

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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Eircode:	R93 PD74
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Name of Registered Provider:	Sulinder Finn
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Service type:	Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	09/09/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	26	PM	N/A
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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 service is a registered sessional and part-time service in the centre of Carlow town. The service operates from a two-storey dwelling house located in the Highfield residential estate in Carlow town and has two classrooms currently providing early childhood care and education sessions for children aged 2 to 6 years. The Bumble Bee room on the first floor operates between 09:00 hours to 12:00 hours and the Dragonfly room on the ground floor operates between 09:15 to 12:15 hours. A part-time service is currently not being offered. There is an outdoor play area located in the back garden of the house which is directly accessed via the French doors at the back of the Bumble Bee Room.

Staffing

There are seven staff members employed in the service including the registered provider. All staff members employed in the service held qualifications in early childhood care and education ranging from Level 5 to Level 8 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.

The inspection focused on assessment of compliance under regulations 9, 10, 11, 15, 17, 19, 23, 24, 25, 26 and 28

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under the following regulations 10, 15, and 23.

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

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

The inspection was triggered by receipt of information submitted to the Inspectorate.

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

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.

(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 and designated person in charge were present in the service for the duration of the inspection.

(b) The staff roster demonstrated that one of the following, the registered provider, designated person in charge or a named deputy designated person in charge, was always onsite while the service was in operation.

(c) A clear outline of the management of the structure was displayed in the service, identifying the lines of authority, accountability, the roles, and responsibilities of individual staff members in the service.

(2) Staff files for seven staff members, including the registered provider were reviewed by the inspector.

- (a)(b) Two validated references were available on file for each of the seven staff members, from either a past employer or from a reputable source.
- (c) Garda vetting certificates were available on file for each staff member. The registered provider demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d) Police Vetting disclosure certificates were on file for each of two staff members employed in the service who had lived outside of the state for a period of longer than six months.
- (4) Certificates of qualifications were available for inspection, for each staff member, who as part of their role were working directly with the children, demonstrating that each staff member held at least a minimum Level 5 to Level 8 qualification in early childhood care and education on the national QQI Framework.

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 following service policies were selected for review on inspection day. The service's Statement of Purpose and Function, Complaints policy, policy on Managing Behaviour, Policy on Infection Control policy, Fire Safety policy, policy on Accidents and Incidents, policy on Dropping and Collection of Children, and policies on Staff Recruitment, Staff Training and Supervision of Staff. These policies were observed to be adequate and appropriate in content in line with the requirements of Schedule 5, Regulation 10.

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 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.*

(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,

Compliance Information

(1) Throughout the inspection, there was an adequate number of staff members working directly with the children attending the service.

(2) The following adult to child ratios were observed in each of the two classrooms throughout the ECCE session. While the service is registered to operate a part-time service, the registered provider is currently operating only a sessional ECCE service.

In the Bumble Bee classroom on the first floor, there were 9 children aged 2 to 3 years in attendance for an ECCE session between 09:00 to 12:00 hours.

In the Dragonfly classroom on the ground floor there were 17 children aged 3 to 5 years of age in attendance for an ECCE session between 09:15 to 12:15 hours.

(8)(a) On review of the staff roster and in discussion with the registered provider the inspector was assured that there were always at least 2 adults on the premises in each of the classrooms, while children were in attendance in the service.

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-

(a) a parent or guardian of a pre-school child but only in respect of the record relating to that child,

(b) an employee who is authorised in that behalf by the registered provider, and

(c) an authorised person.

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) is retained for a period of 2 years from the date on which the child to whom it relates ceases to attend the service.

Compliance Information

(1)(a) to (i) On review of a sample of 12 registration records of pre-school children who had attended or are attending the service, the inspector observed that records of the particulars (a) to (i) were maintained for each preschool child.

(3) The pre-school records referred to in paragraph (1) were available and open for inspection to parents/guardians of the child to which the record pertained to, to staff members in the service authorised by the registered provider and to an authorised person such as the early years inspector, on the day of inspection.

(4) The registered provider assured and demonstrated to the inspector that pre-school records of children who have attended the service are retained securely for at least a period of two years from the date that the child, to whom the record related to, ceases to attend the pre-school service.

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 that the information referred to in regulation 16(1)(a) to (g) was provided on the parents notice board in the entrance hall of the service. A visual photographic overview of the roles and responsibilities of the staff employed in the service to work directly with the children was displayed, for both parents/ guardians and children to see. The notice board also displayed the service's statement of purpose and function, child safeguarding statement and a list of the policies and procedures that were available in hard copy from the service manager.

The registered provider and manager also informed the inspector that the parents /guardians of the children are provided with copies of the policies on registration of their child in the service or at the open evening which the service operates prior to commencement of new children in the ECCE year.

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.

(2) A registered provider shall ensure that no corporal punishment is inflicted on a pre-school child whilst attending the service.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that no practices that are disrespectful, degrading, exploitive, intimidating, emotionally or physically harmful or neglectful are carried out in respect of a pre-school child whilst attending the service.

Compliance Information

(1) Throughout the inspection the inspector observed in both classrooms that the individual children's learning and care needs were provided for by the staff in the pre-school service.

Upstairs in the Bumble Bee classroom the nine young children who had recently commenced in the service demonstrated that they were already confident and familiar in their physical environment and had formed attachments to the staff looking after them.

There was physical evidence displayed in the classroom that parents had been invited to be involved in contributing to their child's integration into the service with a well-developed family photo wall, displaying information "All about Me" on each child. "Our Class Birthday Wall" also displayed each child's personal photograph and birthday.

The staff used visual photographic labels with each child's photo and clearly written name, for all the young children to become familiar with where to place their belongings, and to see what the daily plan of activities included as well as promoting their learning of each other's names.

Children were observed checking the daily activity program to see if circle time was to follow free play.

Both staff were observed engaged with the children during free play time. Supporting their imaginary play or extending upon the children's emergent interests such as some of the children's interests in making dinosaur footprints in the yellow playdough which had been prepared on a table and stimulated the children's sensory play and imaginations.

Children were encouraged to choose what activities they demonstrated an interest in and were responded to promptly if the child wished the staff member to engage in play or an activity with them, for example when a child wanted a staff member to sit and read a book with them.

The physical environment provided a variety of stimulating interest areas with age-appropriate sensory manipulative and connective materials as well as open -ended props and accessories in the home /kitchen area and construction area for children to play with. Children were observed washing dolls, feeling conkers and cones on the nature table, making jigsaws, and incorporating small world figurines in sensory play with the playdough to create imprints.

After free play the inspector observed that the group of young children transitioned comfortably to circle time, demonstrating familiarity with the routine of the service, early in the new school year. Two children with additional needs were supported by the staff during circle time, allowing them at times to wander to another activity of choice, however holding them in their arms when they both displayed interest in the songs., which both children displayed joy at joining in with.

Similarly downstairs in the Dragonfly classroom, the older children displayed confidence and independence in their activities and routine, participating in activities, both child and adult led, and communicating their needs and wishes to the staff looking after them such as planning for snack time and outdoor play.

In each of the classrooms the children had direct access to adjacent toilet facilities which they were observed to use independently as child sized toilets and hand wash basins provided the children with ease of access to the facilities.

Staff were observed to support children with toileting by listening out for calls for help and responding promptly if required, supporting the children.

Drinking water was provided at drink stations in each of the classrooms and snack time included staff sitting with the children enjoying conversations and supporting children to eat their healthy snacks in an enjoyable atmosphere.

(2)(3) On observation of the staff's gentle and nurturing interactions and through discussions with the children throughout the inspection the inspector was assured that the registered provider and staff were well informed regarding practices that were not accepted in caring for or supporting the behavioural and emotional needs of the children attending the service. In discussion with the registered provider and staff present, the inspector was assured that the adults in the service were well informed in relation to safeguarding the children in their care.

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 at the main entrance, to prevent any unauthorised person from entering the building and to prevent any child exiting the building unsupervised. The outdoor play area was secured with a high wall and a secured wooden side gate.

The inspector observed that the children accessed the outdoor play area through the rear patio doors from the Dragonfly classroom.

All cleaning products and equipment had a designated storage area and were stored out of the reach of the children.

The service's child safeguarding statement was available and displayed on the service parent's noticeboard.

Infection Control:

There was an adequate number of toilet and nappy changing facilities provided in the service to meet the needs of the children attending the service.

Adjacent to the Bumble Bee Classroom on the first floor there were two child sized toilet units with two hand wash basins and a nappy changing table, in the toilet facilities provided.

Downstairs in the toilet facilities adjacent to the classroom an additional two children's toilet units and handwash basins were provided. A designated staff toilet was also provided in the service.

Each toilet unit was supplied with liquid hand soap and paper towelling, which the children could easily access and use.

The older children in the Dragonfly classroom were observed to use the toilet and hand washing facilities independently, while staff supported and assisted the younger children upstairs in the Bumble Bee classroom if needed.

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

Administration of Medication:

While there were no medications currently required to be administered to any child in the service, the staff were well informed of the procedure to be followed in administering any type of medication to a child, in line with the service's administration of medication policy.

Outing:

The service had an adequate outings policy in place in the service for the safe planning and assessment of any proposed outings away from the service which included communication and consent from parents and procedures to mitigate against any potential risk which might arise.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) no person other than-

(i) pre-school child attending the service,

(ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,

(iii) an employee, or

(iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and

(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.

Compliance Information

(1) The staff in each of the two classrooms demonstrated to the inspector that each pre-school child's daily attendance and departure times from the service were recorded.

(3)(a)(b) The staff ensured that no other person other than a pre-school child, person dropping or collecting a child, employee or unpaid worker could enter the premises without their entry being approved by an employee. All authorised visitors to the service were required to record the date of entry, their name, contact number, reason for entry, check in and out times on the visitors record book located at the main entrance.

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

There were two staff members employed in the service with current certification in the required first aid responder (FAR) training for children. At all times while the service was operating, the two staff members with FAR training were present. This was reflected in the staff roster reviewed by the inspector on the day of inspection. The inspector was reassured by the registered provider that additional staff members were proposed to attend first aid responder training soon.

(2)(a)(b)

There was first aid bag available in each of the Bumble Bee and Dragonfly classrooms and there was also a first aid bag available in the office.

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 firefighting 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.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that a record referred to in paragraph (2) is retained for a period of 5 years after its creation

(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 registered provider ensured that the following fire 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 16 June 2025.
- (b) A record was maintained of the dates of checking and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and fire alarm system in the service, by a reputable contractor. The last maintenance check for the firefighting equipment and smoke alarm system was recorded as having last taken place on the 30 June 2025.
- (2) The fire safety records were available and open for inspection by the early years inspector or by a parent / employee on request.
- (3) The registered provider demonstrated that records were maintained for the five years prior to inspection.
- (4) Evidence of a fire evacuation procedure notice was clearly displayed in the entrance hall.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

An insurance certificate displaying adequate insurance for a part-time childcare service for up to 37 preschool children was displayed on the notice board in the entrance hall.

The insurance certificate provided cover from 28 March 2025 to the 27 March 2026.