

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015CC412
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	The Early Years Centre
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Birchdale, Caherlag, Glanmire, Co. Cork
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<b>Eircode:</b>	T45 EP22
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Joan O'Sullivan
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<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	25/11/2024
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	16	PM	N/A
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate Administration Building St Mary's Health Campus Gurrabraher Cork
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	D Prendergast
<b>Title:</b>	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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	N/A
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### Description of service

The Early Years Centre is a sessional service, situated in a rural area of Glanmire, in Co. Cork. It is registered to provide care and education to children aged two to six years. Two daily sessional services are operated, in conjunction with the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme; the first from 8.30am to 11.30am and the second between 9.00am and 12.00pm. A HighScope, emergent curriculum is implemented, with a focus on outdoor play and exploration.

Located on the grounds of the registered provider's private residence, the service predominantly operates in the outdoor environment, which includes a number of sheltered areas. Two separate buildings are utilised for indoor activities.

### Staffing

The service employs four adults, including the registered provider and two relief staff. All four of the adults are involved in the direct care of the children and each has achieved a relevant award in Early Childhood Care and Education.

### 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.

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, deputy person in charge and the 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*

*(2) A registered provider shall ensure that each employee, unpaid worker and contractor is suitable and competent taking into consideration the nature of the needs of children, including by-*

- (a) consideration of references from the person's past employers, if any, and in particular the most recent employer, if any,*
- (b) consideration of references from reputable sources in the case of a person who has no past employers,*
- (c) consideration of the vetting disclosure received from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána in accordance with the Act of 2012 in respect of the person, and*
- (d) ensuring, insofar as is practicable, that where a person has lived in a state other than the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months, he or she provides police vetting from the police authorities in that state.*

*(4) A registered provider shall ensure that, without prejudice to the generality of paragraph (2) and subject to paragraphs (5) and (6), each employee working directly with children attending the service holds at least a major award in Early childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.*

## Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) The person in charge of operating the service was the registered provider. In the event of her absence, a named deputy had been nominated to deputise.
- (b) The registered provider was present to facilitate the duration of the inspection.
- (2) Recruitment records in respect of the four adults attached to the setting were reviewed and the following information was obtained:
- (a) There were four written and validated references on file from past employers.
- (b) There were also four references in place from sources other than previous employers, with corresponding records of validation.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all four staff. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d) Employment history records demonstrated that police vetting from other jurisdictions was required for one of the adults and the relevant documentation was in place.
- (4) A recognised award in Early Childhood Care and Education, as listed on the National Framework of Qualifications, had been attained by each of the four adults.

## 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 service's policy on Healthy Eating was reviewed and was found to include the required detail.

### 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) A sufficient number of adults was observed to be available to the children throughout the period of inspection.
- (3) The requirements of the regulation in relation to the minimum ratio of adults to children were adhered to.

The sessional groups were in operation as follows:

Room Name and Age Range of Children	Number of Children Present	Number of Adults Present
Senior Group (3 ½ - 4 years)	5	1
Junior Group (3 – 3 ½ years)	11	1

### 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:
- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;

#### Compliance Information

- (1)
- (h) A six-week sample of the service's child attendance records was assessed and was found to meet the necessary requirements. Attendance records relating to the morning of inspection were also reviewed and had been adequately completed.

## 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

(1)(a)

##### Basic needs:

- Snack time routines were observed to be social occasions, as the children chatted freely and the adults promoted independence and problem solving. For example, the children were encouraged to try to open food packaging and containers by themselves and one of the adults gently reminded the children that if we practice, we might figure it out.
- A cosy area was located within the main school room, for any child who wished to rest or relax. This was furnished with sofas, cushions and book baskets.
- The children were noted to access and utilise the sanitary facilities independently throughout the morning.
- Sufficient space was available for the children to move freely indoors. Frequent changes of environment were also facilitated, which afforded the children opportunities to experience a range of activities. For example, the children carried out crafts in the Cabin, engaged in music activities in the main school room and participated in active play in both outdoor environments.
- All of the children were dressed in suitable outdoor clothing, which included coats, hats and appropriate footwear.

### 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 policy on Healthy Eating was implemented and reflected through the various foods that had been provided for the children, by their parents and caregivers. Examples were observed to include bread rolls, sandwiches, crackers, yogurts and a selection of fruit.
- During the snack break, water was offered to the children who had not brought their own water bottles.
- The inspector was advised that one of the children had a food allergy. This was managed through ensuring that all parents were aware of the service’s nut free policy, which was highlighted within the Healthy Eating policy.
- In conversation, the registered provider informed the inspector that if a child expressed hunger outside of the allocated snack time, they could choose something to eat from their lunch box. This was also in keeping with the service’s Healthy Eating policy.

### 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 gate that provided access to the service was secured from the interior, once all of the children had arrived. The outdoor play environments were made secure through a combination of stone walls, hedging, fencing and gates.
- Cleaning supplies were maintained out of the children’s reach.
- Cables and flexes were inaccessible to the children.
- In the outdoor play spaces, shock absorbing surfacing and soft mats were in place underneath large equipment, such as swings and slides.
- Fire extinguishers were noted to be safely secured.

### Infection Control:

- Wash hand basins were equipped to facilitate handwashing practice, which was observed before the mid-morning snack.
- A refrigerator was available for the storage of perishable snacks.

### Administration of Medication:

- Medication was not observed to be administered to any of the children.
- Medication held at the setting was stored well out of the children's reach, had been appropriately labelled and was in-date.
- When asked during discussion about the steps involved in administering specific medication, the deputy demonstrated familiarity with the appropriate procedure.

### Fire Safety:

- Fire exit doors were found to be free from any obstructions that may delay a timely exit in the event of a fire.
- Fire exits were illuminated with appropriate signage.

### Outing:

- An outing from the service did not take place.

## 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) The certification presented for examination indicated that one of the adults had completed First Aid Responder (FAR) training. This adult was available throughout the hours of operation.

(2)(a)&(b)

The first aid supplies were stored on high-level shelving and were available to the children at all times, should treatment be required.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

#### Compliance Information

The service's insurance certificate demonstrated that adequate cover was in place. Under the policy, up to 22 children could attend the sessional service at any one time. The policy was valid from 28 March 2024 until 27 March 2025.