

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CW019
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Name of Service:	Jigsaw Childcare
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Address of Service:	34 Highfield, Dublin Road, Carlow, Co. Carlow
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Name of Registered Provider:	Sulinder Finn
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Service type:	Part Time, Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	14/09/2023
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No of pre-school children:	AM	35	PM	0
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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).

Conditions if applicable	Not applicable
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Description of service

Jigsaw Childcare is a registered part-time and sessional service, located in Carlow town. The service operates from a detached house, located in a housing estate in the centre of the town and is comprised of two early years classrooms- the “Bumblebee” and “Dragonfly” classrooms. A secure outdoor play area is provided at the back of the premises. The service currently only operates a sessional early childhood care and education (ECCE) childcare service for children aged 2 to 6 years of age, from September to June, closing for the months of July and August. The sessional service runs from 09:00 to 12:00 in the “Bumblebee” classroom and from 09:15 to 12:15 in the “Dragonfly” classroom.

The service is also registered to provide a school age service.

Staffing

There were six staff employed in the service including the registered provider, who also operates a second early years service and mobilises between the two services. All staff members working directly with the children held a qualification at the minimum Level 5 to Level 8 on the National Qualifications 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.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under the following regulations.

- 9(1)(2)(3)(4)-Management and Recruitment,
- 10-Policies, Procedures etc.-of a preschool service,
- 11(1)(3)-Staffing Levels,
- 21- Equipment and Materials,
- 23-Safeguarding Health, Safety, and Welfare of child,
- 25-First Aid,
- 26- Fire Safety Measures,
- 28-Insurance,
- 30-Minimum Space Requirements

As a result, the scope of the inspection included both the “Bumblebee” and “Dragonfly” classrooms.

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 to the registered provider in respect of a non-compliance identified as an immediate risk to the safety of the children attending the service which is contrary to the requirement of regulation 25.

The registered provider responded on the 15 September 2023, indicating the actions, they were taking to address the risk.

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.

Part III – Management and Staff

(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) There was a deputy designated person in charge on the day of inspection. The registered provider, who is registered as the person in charge, arrived on the premises for a period but did not remain for the inspection process.

(b) The deputy designated person in charge remained on the premises for the duration of the inspection.

(2) Staff files for six staff members employed in the service were reviewed by the inspector.

(a)(b) Two validated references were available on file for each of the six staff members, from either a past employer or from a reputable source.

(c) Garda vetting certificates were available on file, for each staff member working directly with the children.

(d) Police vetting was available for one staff member, who had lived outside of the state for a period longer than six months.

(3) On review of staff files and the required documentation, the inspector was assured that the procedures specified in paragraph (2) was carried out prior to employment of any staff member in the service.

(4) Certificates of qualifications were available in each staff member's file, demonstrating that each staff member held a qualification at the minimum level 5 and above on the national framework of qualifications.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(c) During the course of the inspection, the inspector did not observe a clear outline of management in the service, identifying the lines of authority, accountability, the roles, and responsibilities of individual staff members in the service.

The registration details of the service stated that the registered provider was also the designated person in charge in the service.

It became apparent to the inspector during the inspection process, and during the feedback meeting, that it was the deputy designated person in charge and another staff member, and not the registered provider / designated person in charge, that were tasked with the overall governance of the service such as policies and procedures.

While it is acknowledged that there was a deputy designated person in charge for the duration of the inspection, facilitating the inspection, the inspector observed that this staff member was also a room leader in an ECCE classroom, working directly with the children, as part of her role in the service.

This was concerning as not all policies and documentation were readily available for inspection. Regulation states that the registered provider must ensure that the written policies, procedures, and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place in the service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider submitted the following corrective and preventative actions: A Change in circumstances form has been forwarded to the Early Years Inspectorate Office regarding change of person in charge. The service will ensure that there is always a designated person in charge on the premises.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copy of statement outlining the roles and responsibilities of each employee in the service.

Copy of Change in Circumstances form.

Summary Comment

The actions submitted are appropriate to address the non-compliances. The implementation of these actions will be reviewed on next inspection.

art 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 following policies were available for review in the service on the day of inspection: complaints policy, policy on administration of medications, policy on infection control, policy on behaviour management, fire safety policy, policy on accidents and incident, policy on authorisation to collect children, policy on healthy eating, policy on outdoor play, and settling in policy. The content of each of the above policies was observed to be relevant and adequate.

Non-Compliance Information

1.While a policy on outings was available for review by the inspector, its content was inadequate and did not contain the following relevant information:

The items checked prior to an outing, for example, parental consent, insurance cover, adult /child ratio for the duration of the outing, first aid supplies and if a staff member qualified in first aid responder training was always present, on the outing, the contact details of parents and details of the procedure for response to and management of a critical incident while on an outing, for example if a child went missing.

2.The following policies were not available for review on the day of inspection; inclusion policy, policy on staff absences, policy on the use of the internet and photographic and recording devices, recruitment policy, risk management policy, staff training policy and supervision policy. It is acknowledged that two staff members informed the inspector that they were reviewing the service's policies and had copies on a home IT system,

however the registered provider must ensure that the written policies, procedures, and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place in the service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider submitted the following corrective and preventive actions.

1. The service's outing policy did need reviewing and have enclosed a revised copy.
2. Copies of the required policies are available in the service.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copies of revised policies.

Summary Comment

The actions submitted are appropriate to address the non-compliances. The implementation of these actions will be reviewed on next inspection.

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) There were always an adequate number of staff members working directly with the children on the day of inspection.

(2) The following adult to child ratios were observed during the provision of the sessional service.

In the "Bumble Bee" room between the hours of 09:00 and 12:00, there were 2 staff members directly caring for 14 children, aged 2 years 8 months to 4 years.

In the “Dragonfly” room between the hours of 09:15 and 12:15, there were 3 staff members directly caring for 21 children aged 3 to 5 years.

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

The service had two classrooms, which contained clear identifiable interest areas, supplied with a variety of play resources and materials appropriate to the age and needs of the children in attendance. In both classrooms, there were home/ kitchen corners, construction areas, art and creativity areas, sensory areas, small world figurines, treasure baskets, dolls houses, car garages, trains and train tracks, and Montessori equipment. Low level shelving provided ease of access for the children to a variety of play materials such as peg boards, jigsaws, connective and manipulative material, playdough and playdough equipment, art and craft materials and Montessori tray tasks.

In each of the rooms, a child sized couch and soft mat area was provided for the children to avail of opportunities to rest, opt out of activities or read.

A suitable safe environment was provided at the back of the premises in the garden area, The area was secured by a high block wall and wooden fencing with each side of the building gated securely. The area had been designed with a raised deck area, covered in artificial grass to one side which provided the children with a stage to dance and sing on, or to cut the grass with a toy grass mower.

A covered over area provided the children with seating and tables for an outdoor classroom and sheltered them from rainy weather while playing with water trays containing plastic octopi, ducks, watering cans and sponges. Other interest areas included a large gardening trough with rakes and shovels for digging and planting, a gravel construction area containing diggers and dress-up construction materials, and an outdoor wooden kitchen and shop and playhouse with pots and pans, opened ended recycled materials and toy ice creams for sale in the shop.

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 main entrance was secured internally by a lock system. Staff working directly with the children could view any visitors to the service through the front window. Internally the door to the “Dragonfly” classroom was secured with a keypad system, with the access code only known to staff employed in the service. It was observed on the day of inspection that no unauthorised person could gain access to the service and no child could leave the service unsupervised.

Infection Control:

Each classroom had adjacent child sized toilets and upstairs in the toilet area adjacent to the “Bumblebee” classroom, a suitable nappy changing area was provided for younger children. Children and staff were observed to practice handwashing procedures after toileting, nappy changing, messy and outdoor play and before sitting down for their morning snack.

Cleaning schedules and records were maintained for both classrooms.

Administration of Medication:

On the day of inspection, there was no child in the service that required medication to be administered. An administration of medication policy was available in the service. On review of past administration of medication records maintained by the service, records were completed appropriately in line with the service’s administration of medication policy.

Fire Safety:

The service had a fire safety policy which was reflected in the service’s fire safety practices. A fire assembly area was clearly identified at the front of the building. The service’s fire drill procedure in the event of a fire was clearly displayed in the entrance hall.

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

(2)(a) A first aid box was available on a shelf in the “Dragonfly” room.

(b) The first aid box could be easily accessed by staff members if a child required first aid while attending the service.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) The inspector observed that there was no documented evidence that there was a staff member present in the service trained as a first aid responder (FAR). It is acknowledged that a staff member provided evidence showing the inspector an email confirming intention to attend FAR training, however no accreditation certificates were available for review. The registered provider must demonstrate that a staff member trained in FAR is on the premises and immediately available to the children attending the service. An immediate action notice was issued to the registered provider onsite in response to this breach of regulation.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider submitted the following response: A member of staff had completed their FAR training on the 16th of August 2023. The certificate did not arrive in time for the inspection. I forwarded the inspector a letter sent to me by the FAR trainer to as proof of the staff member completing the training. I have enclosed a copy of the certificate. Ensure all training is completed well in advance of service opening after the summer holidays.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copy of FAR certificate.

Summary Comment

The actions submitted are appropriate to address the non-compliance. The implementation of these actions will be reviewed on next inspection.

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-*
- (a) a parent or guardian of a pre-school child attending or proposing to attend the pre-school service,*
 - (b) an employee, and*
 - (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) 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 16 June 2023.
- (b) The registered provider maintained a record of the number, type and maintenance of fire-fighting equipment and smoke alarms in the service. The last maintenance check was recorded as having taken place on the 26 July 2023.
- (4) A notice of the procedure for staff and children to follow in the event of a fire was clearly displayed in the entrance hall of the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

There was a current insurance certificate for the childcare service on display in the entrance hall. The insurance certificate detailed insurance cover for a sessional service for 37 early years children.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 30 - Minimum space requirements

(1) Subject to paragraphs (2) to (6), a registered provider shall ensure that adequate clear floor space is available in the premises for the work, play and movement of children attending the pre-school service.

(3) A registered provider of a sessional pre-school service or a pre-school service in a drop-in centre shall ensure that a minimum of 1.818 square metres of clear floor space is available for each child attending the service.

Compliance Information

(1) There was adequate clear floor space available in each of the two classrooms in the service.

(3) In the “Dragonfly” classroom on the ground floor, there was a total of 53.5 square metres of clear floor space, providing adequate clear space for 22 early years children to attend a sessional service.

In the “Bumblebee” classroom on the first floor there was a total of 35.7 square metres of clear floor space, providing a minimum of 1.818 square metres for each of 19 early years children to attend a sessional service.