

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2023TY005		
Name of Service:	Kids Cahir Preschool		
Address of Service:	Townspark, Cahir, Tipperary.		
Eircode:	E21 YY80		
Name of Registered Provider:	Helena O'Meara		
Service type:	Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	05/10/2023		
No of pre-school children:	AM	14	PM N/A
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Child and Family Agency, Ferryhouse, Clonmel, Tipperary.		
Inspection undertaken by:	E Cullen		
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

Kids Cahir Preschool provides care and education to children aged 2 to 6 years old on a sessional basis. The service opened in September 2023 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 service operates from a former primary school building located in the town of Cahir in south Tipperary. The single storey detached premises comprises of an office, kitchen, sanitary accommodation areas and five early years rooms. There were extensive grounds that were available for outdoor play. A registered school aged care service is on the same premises: Cahir Breakfast Club and After School Service.

Staffing

The service currently employs two staff members and the registered provider who work directly with children in the service. Two work experience students were also present on the day of inspection. Staff members held qualifications in Early Childhood Education and Care at Level 6 and 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

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 and health, welfare and development of child. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9 (2)(3)(4) - Management and Recruitment, 11 (1)(3) - Staffing Levels and 19 (1)(a)(b) Health, welfare and development of child.

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 registered provider, 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

(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

Documentation was reviewed for the two staff members, the registered provider and three work experience students.

(2)(a)(b) Two validated references were available for each adult from either a past employer, or from a reputable source.

(c) Garda vetting was available on file for each adult.

(4) Certificates of qualification were available on file demonstrating that staff members and the registered provider held a qualification at the minimum level 5 and above on the National Framework of Qualifications.

Non-Compliance Information

(3) The registered provider did not take appropriate measures to ensure that all employees were suitable to work in an early years service prior to their commencement as demonstrated below:

(2)(d) Police vetting was not available for one adult who had lived outside the state for a period over 6 months.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Police vetting has been applied for and confirmation of processing has been received.

Supporting documentation submitted

Communication of dispatch of police clearance was submitted 03 November 2023.

Summary Comment

Once the corrective actions have been completed with regard to police vetting the requirements of the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 will be met. This will be assessed on 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) On the day of inspection there were adequate numbers of staff working directly with the children.

(3) The staff to child ratios were maintained above the minimum requirements. There were 14 children aged 2 to 6 years being cared for by 3 staff.

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

(b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

Staff members were observed to treat the children with respect and a positive regard. They sat with children in small groups or individually, engaged in conversation with and listened attentively to the children as they spoke. Staff members demonstrated a keen awareness of the individual needs of children in the group and ensured needs were met, through individual support and modelling of skills.

Strategies were in place to support children transition from one activity to the next. Verbal warnings were provided to children prior to transitions and staff supported children to clean up after activities.

Parent and guardian communication during collection and drop off periods, provided an opportunity for staff to share information with parents. Additional methods of communication such as phone calls, and a messaging application were used to share information, pictures and observations with parents. Recent communication was on the service healthy eating policy and pictures of activities.

The service was implementing an inclusion policy and this was evident in their practices during the inspection. The environment was inclusive and representative of the children attending the service, with images of the children and their families displayed. Adjustments to the learning environment and teaching strategies were used to support the learning and development of all children attending the service.

The large classroom, named the big top room was bright, warm, and thoughtfully decorated to match the room theme. Two large low-level open shelving units at both ends of the room were used to display a large range of materials and resources which children could freely access. Children were observed to make choices of what they wished to play with, promoting independence and decision making.

A range of play-based materials were offered in the home corner, construction and messy play areas of the room. Children's literacy development was promoted with a well laid out reading and creative areas. Displays of works of art and their recent learning fostered children's identity and belonging. Recent seasonal learning was evidenced in the displays of 'getting to know me' with families, birthdays and self-portraits visible. Autumn crafts and sensory play afforded opportunity to engage in different learning methods.

Outdoors, children had access to a section of the outdoor area to the front of the premises as the other areas were cordoned off for resurfacing works. An outdoor canopy area provided shelter for children. A selection of sensory trays containing rice, pasta, lentil and seasonal items such as pinecones, leaves and conkers were observed in use. Some children engaged in physical play, jumping in the puddles of water supported by staff members.

(1)(b)

Parents and guardians provided all food and drinks for children daily. Parents were provided with the service healthy eating policy on enrolment. A drinks basket was available for children to store their drinks in a central location in the room. Children were observed to access drinks as required throughout the session. Snack was unhurried social experience, staff sat with children and engaged in conversation. Staff members provided assistance where required. An additional supply of food was available in the service if needed.

A staff member was available to escort children to the toilet as needed throughout the session. Handwashing was promoted after toileting and outdoor play. Children had choice in activities and were observed playing outdoors under the sheltered canopy.