

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC151		
Name of Service:	Jolly Tots Playschool		
Address of Service:	Fermoy Community Resource Centre Ltd., 42 McCurtain Street, Fermoy, Co. Cork		
Eircode:	P61 T267		
Name of Registered Provider:	Seamus Ahern		
Service type:	Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	19/10/2023		
No of pre-school children:	AM	5	PM 7
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	134 Bank Place, Mallow, Cork. P61 T267		
Inspection undertaken by:	E. Friel		
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	N/A		

Description of service

Jolly Tots Playschool is a community based early years care and education sessional service in operation since 2011. The service is registered to accommodate children aged from 2 to 6 years of age, children currently attending are aged from 2 years 8 months to 6 years of age. The Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme is facilitated in the morning from 9.00 am until 12 noon and in the afternoon from 12.30 pm to 3.30 pm, and the service is opened Monday to Friday, 38 weeks of the year.

Jolly Tots Playschool is located in the centre of the town of Fermoy in East County Cork. It operates from a care room located on the first floor of Fermoy Community Resource Centre, off which there is a children's sanitary area. There is an office in use by the service on the same floor and a room opposite the care room, which is not currently in use. The nappy changing room is located on the ground floor. The service has access to a secure outdoor play area located at the rear of the service which has been revamped since the last inspection. The surface is covered in artificial grass and there is a covered area to facilitate outdoor play in all weathers.

Staffing

There are four adults employed by the service, one of whom is currently on maternity leave. The registered provider does not work in the service and a Community Employment (C.E.) participant was undertaking a work placement on the day of 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 the child and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

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.

Additional Information

An Immediate Action Notice was issued on site on the 19 October 2023 in regards to safety. The hot water in the wash hand basin of the children's nappy changing area was recorded as 66°C, posing a risk of scalding. The manager replied on the 20 October 2023 stating that remedial action had been carried out ensuring the safety of the staff and children. Evidence was sent on 25 October 2023 to confirm that the matter was adequately resolved.

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.

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, in so far 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 registered provider ensured that there was a designated person and a named person available to deputise.
 - (b) Both the designated person and the named person were on the premises while the pre-school children were on the premises.
 - (c) Staff were aware of their roles and responsibilities.

- (2) Recruitment files were reviewed for the registered provider, four staff members and the C.E. participant.
- (a) (b) There were five validated references from past employers and seven validated references from sources other than past employers.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures from the National Vetting Bureau were available for all six adults.
- (d) There were two international police disclosures on file for two adults who lived outside of Ireland for a period of six months or longer, as adults.
- (4) All four adults who required qualifications, and were working directly with the children, each had a held a major award in Early childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Qualifications 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.*
- (3) Subject to paragraph (5), a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 2 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) therefore at that reference number is satisfied.*

Compliance Information

- (1) There were, at all times, an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the morning and afternoon sessions.
- (3) The adult child ratio was maintained at all times. There were five sessional children in the morning with two adults in attendance and seven children with two adults and a C.E. participant in attendance in the afternoon.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:

- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;*
- (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;*
- (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;*
- (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;*
- (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;*
- (f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;*
- (g) the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner;*
- (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;*
- (i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.*

(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-

- (c) an authorised person.*

Compliance Information

(1) All fifteen records of the pre-school children attending the service were reviewed. The following particulars were found to be compliant (a) to (G).

(3) The pre-school records of all fifteen pre-school children were open to inspection.

Non-Compliance Information

(h) A record of immunisation was missing for one child.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (1)
(h) The missing immunisation record was returned by the parent and is now attached to the child's pre-school record.

Supporting documentation submitted

- (1)
(h) A copy of the child's immunisation record was received in the office of the inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The non-compliance identified under this Regulation has been adequately addressed.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:

(j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;

Compliance Information

- (1)
(j) Individual medical plans and signed administration of medication forms were furnished to the inspector for two children in the service who had chronic illnesses. Staff stated that they had received training on administering the medication required.

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

Compliance Information

BASIC NEEDS:

- Snack was provided by the parents/guardians and was observed to be healthy and nutritious in both the morning session served at 10.30 am and in the afternoon session served at 2.00 pm. Children were observed eating a variety of bite sized pieces of fruit, yogurt, crackers, cheese, and filled sandwiches.
- Children were observed accessing individual water bottles and each child had their own individual laminated place mat with a photograph to place their food on.
- Children were supervised while using the sanitary area with adults providing support to assist children with handwashing.
- Children's behaviour was consistently managed in a positive manner by staff, with an emphasis on positive reinforcement and encouragement. One staff member sat with a child using the first and then strategy encouraging the child to complete the puzzle and then they could play with the magnetic triangles.
- Children demonstrated a sense of pride in their achievements during the morning session and were observed calling on staff to share their achievements. Examples included one child building a house with magnetic shapes and another child making a hexagon with the magnetic triangles.
- The weather on the day of inspection was damp and wet, children were appropriately dressed in coats and hats in keeping with the weather.

PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

- The room was set up in clearly defined areas which provided opportunities for learning across all developmental areas. Examples included a home corner with a wooden sink, fridge and cooker, dressing up costumes stored in box, dollies, buggy and a highchair for imaginary play, various arts & crafts materials including chinks and boards. Puzzles, sorting materials and construction provided possibilities for cognitive development and threading including spools and buttons were available for practicing fine motor skill development.

- Materials and resources were age and stage appropriate and available in baskets on low-lying shelves. These were easily accessible and offered choice and promoted independence.
- Tables and chairs were set out to provide both group and individual opportunities, these were age and stage appropriate with children sitting for activities and snack.
- The walls of the service were decorated with recent artwork of traffic lights related to the theme and a visual routine with photographs of the children in areas both indoors and outdoors making it personal and meaningful.
- A range of developmentally appropriate equipment was provided in the fully enclosed outdoor play area located at the rear of the service. Opportunities were provided for challenge and safe risk for example, children were observed running and cycling on the all-weather artificial grass with a slide available for climbing up and sliding down the slide and a wooden truck suitable for eight children to sit in. A covered sand box was available for sensory play and a shed was available for storing the toys with additional imaginary play toys including dinosaurs and vehicles.

PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES:

- Learning journals documented children's observations which had been carried out by staff which included emerging interests and needs, staff stated these are shared with parents.
- The children were encouraged to make their own choice in selecting play equipment and materials and activities they wished to engage with. Staff offered children the opportunity to take the lead with one child chosen to be the weather watcher and another chosen to be the helper.
- Children's language development was supported through one to one and group discussions. Staff engaged the children by using strategies including asking open ended questions and turn taking.

Non-Compliance Information

BASIC NEEDS:

- (1) There was no rest/quiet area where children could sit quietly to relax or sit away from noisy activities. In conversation staff stated that the yellow sofa had been removed, as it was torn, and had not been replaced.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (1) A new rest/quiet area was created away from noisy activities with a new two-seater sofa. Books are available from a new book rack in the area for the children to choose a book while sitting quietly.

Supporting documentation submitted

(1) A photograph of the new rest/quiet area with the new two-seater sofa and the new book rack was submitted to the office of the inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The non-compliance identified under this Regulation has been adequately 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 external entrance door at the front of the building and the entrance door at the back were both operated with a keypad preventing the unauthorised adults from entering the building.
- The two windows in the care room were fitted with window restrictors preventing children from exiting or falling from them.
- Handrails were available on the stairs providing stability to the children to enable them to climb the stairs safely.
- The staircase was well lit from artificial lighting on the ceiling ensuring that children could see the steps.
- The carpet on the stairs was well fitted and in good condition, ensuring there were no tripping hazards.
- All indoor and outdoor toys appeared in good condition.
- Heavy storage was anchored to prevent tipping or falling.
- Cleaning agents were stored on high shelved which were inaccessible to the children.
- The kitchen was closed and not accessible to the children.
- The heating system was cordoned off in the outdoor play area and bait boxes were inaccessible as they were placed behind a metal fence out of reach of the children.
- The outdoor play perimeter was secured by a high stone wall, metal fencing and a bolted gate. The area at the back of the service is secured with a wide metal gate.

Infection Control:

- Children were able to hang their personal belongings on a hook off the floor area.
- Children were observed washing their hands before and after food, coming in from outdoor play and after toileting. Staff were nearby to provide support and assistance.
- Staff were observed disinfecting tables with a cleaning agent and blue disposable roll before and after food.
- Perishable food was stored in the sink in the kitchen preventing the children's food from spoiling.
- Cleaning schedules and weekly toy deep cleaning schedules were available.

Administration of Medication:

- Anti-febrile medication was available in the service, stored in its original container

Safe Sleep:

- No child slept in the morning or afternoon sessions.

Fire Safety:

- The fire assembly point was located at the rear of the service beside the wide gate, a safe distance from the service.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

- (1) An Immediate Action Notice was issued on site on the 19 October 2023 in regards to safety. The hot water in the wash hand basin of the children's nappy changing area was recorded as 66°C, posing a risk of scalding. The manager replied on the 20 October 2023 stating that remedial action had been carried out ensuring the safety of the staff and children. Evidence was sent on 25 October 2023 to confirm that the matter was adequately resolved.
- (2) The main care room fire exit door was fitted with a key lock, posing a safety risk should the key not be available in the event of an emergency.
- (3) The phone cable and connection cables were both accessible to the children, posing both a safety and tripping hazard.
- (4) There was a broken toilet seat sticking out from behind the children's nappy changing unit, posing a safety risk.

Infection Control:

- (5) There were no disposable gloves or aprons in the nappy changing room, posing a risk of cross infection.
- (6) No pedal operated, lined or lidded nappy bin was available in the nappy changing room, posing a risk of contamination.
- (7) The wastepaper bin was overflowing and was not pedal operated or fitted with a lid, posing a risk of cross contamination from contact with tissues overflowing from the bin.

Fire Safety:

- (8) A safety gate was in place on the frame of the fire exit door, impeding the quick evacuation of children and adults in the event of an emergency.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

- (1) A temperature control valve was installed by the plumber and the temperature of the hot water was recorded at 37°C in the wash hand basin of the children's nappy changing area.
- (2) The main care room fire exit door has been fitted with a thumb twist lock
- (3) All cables have been secured, and staff will check on a daily to ensure they are still in place.
- (4) The broken toilet seat has been removed and the nappy changing area will be checked on a daily basis for broken equipment which will be removed.

Infection Control:

- (5) Disposable aprons and gloves have been placed in the nappy changing area. Staff will check daily to ensure that they are available.
- (6) A pedal operated, lined and lidded nappy bin was installed in the nappy changing room.
- (7) The wastepaper bin was replaced with a pedal operated bin. A cleaning schedule has been put in this area to ensure that the bin is checked regularly to prevent the contents overflowing and staff will empty after each session.

Fire Safety:

- (8) The main fire exit door has now been clearly marked and is unobstructed, the safety gate is used on the internal door to prevent children accessing the main stairway in the community centre.

Supporting documentation submitted

The following photographic evidence was received in the office of the inspectorate.

General Safety:

- (1) The hot water recorded at 37°C in the children's wash hand basin of the nappy changing area, was received in the office of the inspectorate on 25 October 2023.
- (2) The main care room fire exit door fitted with a thumb twist cylinder.
- (3) Cables secured out of reach of the child.
- (4) The nappy changing area showing that the broken toilet seat had been removed.

Infection Control:

- (5) Disposable gloves and aprons in a basket in the nappy changing area.
- (6) A new pedal operated, lined and lidded nappy bin installed in the nappy changing room.
- (7) A new pedal operated bin installed in the area.

Fire Safety:

- (8) The unobstructed fire exit door in the service which leads down to the outdoor play area at the rear of the service.

Summary Comment

The corrective actions implemented by the registered provider has addressed the non-compliances identified under this Regulation.

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) Certificates were on file to evidence that two staff members were trained as First Aid Responders (FAR), one staff member with FAR training was available at all times. In addition, one staff member had a basic first aid certificate and the C.E. participant had a certificate in paediatric first aid.
- (2)
 - (a) (b) The well stocked first aid box was stored within easy reach of the adults in the care room on a shelf behind the care room door and was available at all times.

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-
- (c) an authorised person.
- (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) A written record was available of the fire drills that took place in the service. The last fire drill was recorded as taking place on 18 September 2023.
 - (b) Written records were available detailing the number, type and maintenance of firefighting equipment and testing of smoke alarms in the service. The firefighting equipment certificate was dated 31 March 2023 and the smoke alarm certificate was dated 22 November 2023.
- (2)
- (c) The fire drills, firefighting certificate and the smoke alarm certificate were open to inspection on the day.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were located at the main entrance to the care room on the wall.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured that the service was insured. The expiry date of the policy was dated 29 August 2024. Examples of particulars included the number of children, which was eight, and the type of service covered which was sessional.