

TUSLA REGULATORY INSPECTION REPORT

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015FL134
Name of Service:	Kids Cottage
Address of Service:	78 Church Street Skerries Co. Dublin K34 WF60
Email Address:	kidscottageskerries@gmail.com

Name of Registered Service Provider:	Ms. Jackie Keane
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Type of service registered:	Sessional	☒
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Date of Inspection:	3	0	0	9	2	0	2	0
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No of Pre-School Children present during Inspection:	AM	37	PM	0
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate 180-189 Lakeshore Drive Airside Business Park Swords Co. Dublin
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Inspection undertaken by :	S Taaffe
Title:	Early Years Inspector

Areas which were the subject of this Inspection		
Governance	Health, Welfare and Development	Safety

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	The Kids Cottage is operated from a terraced thatched cottage situated on a mixed commercial and residential street in Skerries in north Co. Dublin which is registered to accommodate 40 pre-school children from 2-6 years on a sessional basis. The service operates for 3 hours each weekday morning and eligible children can avail of the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme for 38 weeks of the year, implementing a Montessori, play-based and emergent curriculum. The service does not cater for school age children. The Kids Cottage is comprised of 3 pre-school rooms which are operated as 2 pods. Pre-school children who attend Pod 1 have use of two adjoining pre-school rooms located to the front of the premises, one of which is designated for table top activities and the second room for free play activities. The children in Pod 2 are accommodated in a spacious care room located to the rear of the premises which leads directly to a well-equipped outdoor play area.
Staffing	There were 7 adults present on the day of inspection and of these 6, including the registered provider, were working directly with the children and the service manager facilitated the inspection.
Methodology	Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate (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. 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 areas of Governance, Health, Welfare and Development of Child and Safety. Inspections may also focus on other areas as required. The inspection process has been amended to minimise the amount of time that inspectors spend in the service and advance notice had been given to the service of the planned inspection. This minimised disruption to service provision while services focus on re-opening and familiarising staff and children with new ways of working. 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 registered provider on 01/10/2020 in respect of excessively hot water in the service.
Acknowledgements	The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, service manager, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

GOVERNANCE

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.
- (7) A registered provider shall ensure that all employees, unpaid workers and contractors are appropriately supervised and provided with appropriate information and where necessary training, including in relation to the following:
- (a) the policies, procedures and statements of the service specified in Schedule 5;

Compliance Information:

Following a review of previous inspection records and in discussion with the service manager it was confirmed that there were 5 new members of staff employed in the service since the last inspection. The staff files maintained in relation to these 5 staff members were viewed on the day of inspection.

The files for the registered provider and the service manager were viewed on previous inspections and were found to meet the regulatory requirement and therefore are not included in this inspection report.

(2)(a) and (b) There were 2 written and validated references available for 5 new staff members who commenced employment in the service since the last inspection.

(a) Of the 10 written references inspected, 7 were from past employers.

(b) Of the 10 written references inspected, 3 were from sources other than a previous employer.

(c) Evidence of completed Garda vetting disclosures was available in respect of the 5 new staff members employed in the service.

(d) In respect of the 5 new staff members, international police vetting was available for the 1 staff member who had resided outside the Irish jurisdiction for longer than 6 months as adults.

(7)(a) Records were available in the service which demonstrated that staff members had a completed certified continuous professional development programmes in the form of online training entitled 'Return to work safely for employees in an Early Year's service' in advance of the service re-opening on 29th June 2020 following the countrywide closures of Early Years' services due to the COVID-19 pandemic. There was additional documentary evidence available in the service showing that all staff members had attended an information and training session incorporating an

Part III - Management and Staff

Regulation 9 - Management and Recruitment

electronic slide presentation whilst socially distanced on site in the service in advance of re-opening; listed topics included reducing the transmission of COVID-19, management of pods and working with children, the service's risk management policy and cleaning procedures. Written records of this service-specific training delivered by the registered provider and the service manager and undertaken by the staff members were made available to the inspector.

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:

The registered provider ensured that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 were in place for the service. The service submitted the requested policies to the Inspectorate in advance of the inspection and these were found to be sufficiently detailed to guide safe practice. The infection control policy had been updated to include infection control measures for COVID-19 and included an enhanced cleaning schedule. There was evidence available in the service to show that parents were provided with the updated policies and procedures which were detailed in a recent copy of the parents' handbook and in separate correspondence sent to parents in August 2020 outlining the staggered drop-off and collection procedures being implemented in the service.

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.*

Compliance Information:

(1) During the inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the service.

(2) The adult to child ratios were correct in the service when the inspector arrived announced at 9.00am and throughout the inspection.

The following adult to child ratios were observed when the service was operating at capacity on the day of inspection:

In Pod 1 there were 16 pre-school children aged between 3 years and 4 years 7 months being cared for by 3 members of staff.

In Pod 2 there were 21 pre-school children aged between 2 years 11 months and 4 years 10 months being cared for by 3 members of staff, one of whom was also working with a child with additional needs.

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

Compliance Information:

(1)(a) The following examples demonstrate how the registered provider ensured that children's learning, development and well-being was facilitated in the service, taking cognisance that the time spent by the inspector in both pods was reduced in order to minimise risk, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic:

SUPPORTING RELATIONSHIPS AROUND CHILDREN:

- The staff members were observed to be respectful and warm in their interactions with the children in their care. The staff members initiated conversations, listened to and responded to the children in an interested and affirmative manner.
- The atmosphere in the service was relaxed and child centred. Staff members were observed to sit at the children's level, eating with and chatting to the children during snack-time and when engaging in table top activities.
- Child-led play was encouraged and supported and the children were observed engaging in activities using equipment of their own choice under the guidance of staff members, with assistance provided when necessary.
- Communication to and from the parents was facilitated by email, electronically through a secure smartphone messenger application and by telephone contact as necessary.

PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

- The play materials and equipment and the furniture in the care rooms were positioned at an accessible level which nurtured independence and facilitated choice.
- The pre-school rooms were well resourced with a wide range and quantity of toys, equipment and materials including real, natural and sensory materials, art and crafts materials, small world, jigsaws and manipulative toys, specialist Montessori equipment, sand and water tables, home corners, construction areas and reading and relaxation areas.
- The home corners in both pods were very well resourced with wooden kitchens, table cloths on the tables, pot plants and vases with felt and plastic flowers, wall-mounted large-faced clocks, vanity units with mirrors, real-life food packaging, wooden and plastic play food, cutlery, crockery, pots and pans. A range of relevant books were provided in each room to support the children's interest and language development.
- On the day of inspection all children engaged in outdoor play, with the children from Pod 1 observed accessing the smaller of the two outdoor play areas which is designated for their use and located directly off the hallway and sanitary accommodation serving this pod. This outdoor play area was

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 19 - Health, Welfare and Development of Child

surfaced with artificial grass and contained a sit-in self-propel car, a rocking toy and a range of additional toys and play materials including push along toys, a garage, blocks, balls and shape sorters which were stored on shelving in a cupboard adjacent to bench seating provided for the children and adults. The larger outdoor play area designated for use by Pod 2 was also surfaced with artificial grass. A lean to structure was in place along the rear wall of the premises, covered with transparent rigid plastic corrugated sheeting which provided shelter from sun or rain and enabled the children to access this part of the outdoor play space during all weather conditions. Tables and chairs were provided in this area for the children who were observed sitting at the tables outdoors colouring, painting and making jig saws on the day of inspection. The remainder of the outdoor play area used by Pod 2 was positioned at a higher level than the premises itself and was accessed by walking up a sloping incline. The raised area contained a wooden climbing frame with a slide and 2 swings attached, a plastic play house, a lidded sand table, a water table, 2 sit-in self-propel car, planting boxes, a plastic work bench and a wooden picnic bench.

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:

The inspector viewed the following measures undertaken by the staff members to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of the pre-school children. The time spent in the premises was reduced in order to minimise risk, taking cognisance of the COVID-19 pandemic.

INFECTION CONTROL:

- The service implemented a policy whereby staff are required to sign off daily that they do not have any symptoms associated with COVID-19 at the start of each working day.
- The ECCE programme times were staggered with one quarter of named children starting at 8.55am, one quarter at 9.00am, one quarter at 9.05am and one quarter at 9.10am and subsequent collection times staggered accordingly, which supported social distancing by reducing the likelihood of parents and children congregating at the entrance.
- Distance markings spaced 2 metres apart were in place on the pathway at the entrance of the premises.
- The service enquired from the parents as to the child's fitness to attend on a daily basis, including seeking confirmation that the child had not been ill, received medication or had a fever in the preceding 24 hours.

Part VI - Safety

- Child-friendly hand hygiene pictorial posters were positioned throughout the service to remind staff and children on the appropriate hand washing technique. Appropriate hand hygiene procedures were observed to be carried out with staff and children after using the toilet, before eating and serving food, after outdoor play and after wiping noses. Hand sanitiser gel containing 60% alcohol was provided at each room entrance and also within each room and in the outdoor play area to facilitate additional hand hygiene procedures.
- In keeping with the service's healthy eating policy and infection control policy the children's lunches were provided by parents and packaged in zipped plastic bags which were labelled with the children's names. These were refrigerated on arrival to the service which reduced the risk of bacteria growth in the food.
- The staff members were observed implementing appropriate cleaning procedures on the day of inspection and up-to-date cleaning schedules were on display in the service. These had been revised to include enhanced cleaning and infection control measures in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- When asked, staff members accurately described the symptoms of COVID-19 and the isolation procedures to be followed in the event of an adult or child becoming unwell whilst attending the service.
- The children attended their own designated pod on a daily basis which was resourced with its own play materials and equipment including sand, none of which was shared between pods. Staff members remained within their own pod and did not move between the two pods. This minimised the risk of cross-infection in the service.

GENERAL SAFETY:

- The premises and two outdoor play areas were appropriately secured to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the Early Years' service.
- Cleaning agents were stored safely out of the reach of children.
- Emergency exits in the service were clear and unobstructed.

SAFE SLEEP:

- There was a suitable comfortable rest area available in both pods should a pre-school child wish to rest, relax or take a break from activities during the day, each fitted with soft wipeable matting.

Non-compliance information:

The following risk was identified that could impact on the health, safety and welfare of a pre-school child attending the service:

GENERAL SAFETY:

1. The hot water temperature in the wash hand basin on the left hand side in the children's sanitary accommodation assigned for use by Pod 2 was recorded at 48.4°C at 10.05am on the day of inspection which posed a potential burns risk to pre-school children.

Part VI - Safety

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider:	The registered provider stated the following corrective actions and preventive actions have been carried out: <u>Corrective Action:</u> 1. A plumber was engaged and the blending valves were adjusted and the water is now at the correct temperature. <u>Preventive Action:</u> 1. The plumber will come in and check the temperature of the water regularly.
Summary Comment:	The registered provider submitted the following documentary evidence: • A plumber's report detailing the works completed in the service. The corrective action and preventive action submitted by the registered provider have addressed the non-compliance identified on inspection in relation to Regulation 23. The regulatory requirement has been met.

Additional Risk Identified

Regulation 29 - Premises

*A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are—
(e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

Non-Compliance Information:	(e) There was 1 toilet serviced by 2 wash hand basins provided in the sanitary accommodation used by the children attending Pod 1. The provision of 1 toilet was sufficient to meet the toileting needs of a maximum of 11 children who were toilet trained and therefore inadequate for the 16 children who used this sanitary accommodation on a daily basis.
Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider:	The registered provider stated the following corrective actions and preventive actions have been carried out: <u>Corrective Actions:</u> (e) The toilet was re-installed and all associated works carried out.
Summary Comment:	The registered provider submitted the following documentary evidence: • A plumber's report detailing the works completed in the service. • Photograph showing a second toilet installed in the sanitary accommodation used by pod 1. The corrective action submitted by the registered provider has addressed the non-compliance identified on inspection in relation to Regulation 29. The regulatory requirement has been met.