that one staff member was employed prior to a vetting disclosure being received by the registered provider.
Corrective & Preventive Action Response submitted by the Registered Provider
(1)(a)(b)(d) The registered provider stated that: - Validated references for staff have been added to each staff member's file. In future, all new employees will be required to provide references prior to the commencement of the post so these can be validated and added to the staff member's file. - The Garda National Vetting Bureau and the embassy of the country the staff member had travelled to have been contacted and the registered provider awaits their response. Police vetting from relevant countries will be obtained for future employees who have lived out of the State for more than six consecutive months.

(2)

The registered provider stated that going forward, if retention of new employees is a priority, a new staff member will be assigned induction duties off-site. The registered provider listed examples which included staff working from home to attain a children first cert, to complete various relevant courses, and to read and understand policies etc. until vetting disclosures are received.

A copy of the reviewed and updated Garda vetting policy was submitted to the Inspectorate.

Summary

The inspectors reviewed the actions and evidence that the registered provider submitted as part of the CAPA process. The non-compliance under Regulation 8(1)(d) which was found on inspection remains outstanding. This will be reviewed on the next inspection.

Regulation 9: Staffing levels

Purpose

Your service must ensure that an adequate number of staff are available at all times during the provision of services to meet the needs of the children attending. At all times, the number of staff within the service will be appropriate to the needs of children, the type of service and the care provided.

Core Regulatory Requirement

Is there an adequate number of adults working directly with the children at all times?

Regulatory requirement met

(1)(2)(4)

During the inspection, there were appropriate staffing levels, and the children were appropriately supervised at all times. There were two staff members available for nine children. The registered provider was available to offer support if or when required.

A spot check of the staff roster and the children's attendance log was conducted in relation to specific dates during the following months of 2023: June, July, and August. These records showed that adequate staffing levels had been maintained in relation to the specific dates checked.

Regulation 10: Policies etc of a school age service

Purpose

As a registered provider, you must develop, approve, distribute and review policies, procedures and statements in a consistent way. Policies and procedures will standardise your service's approach to implementing best practice and ensuring compliance with the legislation and regulations.

Core Regulatory Requirement

Are all the policies, procedures and statements in place for the school aged service?

Regulatory requirement met

The service had a statement of purpose and function document available for review. This statement included the following:

- Who the service is aimed at;
- The hours of the service;
- The age range of the children catered for in the service;
- The number of children the service can cater for.

This document was devised in 2020 and reviewed on 29 August 2022.

The service also had a fire safety policy in place. The policy contained the details required under Schedule 6 of the regulations.

Regulation 11: Premises

Purpose

As the registered provider, you must ensure that you provide an outdoor area on the premises and that children can access this on a daily basis. If an outdoor area is not provided you must ensure that children can access an outdoor space on a daily basis.

Core Regulatory Requirement

Is an outdoor area provided to the children on a daily basis?

Regulatory requirement met

(a)

There was a secure outdoor area at the front of the premises. The children were observed to access this space during the inspection.

Regulation 12: Insurance

Purpose

As a registered provider, you must ensure that the school age service is adequately insured.

Core Regulatory Requirement

Has the service obtained adequate insurance for the type of care and number of children attending the service?

Regulatory requirement met

The registered provider had ensured that the service was adequately insured. The service was insured from 27 December 2022 to 26 December 2023 for a maximum of 30 children.

Health, Safety and Welfare of children

Child Care Act 1991, Section 58 as amended by Part 12 of the Child and Family Agency Act, 2013

Purpose

The protection and welfare of the children in your service is paramount, and the children's safety and wellbeing is the priority. As a registered provider, you must be committed to safeguarding the health, safety and welfare of children in your care, and to providing a safe environment where they can play, learn and develop.

Core Regulatory Requirements

Does the service provide appropriate care and attention in a safe environment and meet the safeguarding and welfare requirements of children?

Regulatory requirement met

The inspectors observed the health, safety, and welfare of children being supported by the following:

- Staff showed respect towards the children. For example, the inspectors observed the staff taking their time with children when in conversation with them, waiting for a child to speak, and then giving positive affirmations to their comments.
- Staff appeared familiar with the children and were observed providing them with the support they required. For example, some children appeared to require support with transitioning between service rooms and the outdoor area. At those times, staff were observed explaining to the children what was happening next and giving the children time to adjust to the new plan.

- Staff were observed pre-empting situations which could cause emotional distress for some children. At those times, they were also observed using positive behaviour strategies to effectively manage the situations, such as supporting a child with decision making. For example, a staff member pre-empted that a child may become very upset if other children changed or dismantled their building blocks structure. The staff member was observed offering to take care of the “special structures” the child had created before other children played with them.
- The entrance and exits on the premises were secure on arrival and during the inspection. Both main doors had thumb turn locks and door chain locks to ensure there was no unauthorised entry or exits from the premises.
- The toys, equipment, materials, and space were suitable for the age and developmental stage of the children accessing the service. On the day of inspection, all children were observed to be occupied and engaged with materials. In terms of toys available, they were in working order and there was a record to show the batteries in the toys were checked weekly. Regarding the space, a staff member explained how each room in the service is used to support the children. Room 1 was used for large play, including floor play (e.g., construction play, cars and garages, train tracks), and role play (e.g., play kitchen, play food, pretend shop). Room 2 was a large wide hallway and when not used during transitions, it was used as a quiet calm space. It had a soft floor covering and large cushions for relaxing. Room 3 was used mainly for tabletop activities (e.g., arts and crafts, puzzles, jigsaws) and meal/snack times. The Registered Provider informed inspectors that the service is introducing a daily activity schedule.

Regulatory requirement not met

The inspectors observed that the health, safety, and welfare of children had not been supported in relation to the following:

1. In the service’s fire safety policy, it was stipulated that monthly fire drills will take place. A review of the service’s Fire Drill Log 2023 showed that seven fire drills took place between January and August 2023. Two drills had occurred in some months such as in January and June. There were no drills recorded for the months of February, March, and July 2023. The absence of regular fire drills presents a risk to the safe evacuation of children in the event of a fire. The inspectors acknowledge that on inspection, the registered provider and a staff member demonstrated they were familiar with the fire evacuation procedure. It is also acknowledged that some staff members had completed fire safety training.

Corrective & Preventive Action Response submitted by the Registered Provider

1. The registered provider stated that a fire drill was conducted in September 2023. They also stated that management and staff trained in fire safety have reviewed and refreshed their knowledge of the fire safety policy. They noted that management and staff are aware of their commitment to conduct monthly fire drills and have devised a schedule that will be adhered to moving forward. A copy of a completed fire drill record was submitted to the Inspectorate.

Summary

The inspectors reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under the Health, Safety, and Welfare of Children, Child Care Act 1991, Section 58 as amended by Part 12 of the Child and Family Agency Act, 2013 has been adequately addressed.

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