

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015GY017
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Name of Service:	Ballinasloe Community Childcare Group
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Address of Service:	M6 Business Park, Poolboy, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway
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Eircode:	H53 X9X0
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Name of Registered Provider:	Joanne Costello Jordan
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	04/03/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	51	PM	35
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Quality and Regulation Directorate, Child and Family Agency, Clinical & Administration Building, Block A (1st Floor- Green Corridor), Merlin Park, Galway.
Inspection undertaken by:	F. Kelly, B. Lavin.
Title:	Early Years Inspectors

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

This community operated pre-school is in an industrial development in Ballinasloe, Co Galway. This service offers a full day care and part time care provision from 08.00 to 18.00. The Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) pre-school care programmes and sessional care programmes are also offered from 09.30 to 12.30 Monday to Friday. The service is registered for pre-school children aged 1 to 6 years of age.

There were four playrooms, two ground floor childcare rooms- the Baby room and Toddler room and two first floor rooms- the Junior Pre-school and Senior Pre-school. The premises has a kitchen, where children's main meals are prepared and cooked. There is a designated dining room used by the children for their mealtimes. There is a secured outdoor play area to the side of the premises.

Staffing

The registered provider does not work in the service. There was a designated person in charge and named person able to deputise. There are 15 staff members employed in the service.

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 and safety.

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 inspectors wish 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.*

(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.

(7) A registered provider shall ensure that all employees, unpaid workers and contractors are appropriately supervised and provided with appropriate information, and where necessary training, including in relation to the following:

(a) the policies, procedures and statements of the service specified in Schedule 5.

(b) Part VIIA (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013)) of the Act, and

(c) these Regulations.

Compliance Information

1)(a) The manager was the designated person in charge and there was a named person who was able to deputise as required.

(b) During the period of inspection, the manager was in charge and facilitated the inspection.

Following a review of the service files and discussion with the person in charge, it was confirmed that there were 15 adults employed in the service. The registered provider did not work in the service on a daily basis.

It was confirmed that there were 4 new staff members working in the service since the last inspection dated the 19/12/24. Following a review of these files it was noted:

(2)(a) Six of the required eight written and appropriately validated references available were from the adult's most recent employer.

(b) Two written and appropriately validated references from another source were on file for two staff members.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for 15 of the adults employed in the service and they did adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew garda vetting every 3 years.

(d) Police vetting was required and was available for one adult working in the service, as they lived outside the jurisdiction for more than six months as an adult.

(4) All adults working directly with children had obtained an award in Early Childhood Care and Education ranging from level 5 to level 8 on the National Qualifications Framework or equivalent.

(7) (a) (b) (c)

The registered provider did ensure that all employees were provided with the appropriate information and training including induction training for new staff members, staff supervision for all staff and regular staff team meetings.

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.

(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) There was a designated person in charge and there was a named person available to deputise in the service. On the day of inspection, the person in charge was on the premises when the early years inspector arrived and facilitated the inspection.

(2) On the morning of the inspection, there were 51 children present.

- Baby room- 4 children were aged between 1 and 2 years and cared for by 1 adult.
- Toddler room- 8 children were aged between 1 and 2 years and cared for by 3 adults.
- Junior Pre-school- 17 children were aged between 2.5 and 3 years and were cared for by 3 adults.
- Senior Pre-school- 22 children were aged between 3 and 5 years and cared for by 4 adults.

The person in charge assisted with the administration aspect of the inspection and was available to provide relief cover in the care rooms.

(8)(a) The person in charge ensured that there were two staff on the premises at all times while the pre-school was operating.

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.

Compliance Information

BASIC NEEDS

- Healthy eating was promoted within the service. The service prepared and cooked all the meals on site. On the day inspection the main meal of the day consisted of beef goulash, potatoes and vegetables or pasta sauce and vegetables for the younger age group. Snacks and children's drinks were available to the children when they required them. Each child was given enough time to eat and enjoy their snack without being rushed.
- Children were independent with their toileting needs and they had unrestricted access to the toilet that is located adjacent to the playrooms. The younger children were given help and support when required.
- The children had access to relaxation areas and soft seating in all the playrooms, these areas were used on a few occasions throughout the session. In the baby room the staff members were observed sitting in this area with the children- holding, comforting and engaging with the young children in their care.
- Children's behaviour was positively reinforced. Children were encouraged and praised throughout the session; this was observed on numerous occasions during the inspection.
- The older children had access to the outdoor play area on a daily basis. On the day of inspection, the children were observed putting on their jackets and hats prior to going outside. The children were encouraged to be as independent as possible and the staff offered help and assistance when required.

SUPPORTING RELATIONSHIPS AROUND CHILDREN

- The staff present demonstrated sensitivity, warmth and positive regard for the children as evidenced in the positive use of language and soft tones when speaking to the children.
- The atmosphere between the children and the staff remained calm and relaxed throughout the inspection.
- The staff communicated with parents/guardians on the progress of each individual child e.g. a verbal handover was given each day for each pre-school child at drop off/collection time. The services had

recently introduced a childcare communication app which allows the staff to update the parents on the child's daily activity.

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.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. The opening in the 5 windows in the senior playroom, ranged from 16.5 cm to 22.9 cm. The openings in the 4 windows in the junior playroom ranged from 16.5 cm to 19 cm. The playrooms were located on the first floor of the premises. There wasn't a safety restrictor installed on these windows which would prevent a child from falling from the window. The safety restrictors should limit the initial movement of an opening section to not more than 10 cm.
2. There was a trailing lead that was accessible from a cot in the toddler room which may pose a risk of strangulation to a child using this cot. The inspector asked for this trailing lead to be removed.

Infection Control:

3. There were two mattresses in the toddler sleep room that were ripped on the corners with exposed foam, which prevented the mattresses from being effectively cleaned between uses, thus posing a risk of cross infection.
4. The soft seating in the upstairs Junior Preschool room was ripped with exposed foam which made it difficult to effectively clean the seats, posing a risk of cross infection.
5. The children's hands in the baby room were not consistently cleaned before eating. This posed a risk of cross infection.
6. The drop downside rail on a cot in the toddler sleep room was broken. The rail would not stay in a fixed upright position. This posed a safety risk to a child. The person in charge advised that the cot was not going to be used until the side rail was repaired.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider stated the following in their reply:

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The opening of the window was restricted to less than 10 centimeters. The windows will be checked regularly by staff
2. Cable casing was installed to fix the cable to the wall; staff will conduct visual checks to ensure the wire is secured at all times.

Infection Control:

3. The mattresses were replaced with easy clean covers, and these will be checked regularly by staff
4. the soft seating was repaired and is now included in the monthly audit checks for repairs
5. A step up was added to the sink to help the children gain access to the hand-washing sink, the staff will ensure children's hands are consistently washed.
6. The cot has been replaced, and staff will routinely check equipment to ensure they are in good condition.

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Supporting documentation submitted

Photographs and receipt were submitted to the early year's inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The inspectors reviewed the actions and the evidence submitted. The non compliances identified under regulation 23 have 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:

(i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis.

(3) A record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection on the premises, and the documents and records referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall be open to inspection whether on the premises or elsewhere, by an authorised person.

Compliance Information

- (1) (i) Details of the staff roster on a daily basis were available for inspection.
- (3) The records referred to in paragraph (1) were furnished to the inspector on the premises.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-

- (a) of sound and stable structure,*
- (b) safe and secure,*
- (c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated*
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

Non-Compliance Information

1. The ventilation system in the internal sanitary area attached to the Toddler area, did not appear to be working. There was no sound from the system when it was turned on and did not create a suction, the poor ventilation system may result in poor quality air circulation and the prevent the extraction of contaminated/foul air from the premises. There were black spots on the ceiling, the inspectorate team were informed that it was a result of a broken sink in the sanitary area above this toilet which leaked down and stained the ceiling tiles.
2. The sleep room attached to the Baby room did not have any form of ventilation. The staff did not have access to the openable windows that were positioned high up over the cots. The window ledges were used to store boxes of toys and other items which prevented the windows from being opened.
3. The hand-washing sink in the upstairs children's sanitary area was blocked off and not in use by the children, which resulted in 16 children using 1 hand washing basin. It was acknowledged that the service manager informed the inspection team that plumber was appointed to fix the issue and was awaiting parts to fix the taps.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider stated the following in their reply:

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. The fan in the ventilation system was replaced to help with air flow. The ceiling tiles have also been replaced in the sanitary area.
2. The window ledges in the baby room were cleared of storage boxes, and the staff now have access to the two windows which allow ventilation to the sleep room.
3. The sink was repaired in the children's sanitary area, and the children have access to running water to effectively wash hands.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographs and a video were submitted to the early year's inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The inspectors reviewed the actions, and the evidence submitted the non-compliances identified under regulation 29 have been adequately addressed

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.

Non-Compliance Information

The Junior playroom and the Senior playroom were not supplied with adequate materials to support children's play and learning. There were not enough toys and equipment available to the children to provide rich and varied environment for the children to play. For example:

1. The play kitchen areas were poorly stocked with accessories; one the kitchen unit door was broken and void of toys.
2. The dress up clothes were in poor condition and all in a bundle on the floor of the hanging unit making it difficult for the children to pick and choose what they wanted to play with.
3. The books in the library area were in poor condition, many were ripped and torn.
4. The dolls houses were void of any furniture or toy accessories.

5. The dolls and dolls accessories were in poor condition and they were poorly displayed. This did not make it attractive for the young children to want play with them.
6. Puzzles and games were stored out of the children's reach, a young child in the Junior preschool room was observed asking a staff member for a jigsaw puzzle that was stored on a very high shelf. The staff member retrieved a small plastic bag that contained jigsaw pieces. There was no picture of the completed jigsaw or the number of jigsaw pieces the jigsaw should contain. When the inspector asked the staff member if this information was available to the child, they replied "that the childcare course that they attended suggested that children should use their imagination and memory when completing a jigsaw".
7. There were 5 "cause and effect" toys in the baby room that were not working.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider stated the following in their reply:

Corrective and Preventive Action

1 to 7

A large section of toys were purchased which included kitchen units, dress up costumes, books, dolls house with furniture and other accessories. Staff have chosen age-appropriate puzzles for the children, and they now are accessible to the children on low level shelving. The staff have checked all battery-operated toys; batteries were replaced when required and toys were replaced when they were no longer operational.

Staff will monitor all play areas and toys will be reviewed and may be replaced as part of a monthly audit will now be part of a monthly audit

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographs and receipt for toys purchased were submitted to the early year's inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The inspectors have reviewed the actions and the evidence submitted. The non compliances identified under regulation 21 have been adequately addressed.