

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CW049
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Name of Service:	Kilkenny Road Community Childcare & Family Centre
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Address of Service:	Kilkenny Road, Carlow, Co. Carlow
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Eircode:	R93 FX65
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Name of Registered Provider:	Marian Duffy
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	05/06/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	34	PM	24
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	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).

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Description of service

Kilkenny Road Community Childcare & Family Centre is a registered full day childcare service which operates from a purpose-built premises in a quiet cul-de-sac, off the Kilkenny Road, in Carlow town. The service provides sessional, part-time and full day childcare services for children aged 1 to 6 years, operating from 08:30 to 17:30 hours, Monday to Fridays for 38 weeks of the year.

There are four pre-school classrooms provided in the service, the Wobbler, Toddler, Preschool and Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) classrooms.

A designated dining area is provided adjacent to the kitchen, where the older children go for their meals.

Two designated sleep rooms and a dedicated sensory/ relaxation room are provided adjacent to the Wobbler classroom. There are several outdoor play areas provided onsite which the children can directly access from their classrooms.

Staffing

There were 20 staff members employed in the service including an office administrator, and 2 dedicated kitchen staff members. The registered provider does not work in the service.

All staff who as part of their role in the service is to work directly with the children in their care held qualifications in early childhood care and education ranging from Level 5 to Level 8 on the national Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) framework.

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

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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.

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

Regulation 21- equipment and Materials,

Regulation 22- Food and Drink,

Regulation 23- Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child,

As a result, the scope of the inspection included the Toddler room, Pre-School and ECCE classrooms and outdoor play areas.

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 person in charge, staff 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, 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.*

(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 service has a named designated person in charge, and a named person who can deputise as required.

(b) The staff roster demonstrated that either the designated person or a named deputy designated person in charge was always onsite while children attended the service. On the day of inspection, the designated person in charge was onsite.

(2) Staff files for seven new staff members who had commenced employment in the service since the last inspection on 03 September 2024 were reviewed by the inspector.

(a)(b) Two validated references were available on file for each staff member, from either a past employer or from a reputable source.

(c) Garda vetting certificates were available on file for each of the seven new staff members.

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The registered provider demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Police vetting disclosure certificates were on file for four new staff members employed in the service, who had lived outside of the state for a period of longer than six months.

(4) Certificates of qualifications were available for inspection, for five new staff members, who as part of their role were working directly with the children, demonstrating that each staff member held at least a minimum Level 5 to Level 8 qualification in early childhood care and education on the national QQI Framework.

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.

(2) Subject to paragraphs (4) and (5), a registered provider of a full day care service or a part-time day care service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 1 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) thereof at that reference number is satisfied.

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

(a) a registered provider of a pre-school service other than a child-minding service or a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that there are at least 2 adults on the premises at all times,

Compliance Information

(1) Throughout the inspection, there was an adequate number of staff members working directly with the children attending the service. There were 34 pre-school children were directly supervised by 10 staff members.

(2) The following adult to child ratios were observed in each of the three preschool classrooms that were in operation during the inspection.

In the Wobbler room 2 children aged 1 to 2 years were directly cared for by 2 staff members.

In the Toddler room 10 children aged 2 years to 3 years were directly cared for by 3 staff members.

In the pre-school classroom 14 children aged 3 to 4 years were cared for by 3 staff members.

In the ECCE classroom 8 children aged 4 to 5 years were cared for by 2 staff members.

In the evening in the service 24 children remained for a full day care service directly cared for by 7 staff members.

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(8) The registered provider and designated person in charge ensured that there were at least two staff members on the premises always when children were in attendance.

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

Each of the three classrooms observed on the day of inspection had physical environments which were suitably resourced with a variety of interest areas including appropriate sized tables and chairs, kitchen/home corners, rest and reading areas, construction areas, art areas and low-level shelving providing access to storage containers of a variety of play materials and resources.

A designated sensory room away from the business of the older classrooms adjacent to the wobbler room provided a soft cosy relaxing environment with suitably resourced reading materials, sensory visual, sudatory and textured materials.

A variety of outdoor play areas with different ground surfaces of grass, tarmacadam and soft play surfaces contained interest areas such as physical activities, slides ride on toys and climbing frames, mud kitchens, construction area, picnic benches, growing areas and a large sand pit within a covered secured wooden structure.

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Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 22 – Food and drink

A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

A healthy eating policy was available in the service with a weekly menu plan displayed. All food is provided in the service and individual children's nutritional needs are catered for working in partnership with the child's parents.

In discussion with the childcare staff, kitchen staff and on review of the process' surrounding snack and mealtimes, the inspector observed how diligent staff were in ensuring that each child's individual nutritional needs were provided for in the service.

In their individual classrooms and on a designated notice board in the kitchen any child with individual nutritional needs and or food allergies had a child centre plan, clearing depicting the child, their name, nutritional requirements whether cultural or medical.

The kitchen staff explained that as well as currently ensuring that many children's meals were allergen free, in recent years they had to ensure no air borne allergens were in the environment of the service.

The inspector observed that all staff in the service were well informed of the risk of allergens to children with specific allergies as well as each child's cultural nutritional needs.

Children who arrived at the service early in the mornings were provided with a choice of cereals and freshly made toast, milk or water.

Meals were served to the children in the pre-school and ECCE room in the designated dining area adjacent to the kitchen via the interconnecting countertop. Children were able to see the kitchen chefs preparing the meal and serving it, while sitting at tables with their friends.

Children in the toddler and wobbler rooms ate in their classrooms.

The weekly devised menu included snacks included a variety of fruit options, crackers, breadsticks, brown breads and yogurts, the main hot meals of the day included casseroles, pasta bakes, fish dishes and vegetarian options.

An evening meal was also provided including sweet and savoury options such as French toast and fruit, waffles and pasta hoops, fish fingers and beans or ham and toasted sandwiches.

The inspector observed two large fruit bowls on the kitchen counter, which the child could choose from if they wished to have a piece of fruit after their meal or snack or if they were hungry in between snack and meal times.

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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:

Entry to the service could only be authorised via a keypad call system at the main entrance. Only staff in the service knew the access code and were the only persons who could authorise entry to the service. This process reduced the risk of any unauthorised persons gaining access to the service and assisted in ensuring that no child could leave the service unsupervised. The perimeter of the service and outdoor play areas were secured by a 10-foot-high wall and a large metal gate, at the main entrance, secured with a high closing mechanism which could not be reached by the children.

The inspector observed that all cleaning equipment, materials and solutions were stored securely in a designated storage area inaccessible to the children.

On review of records the inspector observed that a daily risk assessment of the various outdoor play areas was carried out and recorded to ensure the outdoor physical play environments were safe for the children.

Infection Control:

The inspector observed effective hand hygiene practices throughout the service with staff ensuring that children washed their hands correctly after using the toilet, after messy and outdoor play and before snack and mealtimes. Staff were observed to support children with hand washing practices especially in ensuring that the younger children in the service washed their hands after nappy changing procedures.

Staff were observed prompting and assisting children with best practice regarding nose hygiene encouraging them to use personal stations to wipe their noses with disposable tissues, dispose of the used tissue into the pedal operated bin and to wash their hands afterwards.

Handwash basins throughout the service were adequately supplied with liquid hand soap and paper towelling, which the children could easily access and use.

Administration of Medication:

On the day of inspection, there was no child in the service that required prescribed or emergency medication. On review of past administration of medication records maintained by the service, records were completed appropriately, by the staff, in line with the service's administration of medication policy. In discussion with the staff present several children that that were in their care had various additional medical needs which the staff

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demonstrated that they were well informed off in relation to signs and symptoms of medical conditions and the appropriate treatment procedures to initiate when required. Where required a child centred medical plan was in place, detailing the medical condition, signs and symptoms of exacerbation of the condition and the appropriate prescribed actions for staff to implement.

Safe Sleep:

The inspector observed that staff were well informed regarding best practices in safe sleep, ensuring that children were positioned on their backs when put down to sleep, with their feet to the foot of the cot.

Physical checks on each sleeping child were carried out at ten-minute intervals, checking and recording the findings of each sleeping child's colour, breathing and sleep position. Staff ensured that the temperature of the sleep rooms were maintained within the recommended temperature for children aged 1 to 2 years of age, 18°C to 22°C as per safe sleep guidance for that age group.

Outing:

An outings policy was available in the service which staff had a clear understanding of with regard to their responsibilities and the procedures that were required in relation to undertaking an outing away from the service.

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) There were seven staff members employed in the service with current certification in the required first aid responder (FAR) training. The staff roster demonstrated that while the service was operating, there was at least three to four staff members with FAR training onsite.

(2)(a)(b) There was first aid box located in each classroom, which was easily accessed by all staff and always available.

The first aid contents were adequate, and records demonstrated that the first aid contents were checked monthly and replaced if necessary.

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.*
- (2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-*
- (a) a parent or guardian of a pre-school child attending or proposing to attend the pre-school service,*
 - (b) an employee, and*
 - (c) an authorised person.*
- (3) A registered provider shall ensure that a record referred to in paragraph (2) is retained for a period of 5 years after its creation*
- (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) The following fire safety records were maintained by the designated person in charge.
- (a) There was a written record of the monthly fire drills that took place in the service. The last fire drill was recorded as having taken place on the 23 May 2026.
 - (b) A written record was maintained of the maintenance of fire-fighting equipment and the smoke alarm system in the service. The last maintenance check of fire-fighting equipment was recorded as having taken place in April 2026 and for the fire alarm system was recorded as having taken place on the 29 August 2025.
- (2) The fire safety records were available and open for inspection by the early years inspector or by a parent / employee on request.
- (3) The designated person in charge demonstrated that records were maintained for the five years prior to inspection.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were displayed in each classroom and on the corridor. A fire assembly point was clearly identified in the carpark, outside the main entrance gate to the service.