

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2023TY005		
<b>Name of Service:</b>	Kids Cahir Preschool		
<b>Address of Service:</b>	Townspark, Cahir, Co Tipperary		
<b>Eircode:</b>	E21 YY80		
<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Helena O Meara		
<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional		
<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	02/03/2026		
<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	7	PM N/A
<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	13 Market Square Mallow Cork P51DD5Y		
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	B Fraher		
<b>Title:</b>	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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	N/A
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### Description of service

Kids Cahir Preschool is a sessional service which provides care and education to children aged 2 to 6 years. The service operates from a former primary school building located in the town of Cahir and caters for 22 preschool children at any one time, Monday to Friday, 9.30am to 12.30pm for 38 weeks of the year. The premises comprises of an office, kitchen, sanitary accommodation, outdoor play area and one care room. A school age service is located in the premises and has access to additional rooms.

### Staffing

The service currently employs 16 staff including the registered provider and the company director who are not service based. Of the 16 employed staff, 3 are allocated to provide care in the preschool. The remaining staff are the senior area manager, area manager, registered provider, company director and staff providing school age care. There were three adults working directly with the children on the day of inspection.

### 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.

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

An Immediate Action Notice was issued to the person in charge as five blind cords on roller blinds covering shelving were accessible to children and were not in restrictive devices. Photographic evidence was received stating all blind cords are now removed. A second immediate Action Notice was issued to the Registered provider via email on the 3 March 2026 as garda vetting was not available for two adults. Both staff are now working in rolls with no access to the children. These were identified as posing a potential safety risk. The response from the registered provider was adequate to mitigate both risks. Further information can be found under Regulation 9 and Regulation 23 of this report.

### Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the children, person in charge 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.*

### Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) The senior area manager was the designated person in charge on the day of inspection and there was a named deputy in the service that could deputise as required.
- (b) The person in charge and the deputy were on duty at the service when the inspector arrived. The staff roster indicated that either the person in charge or the deputy were on duty at all times during the hours of operation.
- (c) There was clear evidence on inspection of the management structure in place and the specific roles of each staff member. This was on display on the notice board.
- (2) The recruitment records in relation to 16 adults, 14 of whom were employed in the service were the subject of inspection. Of these 14 adults employed, 3 were working directly with the preschool children, 2 were managers and 9 worked in school age care. The registered provider and the director of the company's file were also reviewed.
- (a) Of the 32 required references 18 were from previous employers with 17 required records of validation on file.
- (b) Of the 32 required references, 13 were from another source other than a previous employer with 12 records of validation on file.
- (c) Garda vetting was available for 14 adults. However, one of these vetting disclosures was not dated within the previous three years in adherence to with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'. Further information can be found under Regulation 23.
- (d) Police vetting was available for two adults working in the service who lived outside of the state for longer than six consecutive months.
- (4) Records demonstrated that 8 of the 16 adults had achieved at least a major level 5 award in Early Childhood Care and Education as listed on the National Framework of Qualifications. Seven adults did not require qualifications as they did not work directly with preschool children. This included three of the nine adults employed in school age care who did not require qualifications.

### Non-Compliance Information

- (2)(a)(b) One reference and validation was not available in respect of one adult and two references available for two adults had no evidence of validation.

(2)(c) A Garda vetting record was unavailable for two adults, who worked at the service. On 3 March 2026, an Immediate Action Notice was issued to the registered provider, regarding the breach of Regulation 9. The senior area manager responded and stated that an application for Garda vetting had been submitted and that the two adults in question would have no access to the children.

(2)(d) Police vetting was unavailable for one adult who lived outside of the state for longer than six consecutive months and it was not possible to determine if police vetting was required for two further staff members as there were gaps in the available curriculum vitae.

(3) Seven adults employed did not have the correct procedures carried out prior to commencement of employment. This posed a possible risk to unsuitable adults having access to the children.

(4) There was one adult working in the preschool service who did not have evidence of a qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education at level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualification or a qualification deemed by the minister to be equivalent. Not having suitably qualified staff, may compromise the safety of the children.

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

The following response was received from the registered provider:

#### **Corrective and Preventive Action**

(2)(a)(b) A reference and validation for one adult was received and two validations were received for one adult. A second adult had two validations on one page. Going forward all validations and references will be obtained prior to staff commencing employment.

(2)(c) Garda vetting has been received for one staff member. One Garda vetting remains outstanding and this staff member will not work with the children until it is received. All Garda vetting will be obtained prior to staff commencing employment.

(2)(d) Police vetting was applied for one staff member and two curriculum vitae have been updated. The service will ensure that police vetting is obtained prior to commencement of employment and that no gaps are in the curriculum vitae.

(3) Outstanding Garda vetting and police vetting has been applied for and the relevant paperwork has been submitted. The staff member with outstanding Garda vetting will not work with the children. One staff member out on leave will update the curriculum vitae on return to work.

### **Supporting documentation submitted**

- (2)(a)(b) Evidence of validations and references received.
- (2)(c) Proof of Garda vetting for one adult and proof of application sent for Garda vetting for one adult received.
- (2)(d) Proof of police vetting application received and copies of the curriculum vitae received.
- (3) Relevant paperwork and proof of Garda vetting and police vetting applications received.

### **Summary Comment**

Evidence of an application for one staff member for international police vetting and one staff member for Garda vetting was reviewed however, a copy of the completed international police vetting has not been submitted for one staff member and completed Garda vetting for one staff member to the inspector to date. The registered provider is required to furnish the required documentation to the Inspectorate upon receipt. The noncompliance in relation to regulation 9(2)(c) and 9(2)(d) remains outstanding.

One updated curriculum vitae remains outstanding and will be reviewed at the next inspection.

## **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.*

*(3) Subject to paragraph (5), a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 2 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) therefore at that reference number is satisfied.*

### **Compliance Information**

(1) At the time of inspection, there was an adequate number of adults responsible for the direct care of the children in attendance at all times.

(3) The adult to child ratio were observed to meet the minimum requirement over the duration of the inspection.

The seven children attending the service were supervised directly by three 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

On the day of inspection, the following information was obtained through direct observation and discussion with the staff and examination of the relevant documents:

#### Basic needs:

- Snacks provided by the parents/guardians were observed to be healthy and nutritious. Children were observed eating filled sandwiches, crackers, rice cakes, yogurts and a variety of fruits.
- Staff interacted with the children during snack time and were observed helping and assisting the children where necessary.
- Supervision was provided for the children, as they accessed the adjacent sanitary facilities, which were located separately from their care rooms.
- Outdoor play was promoted. Children were observed playing in the outdoor play area. Each child was appropriately dressed wearing coats and wellingtons.
- Children had the opportunity to rest or relax with soft seating in the form of a child size vinyl sofa and also the use of a sensory room.
- Appropriate seating was available in the form of low-level tables and chairs.
- Children's independence was promoted by staff in the care room. An example of this was children put on their own coats and wellingtons and tidying up after play.

#### Supporting relationships:

- Throughout the morning, staff were heard engaging in social conversation with the children which helped promote a relaxed and happy atmosphere.

- Interactions between the staff and children was observed to be warm and sensitive. An example included when children were encouraged to complete pegboards, puzzles, magnetic bricks and also when children engaged in sensory play with mud made from coco powder.
- The person in charge informed the inspector that parents and guardians were communicated with via email, phone messages, at drop off and collection.
- A family photo wall and a birthday calendar were evident on the wall, promoting a sense of belonging for the children.
- As the children completed puzzles, staff were observed to provide praise and encouragement for their accomplishments.
- Children had access to a sensory room where staff sat with them on the ground watching floating fish and engaging in a conversation about them.

### 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 entrance door was secured appropriately. This restricted unauthorised access to the building and prevented the risk of children exiting unsupervised.
- The windows in the care rooms were out of reach and were adequately secured to ensure the safety of the children.
- Cleaning agents were stored out of reach of the children.
- The toys and play equipment assessed were in good condition.
- The first aid box was stored out of reach of the children.

##### Infection control:

- Handwashing facilities were accessible to the children with warm running water, liquid soap and paper towels.
- Children were observed to wash their hands before snack time and after messy play.
- Children's coats and bags were stored off the ground on hooks.
- A refrigerator was available in the care room for the storage of perishable foods.

## Fire safety:

- The fire exit doors were free from obstruction on inspection.
- Fire extinguishers were wall mounted.

## Outing:

- No outings were conducted on the day of inspection. The senior area manager informed the inspector that a yearly outing occurred from the service and occasionally they may walk to the garda station, but no outing had occurred in this school year. On discussing the risk assessment, risks were identified for the children and strategies were in place to mitigate against them.

## Non-Compliance Information

### General safety:

1. An Immediate Action Notice was issued to the person in charge as five blind cords on roller blinds covering shelving were accessible to children in the care room and were not in restrictive devices. This was identified as posing a potential safety risk.
2. Garda vetting was available for 14 adults; however, 1 vetting disclosure was not dated within the previous three years in adherence with the Early Years Inspector Regulatory Notice 'EUI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda vetting'.

### Infection control:

3. The inspector noted that the two bins used for the purpose of waste disposal in the care room were not pedal operated. This increased the risk of cross infection and contamination.

## Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The following statement was received from the registered provider:

### Corrective & Preventive Action

#### General safety:

1. Cords were removed from all the blinds. Blinds purchased in the future will have the cords removed.
2. Garda vetting has been applied for. Garda vetting will be renewed as needed for all employees.

#### Infection control:

3. Pedal bins were purchased for preschool. The service will ensure pedal bins are purchased as needed in the future.

### Supporting documentation submitted

#### General safety:

1. Photographic evidence of removal of blind cords.

2. Evidence of vetting request sent.

**Infection control:**

3. A photograph of the purchased bins was received.

**Summary Comment**

The corrective actions submitted by the registered provider has addressed the non-compliance identified under Regulation 23. The outstanding Garda vetting has now been received.

**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)  
Up to date records of First Aid Response (FAR) certification were in place for two of the adults working in the service.
- (2)  
(a) There were two sufficiently stocked first aid bags available in the service and an eye wash box which was safely stored out of reach of children.  
(b) The first aid supplies were always accessible, should they be required.

## 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 fire fighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.
- (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) Fire drill records were reviewed. Evidence was available to show fire drills were practiced and recorded on a monthly basis. Records showed that the last fire drill was completed on 26 February 2026.
  - (b) Written records were available of the servicing of the firefighting equipment. The firefighting certificate was dated April 2025.
- (4)
- A notice of the procedure to follow in the event of fire was displayed on the wall in the care room.

### Non-Compliance Information

- (1) (b) The service had no records available of maintenance carried out on the smoke alarm systems. This posed a risk of safety to the children and adults in the service in the event of fire.

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

The following response was received from the registered provider:

#### **Corrective and Preventive Action**

A serving company carried out the required maintenance. This will be completed quarterly in the future.

#### **Supporting documentation submitted**

Invoice of servicing completed was received in the office of the inspectorate.

### Summary Comment

The corrective action submitted by the registered provider has addressed the non-compliance identified under Regulation 26.