

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2020CC007
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Name of Service:	Kathy's Child Minding
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Address of Service:	Lakeview, Chapel Street, Dunmanway, Co. Cork
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Eircode:	P47 HK50
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Name of Registered Provider:	Kathy O'Regan
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Service type:	Childminder
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Date(s) of Inspection:	30/04/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	5	PM	4
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Admin Building, St Marys Health Campus, Cork, T23X440
Inspection undertaken by:	M.O' Reilly
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	N/A
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Description of service

The service is registered to cater for a maximum of 5 early years children, aged 0 to 6 years, at any one time. Registered daily hours of operation are from 7:30am to 18:00 hours, Monday to Friday. The service is located in the village of Dunmanway, Co. Cork and is provided from a two-storey house. The ground floor kitchen cum dining cum living area and an interlinked room functions as play areas for the children and there is an adjacent toilet and nappy changing facility. On the first floor, there are three standard cots located in one sleep room. The older children's sleep needs are accommodated in a separate room downstairs. The children have the use of a large outdoor play space at the rear side of the childminders home.

Staffing

The service is operated by the named childminder with the backup of two emergency contact persons. The childminder holds a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education.

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/ safety/ premises and facilities. 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.

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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 childminder, one of the emergency contact persons 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*

(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.*

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(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 registered provider was in charge of operating the childminding service.
- (b) The childminder was present for most of the inspection process except for twenty minutes in the afternoon when one of the named emergency persons relieved the childminder who transported one of the children in attendance by car to an early years service located nearby.
- (2)
- The files of the childminder and the named emergency persons for the service were reviewed.
- (a) One written reference obtained was from a previous employer.
- (b) Five written references had been obtained from a source other than a previous employer.
- (c) Garda vetting was on file for the three adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d) A police vetting record was present for the adult who had lived outside the jurisdiction for a period of six months or more, while over the age of eighteen years.
- (4) The registered provider had achieved a level 5 award in Early Childhood Care and Education and a copy of the relevant certificate was available.

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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.

(8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-

(b) a childminder shall ensure that a second person familiar with the operation of the service and in a position to provide assistance to the childminder in operating the service is, at all times, within close distance of the service and available to attend the service to assist the childminder in the event of an emergency, and

Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider stated that at all times the childminder works directly with the children attending during the hours of operation except when she has to transport a child by car to another early years service and one of the named emergency contact persons will assist the childminder for this short period of time as observed on day of inspection.

(8)
(b) The childminder has ensured a second person is available to provide assistance and is within close proximity to the service in the event of an emergency.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 12 - Childminders

(1) A childminder shall ensure that-

(a) there are no more than 5 pre-school children in his or her care at any given time, including his or her own pre-school children,

(b) subject to paragraph (2), there are no more than 2 children under the age of 15 months in his or her care at any given time, including his or her own pre-school children, and

(c) there is a working telephone on the premises.

(2) A childminder may have more than 2 children under the age of 15 months in his or her care at any given time where all such children are siblings of each other.

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Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) There were five early years children in the care of the childminder when the inspection commenced. The ages of the children present ranged in age from 20 months to 4 years plus. The adult child ratio for a childminder was maintained at time of inspection.
- (b) At time of inspection, there was 1 child in attendance aged between 1 and 2 years, 1 child aged between 3 and 4 years and three children aged between four and five years.
- (c) A working mobile phone was available for use.
- (2) Not applicable as there was no child present under the age of 15 months in the care of a childminder at time of inspection

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

- (1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:*
- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;*
 - (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;*
 - (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;*
 - (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;*
 - (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;*
 - (f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;*
 - (g) the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner;*
 - (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;*
 - (i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.*

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Compliance Information

(1)(a) to (i)

The children's registration forms of the five children present at time of inspection were reviewed and four of the five children's registration forms were found to contain all of the elements of information as required by Regulation 15 (a) to (i) inclusive.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(a) to (j)

It was observed that there was no completed child registration form on file for one child present on the day of the inspection.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

In the written response received, the following was stated by the childminder:

Corrective and Preventive Action

A completed child registration form is now on file in the service for the child that had no child registration form in place at time of inspection. A completed child registration form will be on file in the service prior to a child commencing in the service.

Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of the completed child registration form was forwarded to the Early Years Department and deemed satisfactory.

Summary Comment

Correspondence received was deemed to meet the requirement of Regulation 15, (1) (a) to (j) inclusive of the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

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Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:

(h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis.

Compliance Information

(1)

(h) Daily attendance records, which included children's arrival and departure times, were maintained, and presented for review.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(h) It was observed that one of the children present on day of inspection, the child's name was not recorded in the daily attendance book.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

In the written response received the following was stated by the childminder:

Corrective and Preventive Action

All children, even children settling into the childminding service, each child's name will be recorded on the daily attendance book.

Supporting documentation submitted

Correspondence received from the childminder stating that going forward each child in attendance, their name will be recorded on the daily attendance book in the service, was accepted as evidence.

Summary Comment

Correspondence received was deemed to meet the requirement of Regulation 16, (1) (h) of the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

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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

Basic needs:

- The childminder was observed to interact in a caring manner with the children building their confidence and communication skills within the setting.
- Soft seating areas, with an adjacent supply of books, were provided to meet the children's need for rest and relaxation.
- Lunch was a sociable time, the childminder sat with the children and assisted with feeding the younger children as required. The younger children were seated in highchairs located beside the kitchen table. The childminder stated that children eat meals and snacks generally at the kitchen table in the house rather than in the playroom. It was observed that each of the children had a hot meal provided by parents at lunch time.
- Shortly after eating lunch, one child was facilitated to sleep in one of the cots on the first floor.
- Within the indoor play environment, there was sufficient space for the children to freely explore their chosen activities and interest items. The older children were also observed to move freely between the indoor and outdoor play spaces, during the afternoon.
- The front room provided low couches and blankets for the children to rest and opt out of robust play as they wished.
- Another rest area was situated in the kitchen cum dining room. It was furnished with matting, cushions, and low bean bags for the children's comfort.
- Nappy changing was required for some of the children in attendance and the childminder advised that this was carried out as the need arose.

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Supporting relationships around children:

- The childminder consistently communicated with the children in advance of initiating new activities and care practices, such as nappy changing and sleep routines, which supported the children to prepare for transitions. As a result, the children appeared calm, confident and actively engaged in their environment.
- The children's interests and efforts were acknowledged. For example, the childminder sat with and chatted warmly to the children, as she read a book, and they explored play materials after lunch. In the afternoon, she was observed encouraging the older children with gross and imaginative play in the outdoor play area.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

A broad range of interest items were within easy reach for the children, in the play areas. There was a selection of hand-held toys, adjacent shelving was used to display additional play resources, such as plastic bricks, building blocks, jigsaws, sensory and noise making apparatus. A wide range of age-appropriate books were displayed and a kitchen with associated utensils. Materials and resources were organised and displayed to encourage the children to play with them with their friends and independently.

- Outdoors the children had access to the large garden which allowed for gross motor skill play, exploration, fresh air and robust play. The enclosed play space consisted of a shock absorbing surface immediately outside the patio door and hard and natural grass surfaces that were equipped with a variety of play materials. These included a selection of push and ride on toys, slides, a sand tray and a playhouse. There were storage facilities to store outdoor play equipment when not in use.

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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:

- Upon the inspectors' arrival at the service, the main entrance door was found to have been secured and was maintained secure when not in use.
- The outdoor play environment was securely enclosed by a fence, walls and a secured gate. The patio was laid with child safety matting for the children's comfort and safety.
- Access to the two fireplaces were prevented through use of a suitable fire guards.
- No cables were within reach of children on the day of inspection.
- The children had access to the cutlery drawer. All sharp objects for example knives were stored in another area of the kitchen out of children's reach.

Infection Control:

- A lidded, pedal operated bin was in place for nappy disposal.
- The toilet and nappy changing area was equipped to facilitate hygienic handwashing and drying; warm running water was available, along with liquid soap and paper towels.
- Single use gloves were readily accessible for nappy changing procedures.
- Training pots were available as required.
- The water was found to be suitably hot for hand washing purposes.
- There was one nappy changing unit with a changing mat which was clean and well maintained. Cubby space below the changing unit stored the children's individual toiletries.
- A fridge was available for the storage of perishable food.
- The domestic cushions in the rest area in the kitchen/dining area were clean.

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Administration of Medication:

- The administration of medication was not observed over the course of the inspection. Further to this, the childminder advised that currently none of the children were in receipt of medication.

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Safe Sleep:

- The service provided a separate sleep room which was situated on the first floor.
- The room was furnished with 3 standard cots and an adult single bed. The cots had well fitted mattresses. The bed linen on the cot mattress was clean. Stackable beds were stored on the ground floor rest room. Suitable linen was available for the stackable beds.
- At time of announced inspection, one child was observed sleeping in one of the standard cots located on the first floor.
- The 10-minute interval sleep checks, which were conducted by the childminder, were maintained in writing.
- The air temperature of one of the sleep areas was recorded at 19°C. This fell within the required range of 16°C to 20°C, for safe sleep practice.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

1. The children had access to a cloth towel in the children's toilet and nappy changing facility.
2. A disposable apron was not used during nappy changing at time of inspection.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

In the written response received, the following was stated by the childminder:

Infection Control:

Corrective & Preventive Action

1. The children no longer have access to cloth towels in the children's toilet and nappy changing facility. The children's hands will be dried with single use disposable paper towels while in the service.
2. A disposable apron will be worn at each nappy change going forward.

Supporting documentation submitted

1. Correspondence received from the childminder was accepted as evidence.
2. Correspondence received from the childminder was accepted as evidence.

Summary Comment

Correspondence received was deemed to meet the requirement of Regulation 23, Infection Control 1.+2. of the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

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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 childminder had an in date first aid responder (FAR) training certificate and she is available to the children at all times while in the service.

(2)

(a) The childminder ensured that a suitably equipped first aid box for children was safely stored in the premise.

(b) It was available to the children attending the childminding service at all times.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The childminder has adequate insurance to cover the 5 early years children present on day of inspection. The insurance is valid until 29 January 2025.