

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CW014
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Name of Service:	Creative Kids
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Address of Service:	Askea Business Park, O'Brien Road, Carlow, Co. Carlow
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Eircode:	R93 T2C9
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Name of Registered Provider:	Katarzyna Gurzawska
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	22/07/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	10	PM	10
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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

Creative Kids is a registered full day childcare service in Carlow town. The service provides early childhood care and education (ECCE) sessions, part-time and full day childcare services for children aged 2 to 6 years of age.

A registered school age service is also provided in the premises.

The service operates from 07:00 to 19:00 hours, Monday to Friday for 52 weeks of the year.

The childcare service operates from a designated area of a building in an industrial estate in Carlow town. The service is divided into three classrooms, and an outdoor area is provided to the side of the building which can be directly accessed from the classrooms.

Staffing

There are eight staff members employed in the service including the registered provider, two chefs, three early years educators and two school age carers. All staff members employed in the service who as part of their role was to work directly with the pre-school children held qualifications in early childhood care and education ranging from Level 5 to Level 9 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

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.

Regulation 17- Information for Parents,

Regulation 21-Equipment and Materials,

Regulation 22- Food and Drink,

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

Regulation 27- Supervision.

As a result, the scope of the inspection included the “Jungle Room” which was the only pre-school room in operation on the day of inspection. However, the inspector also observed the physical environment of the “Disney Room” and the “Little Sailors Room”.

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, 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.*

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(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)(b)(c) A named person who was able to deputise as required, was in charge on the inspector's arrival at the service. The registered provider arrived later in the morning as scheduled according to the service staff roster. A staff display in the entrance hall provided details of the management, staff and reporting structures within the service.

(2) Through review of records and discussion with the person in charge, it was determined that three staff members had commenced employment in the service since the last inspection.

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To assess compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years, six vetting disclosures were also identified as requiring review:

(a)(b) Two validated references were available for each of the three new staff members from either a past employer, or from a source other than a past employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all staff. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) International police vetting was available for four staff members who had lived outside the state for a period over 6 months.

(4) Certificates of qualification were available on file demonstrating that staff members who as part of their role in the service was to work directly with the pre-school children held qualifications in early childhood care and education ranging from Level 5 to Level 9 on the national Quality and Qualifications Ireland (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.

Compliance Information

(1) On the day of inspection there was an adequate number of staff always working with the pre-school children. There were 10 children with 2 staff members directly supervising them throughout the inspection. Twelve school age children were directly cared for by one staff member in a separate part of the service. A deputy designated person in charge and the registered provider was also available throughout the inspection to provide relief for staff breaks and to assist with care.

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(2) The adult to child ratios were maintained as follows throughout the service:

In the “Jungle Classroom”, there were 10 preschool children aged 2 to 4 years directly cared for by 2 staff members.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 17 – Information for parents

A registered provider shall ensure that a parent or guardian of a child proposing to attend the service is provided with the information referred to in subparagraphs (a) to (g) of Regulation 16(1).

Compliance Information

The inspector observed on arrival to the service that a large notice board in the entrance hall provided clear information to parents on the types of services provided for children, details of adult to child ratios in each class, hours of opening, fees and childcare subsidy schemes available for families.

The notice board also indicated who was in charge on any day and identified the roles, responsibilities and lines of responsibility of each staff member in the service.

At drop-off and collection times, the inspector observed that parents were familiar and engaged with the staff caring for their child, updating staff with any necessary information. Staff efficiently informed parents and guardians with a verbal handover of their child’s day in the service at collection time.

In discussion with staff and the person in charge, the inspector was informed that any general service information was provided via the means of a media application with emails sent for invitations to childcare community gatherings or individual specific emails to parents when conveying individual children’s information.

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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

Throughout the inspection the inspector observed that adequate and suitable play and work equipment and resources were provided for the children attending the service. The three classroom areas contained a variety of interest areas as well as the physical environments of each classroom being themed and decorated accordingly with theme specific play equipment and resources, such as the Disney room containing Disney characters and prints, the Jungle room containing jungle foliage and jungle animals and the Little sailors room containing sailboats, a light house, seashells and a decorated fishing net decorating the ceiling of the classroom.

A separate small room was provided adjacent to the Jungle room which provided a quiet, safe and relaxing environment for children to sleep on one of the four stackable beds provided, should they become tired and require a nap during their time in the service.

The outdoor play area which could be directly accessed via the “Disney Room” provided a long-shaded area which also contained interest areas and appropriate play equipment including swings and climbing frames, a wooden boat, outdoor kitchen, wooden playhouse and flower bed growing area, an art easel, balance beam and ride on toys to stimulate imaginary play and provide challenges for physical exercise and development.

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 chef was employed in the service, who prepared fresh snacks and meals daily in the kitchen available onsite. The service’s menu plan was clearly displayed on the parents’ information board providing families with an overview of what snacks and meals were offered in the service. Staff informed the inspector that the menu plan had been developed in conjunction with families and the children attending the service. A menu overview documented the selection of breakfast cereals and daily snacks provided in the service as well as the three-week menu plan that was offered in rotation. The children were also provided with a tea and parents were well informed that special occasion treats were limited to a birthday cake, plain rice crispy buns or jelly and ice-cream.

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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:

The service was secured with a call bell system. Access to the service could only be authorised by the staff upon responding to the doorbell. The main entrance hall was enclosed between the entrance door and a reception counter which assisted in reducing the risk of any unauthorised persons accessing the service and reduced the risk of a child leaving the service unsupervised.

The outdoor play area at the side of the premises was adequately secured with a 12-foot-high concrete wall.

The inspector observed that staff ensured that all cleaning equipment and materials were stored in a safe secure area which was inaccessible to the children.

Infection Control:

Daily and weekly cleaning schedules of the premises were available for review. There was an adequate number of toilets and a nappy changing unit provided in the service to meet the needs of the children in attendance.

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

Children were observed to use the toilet and hand-washing facilities independently, while staff supported and assisted the younger children as needed. Older children were observed to be confident and familiar with hand washing techniques.

Staff were observed to support and prompt the younger children to wash their hands correctly after using the toilet, after nappy-changing, after messy and outdoor play, and before snack times.

Administration of Medication:

In discussion with staff and person in charge, the inspector was assured that staff were well informed of the procedures to follow for the administration of any prescribed, emergency or anti-febrile medication in line with the service's administration of medication policy.

Safe Sleep:

A safe sleep area was provided in an adjacent room to the "Jungle Room" suitably equipped with four stackable beds with fitted sheets and with cellular blankets available if required. The inspector was assured by staff in their

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knowledge of the general safe sleep guidelines and knowledge of the specific guidelines for children over two years in relation to sleep room temperatures.

Outing:

The service had a policy of not operating outings 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 was one staff member trained in a Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Council (PHECC) course available to the children attending the early years service throughout the inspection. The staff roster demonstrated that while children attended the service, there was always a person qualified with a PHECC approved first aid course onsite.

(2)(a)(b) A suitably equipped first aid cabinet was observed in a conspicuous and easily accessible position in the kitchen and was available for the children attending the service.

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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) The following fire safety records were maintained.
- (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 01 July 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 March 2026 and for the fire alarm system was recorded as having taken place on the 15 June 2026.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were displayed on the notice board in the entrance hall.

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Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.

Compliance Information

The inspector observed that the staff in the service ensured that all children were always supervised during their time in the service.

All staff were suitably qualified and had extensive experience as some staff had over 20 years experience working directly with children. The child staff ratios were compliant with the requirements for care under the Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

These ratios were not compromised as the designated person in charge and an additional relief staff member were present and available to support staff for relief for breaks and with care of the children.

During mealtimes staff were observed to sit at the tables with the children especially the younger children encouraging them to eat and drink their food.

Children were encouraged to use the toilet facilities independently and staff stood within hearing range on the corridor while children used the toilets in case, they required their support.

In the outdoor play area staff placed themselves in strategic positions ensuring all aspects of the outdoor play area were supervised visually. If a child wished to go inside to use the toilet or required one to one care, the staff collaborated with the designated person in charge or relief staff ensuring that adult to child ratios were maintained and the physical environments monitored efficiently.

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 displayed on the notice board in the entrance hall of the service, detailing that adequate insurance was in place for a full day childcare service for up to a maximum number of 33 early years children. The insurance certificate applied to the period from 28 March 2026 to 27 March 2027.