

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015KK019
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Name of Service:	Cuddles n Snuggles
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Address of Service:	119 Ashfield East, New Orchard, Kilkenny, Co. Kilkenny
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Eircode:	R95 D2F8
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Name of Registered Provider:	Pamela Costello
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Service type:	Childminder
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Date of Inspection:	22/08/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	5	PM	5
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla, Child & Family Agency, Athy Road, Carlow.
Inspection undertaken by:	Norma Thornton
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

Cuddles n Snuggles is a registered private childminding service which operates from the registered provider's private residence, located in the Ashfield housing estate in Kilkenny city. The registered provider cares for children aged from 0 to 6 years of age between the hours of 08:30 to 18:00 hours, Monday to Friday. The service closes for two weeks in the summer and at Christmas, the dates of which are communicated to parents well in advance. A designated playroom has been created by the registered provider for the children on the ground floor of the house directly adjacent to the kitchen/dining area. The registered provider has also created a secure designated outdoor play area for the children.

Staffing

The registered provider operates the service single-handedly and has a named second person, who lives within proximity to the service, who is familiar with the children and the operation of the service and who is able to provide assistance to the registered provider if required.

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.

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A sampling process was used to assess compliance under the following regulations

10- Policies, Procedures etc. of a Pre-school service

21-Equipment and materials

23-Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child.

The scope of the inspection included the playroom and outdoor play area.

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 and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

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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,*

(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.*

(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 childminder is the designated person in charge in the service and operates the service single handedly.

There is a named second person familiar with the operation of the service who lives in proximity to the service and can help the childminder, when required.

(b) The registered provider was onsite throughout the inspection.

(2)(a)(b) There were two references from previous employers available on file for the registered provider and two validated references from reputable sources, available for the named second person to assist the childminder in case of emergency.

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(c) Garda Vetting certificates were available on file for the registered provider and for the second named emergency contact. The registered provider demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda Vetting every three years.

(d) Not applicable, as neither the registered provider nor second named contact had lived outside of Ireland for a period of longer than six months.

(4) While not required for the role, registered provider held a qualification at Level 8 on the national Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) framework.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.

Compliance Information

On review of a sample of policies, procedures and statements the inspector observed that the registered provider ensured that all documents required for compliance as a registered childminder under regulation 10 were available and appropriate to the childminding service provided.

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.

Compliance Information

(1)(a) There were 5 preschool children aged 21 months to 2 years and 10 months present with the registered childminder on the day of inspection.

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- (b) There was no child under the age of 15 months in the childminder's care at this time.
- (c) The childminder was in possession of a working mobile phone on the premises.

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

The registered provider had a designated playroom for the children to play in which was brightly lit and ventilated with natural light and circulating air from the large window and patio doors which led directly to their designated secure outdoor play area.

The room provided a variety of play areas and equipment appropriate to the age of the children in attendance.

Play materials and resources for older children were safely store on high shelving out of the reach of the younger children.

Areas of interest such as a kitchen/home area, construction area, and rest area were provided with an appropriate child sized table and chairs provided some of the children a comfortable space for drawing and making puzzles/ Other children played imaginatively with dress up clothes or with the toy Hoover provided. The inspector observed that all the play equipment and material provided were maintained well and in a clean condition.

A nappy changing unit was provided in an alcove adjacent to the playroom so that children could have their nappies changed in a dignified manner while the registered provider-maintained supervision of the other children.

At meal or snack times, the children sat in a highchair or at the child sized table and were provided with age-appropriate plates, utensils and drinking vessels.

Two foldable standard cots were provided for the children to sleep in. Individual bed linen was provided for each child.

The outdoor area was secured with a child sized fence and had a soft ground surface of artificial grass. Interest areas such as messy play tables, a playhouse, small slide, outdoor kitchen and child seating were observed.

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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 registered provider held current first aid responder (FAR) training which was due to expire on the 9 September 2024.

(2)(a) A first aid bag was observed in the service, safely stored out of the reach of the children on a shelf in the nappy changing area.

(b) The first aid bag contained adequate and appropriate supplies for the children attending the service, if first aid was 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 firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.

Compliance Information

(1)(a) The registered provider demonstrated that fire drills were carried out monthly. The registered provider clearly explained to the inspector how the fire drill operated and where the fire assembly point was in the event of a fire occurring.

(b) The childminder demonstrated that the fire alarm system was checked monthly and that the fire-fighting equipment had been recently serviced in July 2020.

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Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

An insurance certificate was provided by the registered childminder detailing that the insurance cover was provided for the service which was due to expire on 14 July 2025.