

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2025OY001
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Name of Service:	Just 4 Kids Crèche
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Address of Service:	Kilmalogue Park, Tullamore Rd, Portarlington, Co. Offaly
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Eircode:	R32 CP80
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Name of Registered Provider:	Catriona Robinson
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Service type:	Full Day, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	04/06/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	33	PM	31
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate Child and Family Agency Primary Care Centre Church Avenue Tullamore Co Offaly R35 K1W4
Inspection undertaken by:	R Flynn
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

Just 4 Kids is a private service offering full day care for children aged 0 to 6 years of age. The service is one of three services operated by the registered provider. Just 4 Kids is registered to operate between the hours of 07:45 to 18:00, Monday to Friday. The service is located in a residential area in the town of Portarlinton, Co. Offaly and operates from a purpose-built single storey building. Three pre-school rooms known as the Daisy room for children age 1-2, the Orion room for children age 2-3 and the Daffodil room for children age 3-5 years were in operation. A sleep room, kitchen and an office are also provided. An outdoor play area is provided to the rear of the service. Onsite parking and set down is provided to the carpark at the front of the property.

Staffing

The registered provider employs ten adults to work in the service. The registered provider and eight adults were working directly with children on 04 June 2026. A cook was also available on site. The registered provider facilitated the inspection.

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 and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

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The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under:

Regulation 9 (1)(a)(b), (2) (a)(b)(c)(d), (4) – Management and recruitment,

Regulation 11 (1)(2)(8)(a) – Staffing levels,

Regulation 19 (1)(a)(b) – Health, welfare and development of child,

Regulation 23 – Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child,

Regulation 25(1),(2)(a)(b)– First aid,

Regulation 26 – Fire.

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, 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.*

(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)

There was a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.

(b)

The registered provider and deputy person in charge remained on the premises for the duration of the inspection.

(2)

Following a review of previous inspection information, information available on inspection and discussion with the registered provider it was determined that six new staff members had commenced in the service since the last inspection on the 26 June 2025. The staff files of the newly employed staff members were reviewed and the following was noted;

(a)

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Ten written validated references were available from a previous employer and

(b)

Two written validated references were available from a reputable source.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for the new six staff members. In regard to all staff members, the service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d)

Police vetting was available for three new staff members who had lived outside the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months as an adult.

(4)

Six newly employed childcare staff members working directly with the pre-school children attending the service held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education Level 5 to Level 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed to be the equivalent.

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.

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Compliance Information

(2)

The minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained in the Daisy and Orion room.

Morning

- There were two staff providing direct care to seven children aged between 1-2 years in the Daisy room.
- There were three staff providing direct care to sixteen children aged between 2-3 years in the Orion room.

Afternoon

- There were two staff providing direct care to seven children aged between 1-2 years in the Daisy room.
- There were three staff providing direct care to fifteen children aged between 2-3 years in the Orion room.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)

An adequate number of adults were not working directly with the preschool children in the Daffodil room. One staff member was caring for 10 preschool children aged between 3-5 years for the duration of the inspection. Two staff members were required to maintain the adult to child ratio.

(2)

The registered provider did not ensure that the minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained for the Daffodil room, 10 children aged between 3-5 years were being supervised directly by one adult.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The number of children in the Daffodil room has been reduced to 8 children as the ECCE calendar children have finished. The registered provider has adjusted the room numbers to make sure they are correct for September. More communication with manager on staff roster going forward.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the corrective and preventive actions taken. The non-compliances identified under Regulation 11 have been addressed.

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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
- (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)

Basic needs

Meals were prepared and cooked onsite. Parents provide the morning snack for their child, which were stored in the fridge in each preschool room. On the day of inspection chicken curry and rice was served for lunch. Lunches brought in from home consisted of sandwiches, yoghurts, fruit and brioches. Staff sat with the children during lunch time and engaged in conversation and assisted smaller children when needed. Younger children were given bibs for dinnertime. Drinking water was accessible to children throughout the inspection and children were given a drink with their meal. Infants in the Daisy room ate their meals in highchairs, staff assisted children with feeding where required. Children in the Orion room were observed to sit together at low tables eating their meals, engaging in conversation together and with the staff present.

Supporting relationships

Family, birthday and community walls were displayed in each preschool room, helping the children feel connected to home and their wider community. A 'our local area' wall displayed pictures of various places in the children's local community such as the Garda station, supermarket and the bridge.

Learning Journals were maintained for children in the Orion room which had their artwork and photographs.

Communication between parents and staff is facilitated by an online application which updates parents on the day to day care and activities undertaken.

Physical and material environment

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Babies in the Daisy room were observed to play in the fenced outdoor play area on the low slides and climbing frame. Children in the Daffodil room enjoyed a mystery box activity where the staff placed bowls containing flour, rice and liquid on the table. The children put on a blindfold and took turns identifying the textures, sensations and smells.

Toys and play equipment available to children in Orion room included arts and crafts materials such as crayons, paint, shapes, glitter and paper. Accessible containers contained toy vehicles, dolls and animals. A play kitchen area had play food, equipment and utensils for the children to engage in role play. Children were observed to participate in a tabletop activity together with modelling dough.

(1)(b)

Adult size couches were available in each preschool room for staff to sit with younger children or for children to sit or lie down and take a break from activities. Nappy changing was observed to be timely, and a positive experiences for the children. Staff interacted with the children and engaged in conversation during the nappy changes. Older children were observed to use the sanitary accommodation independently or with support when needed.

Cots were available in the designated sleep room for children aged between 1-2 years from the Daisy room. Children aged two and older were observed sleeping on low level beds in the sleep room and on low level beds in the Daisy room. Sleeping children were physically monitored every 10-minutes and written records of these checks were maintained. Staff remained in the room with sleeping children on low level beds in the Daisy room. Children who did not require a sleep were accommodated in the Orion room and were observed to sit with staff engaged in tabletop activities such as arts and crafts.

Non-Compliance Information

19(1)(a)(b)

- The environment in the Daisy room did not support the pre-school children in initiating play activities. The room was under resourced for the seven children in attendance in the room. There was a limited range of equipment available to provide varied opportunities for the young children to engage in physical and gross motor activity through self-initiated movement. For example,
 - The doors were missing from a play kitchen and there was no supporting kitchen equipment such as pots and pans or play food to use during play.
 - Two storage units were missing their containers and had no toys. This limited the ability for children to play with toys of their choosing.

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- The emotional wellbeing of children was not prioritised at all times during the day by the staff present. Staff members delayed responses to children who were upset evidenced by the following;
On arrival at the service, from the front carpark, the inspector could hear a child crying in the outdoor play area. A staff member could be heard talking to the child in a stern tone. On entry into the service, the inspector saw the child who had been upset in the hallway. No staff member was supporting the child. The child informed the inspector that another child had 'wet the child with water in the garden' the inspector observed that the child was attempting to get a change of clothes from their bag. A staff member from another preschool room on route to the office stopped in the hallway and assisted the child to retrieve the change of clothes from his bag. The child was observed to change his clothes independently in the sanitary accommodation located in the hall. The children from this child's care room had all returned indoors, the staff member covering the Daffodil room where the child was in attendance did not check on the child during this time.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider has taken immediate corrective action to ensure that the environment and practices fully support the wellbeing, learning, and development of all children attending the service.

- A review of the resources available to children in the Daisy Room was undertaken. Additional age-appropriate equipment has been sourced. The play kitchen has been fully replenished with appropriate accessories, including pots, pans, utensils, play food and other role-play materials. Storage units have been restocked with a variety of toys and learning materials to ensure children can independently access resources of their choice. The registered provider will liaise with a quality improvement organisation regarding the layout, resources, and learning environment.
- Staff have been reminded of their responsibility to respond promptly and sensitively to children who are distressed or require emotional support. All staff have participated in a reflective practice meeting focusing on children's emotional wellbeing, responsive interactions and active supervision. Staff have been reminded that children who become upset or require assistance must receive immediate support and reassurance. Supervision arrangements have been reviewed to ensure children are not left without appropriate adult support during transitions or while attending to personal care needs.

Daily observations of staff practice are now undertaken by management to monitor compliance with the service's policies. The registered provider will continue to monitor practice through regular supervision, mentoring and

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team meetings to ensure children's emotional wellbeing is prioritised at all times and that high standards of care are consistently maintained.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographs of the layout of the Daisy room with available and accessible equipment has been viewed by the inspector.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the corrective and preventive actions taken and evidence submitted. The non-compliances identified under Regulation 19 have been addressed.

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:

The entrance door to the service was secure and managed by the staff within. This prevented children exiting the pre-school unsupervised and unauthorised access to the service. A doorbell alerted staff to any visitors.

Cleaning products were stored safely on high shelves out of reach of children.

The kitchen was inaccessible to the children on the day of the inspection, the door was observed to be closed throughout the day.

The perimeter of the outdoor play area was secured by a wooden fence, concrete wall and gates on each side of the premises.

The toys and play equipment observed in use by the children on the day of inspection were safe and in good working order.

Infection Control:

Liquid soap and warm water were available for hand washing. Paper hand towels were accessible from wall mounted dispensers. Pedal bins were available in the preschool rooms and sanitary accommodation for the hygienic disposal of waste. Mechanical ventilation and openable windows were in place in the sanitary accommodation. The preschool rooms were well-ventilated with openable windows.

Removable washable mattress protectors were on each cot mattress in the sleep room.

Administration of Medication:

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An individual and emergency care plan was in place for two children who required specific medication in the event of a medical emergency. No medication was administered on the day of inspection. Staff were familiar with the procedure of administration of medication if required by a child. Written parental consent was available should medication be required to be administered to a child.

Temperature reducing medication was available in the service if a child presented with a high temperature and was stored safely in the kitchenette area of the preschool room.

Safe Sleep:

Appropriate sleep equipment was used for children who required sleep. Sleeping children were physically monitored at 10-minute intervals by a staff member. A record of the colour, position and breathing pattern of sleeping children was noted in sleep logs on an electronic tablet in the preschool room. The sleep room temperature was recorded between 19.6° and 21.4°.

Fire Safety:

Fire exits in the premises were easily recognisable and unobstructed. A fire assembly point was located at the front of the premises.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. A hole was present in the outdoor play area in front of a concrete step that led into the Daisy room this presented a trip hazard.
2. Wooden pallets located under the swings in the outdoor play area were noted to have large gaps evident. This posed a risk of injuring a child should their foot fall through the gaps in the wood.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

The hole has been filled in and new wooden pallets have been placed under the swing set.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Photographs of the hole filled in and the new wooden pallets viewed.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the corrective actions taken and evidence submitted. The non-compliances identified under Regulation 23 have been adequately addressed.

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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)

Five staff members were qualified in First Aid response (FAR) and were available on the premises during the operational hours of the service.

(2)(a)

A suitably equipped first aid box was located in the service.

(b)

A first aid box was accessible to adults caring for children in the pre-school service.

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.

(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)(a)

The service maintained a record of fire drills conducted in the service. The last monthly fire drill was recorded on 25 May 2026.

(b)

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A record was available demonstrating the number and type of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises. The fire extinguishers were serviced in January 2026. The smoke detection system was serviced on 21 April 2026.

(4)

A notice of the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire was posted throughout the service.