

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015GY017		
Name of Service:	Ballinasloe Community Creche		
Address of Service:	M6 Business Park, Poolboy, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway.		
Eircode:	H53 X9XO		
Name of Registered Provider:	Joanne Costello Jordan		
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional		
Date(s) of Inspection:	19/06/2024		
No of pre-school children:	AM	46	PM 29
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	TUSLA - Child and Family Agency, Early Years Inspectorate, Quality Assurance Directorate, Clinical & Administration Building, Block A - (1st Floor- Green Corridor), Merlin Park, Galway.		
Inspection undertaken by:	H. Heagney		
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		

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 8.00hrs to 18.00hrs. The Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) pre-school care programmes and sessional care programmes are also offered from 9.30hrs to 12.30hrs and 14.30hrs to 17.30hrs, Monday to Friday. The service is registered for pre-school children aged 1 to 6 years of age. A child centred play-based pre-school curriculum focusing on emerging interests and Montessori pedagogy is provided.

There are two ground floor childcare rooms namely the Baby room and Toddler room, and two first floor rooms namely the Junior Pre-school and Senior Pre-school. There are two designated sleep rooms – one adjacent to the Baby room with three cots, and one adjacent to the Toddler room with three cots. Stackable beds are available for older children’s sleep provision. The premise has its own kitchen, where children’s main meals are prepared, cooked, and stored on site. There is a designated dining room used by the children for their mealtimes. There is a secure outdoor play area to the side of the premises which includes an all weathered sheltered area, for children’s play, exploration, and fresh air.

Staffing

The registered provider does not work in the premises. There is a designated person in charge and named person able to deputise. There are fourteen staff members working in the premises. Twelve staff hold a Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) at a Level 5 to 8, in Early Childhood Care and Education. The staff have documentary evidence of ongoing training and education. There are two designated chefs. Additionally, there are two adults over the age of 18 years on a childcare work placement, who are supervised when interacting with the children.

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. 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, 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.

(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)

At all times during the period of the inspection, the person in charge ensured that an adequate number of staff were working directly with the children.

(b)

On the day of the inspection, the person in charge was on the premises when the early years inspector arrived and remained on site for the duration of the inspection. The service showed evidence that there was always a named person consistently in charge, on a day-to-day basis.

(2)

The registered provider, twelve childcare staff, two chefs and the two adults over the age of eighteen years were presented to the early year inspector.

Seventeen files were inspected.

(a)&(b)

Thirty-four of the thirty-four validated written references, for the seventeen files, were from a past employer or from a source other than the past employer.

(c)

Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for the seventeen staff. However, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes for one staff member and one adult on a childcare work placement as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. Please refer to the information outlined under regulation 23 of this report.

(d)

Police vetting was available and on file for three staff who had lived outside the jurisdiction for 6 months or more while over the age of 18 years.

(4)

Twelve staff who were working directly with children, held a Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI), at a Level 5 to 8, in Early Childhood Care and Education. Copies of qualifications were on file for the twelve staff.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(d)

Four of the seventeen staff had worked outside the jurisdiction, for six months or more, while over the age of 18 years of age and did not have the required police vetting for that jurisdiction. One of the four staff had worked in two different locations.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

On the 8th and 9th of July 2024, the person in charge advised of the following -

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(d)

The staff commenced the application process for police vetting including for the person who had lived in two different locations while over the age of 18 years.

Two of the four staff had received police vetting.

Supporting documentation submitted

(2)(d)

Two of the four staff with police vetting dated 3rd and 4th of July 2024, were submitted to the office of the early years inspectorate.

Applications for the remaining two staff were submitted to the office of the early years inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The actions taken by the person in charge has partially addressed the non-compliances identified. Police vetting for two staff including the staff member who had lived outside the jurisdiction in two different locations is ongoing and will reviewed again on the 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.

(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 remained on site for the remainder of the inspection.

(2) On the morning of the inspection, there were 46 children present.

- 5 children were aged between 1 to 2 years,
- 13 children were aged between 2 to 3 years,
- 28 children were aged between 3 to 5 years.

There were nine staff directly caring for these children. In the morning, the person in charge and deputy person in charge assisted with the administration aspect of the inspection.

In the afternoon, of the inspection, there were 29 children present.

- 5 children were aged between 1 to 2 years,
- 11 children were aged between 2 to 3 years,
- 13 children were aged between 3 to 6 years.
- There were seven staff directly caring for and supervising these children. The person in charge assisted with the administration aspect of the inspection.

(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 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.*

(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.

(5) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (2) is retained for a period of 2 years from the date on which the child attends the service.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(g)(h)&(i)

Twelve children's records were sampled and reviewed by the early year's inspector.

The sample twelve files reviewed showed that the entries were factual, consistent, and accurate.

The twelve children's records contained the following:-

- The name and date of birth of the child.
- The date in which the child first commenced in the service.
- The date on which the child stopped attending the service (where relevant).
- The name and address of the child's parent or guardian, and a telephone number where that parent or guardian (or a relative or friend of the parent or child) can be contacted during the hours of operation.
- Written authorisation / permissions for collecting the child.

- Details are /were recorded of any illness, allergy, or additional need(s) the child had, together with all the information relevant to the provision of specific care or attention.
 - The name and telephone number of the child’s registered medical practitioner.
 - A record of any immunisations the child has had or where applicable, a disclaimer.
 - Written parental or guardian consent was included to allow the child to have appropriate medical treatment if there was / is an emergency.
- (4) &(5) The person in charge advised and documentary evidence from file review indicated, that all relevant children’s records were kept for 2 years from the date a child stops attending the service.

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

- In the designated dining room, each child was given enough time to eat and enjoy their snack(s) and meal(s) without being rushed. The atmosphere during mealtimes was relaxed, with pleasant social interaction among the children and staff.
- The crockery, cutlery and drinking utensils used were suitable for the children’s ages and stage of development. Children were seated at a comfortable height in relation to table tops or trays (high and low chairs).
- The staff responded to children’s individual personalities, sensitivities and needs in relation to nappy changing, toileting and toilet training.
- On the day of the inspection, twenty children from the Baby room, Toddler room and Junior Pre-school room required nappy changing and were changed in a sensitive manner while having their dignity and privacy maintained. There were four designated nappy changing areas, with airtight sealable bins, and a supply of disposal aprons and gloves. Staff were observed chatting and talking to the child and explaining in advance the nappy changing experience.

- The older children had unrestricted access to the toilet and did not have to wait to use the toilet. Children were allowed to take their time during toileting. Staff encouraged and supported children to become more independent in toileting practices.
- Children were encouraged and supported to manage their own personal care appropriate to their own level of independence, and to develop self-help and personal hygiene skills. Children's hands were washed after nappy changing, toileting, after outdoor play and prior to meals and snacks.
- Staff allowed a child to sleep rest when tired and on demand. Staff recognised children's individual cues of tiredness indicating their need for sleep / rest. On the day of inspection, the five children in the Baby room had sleep. After the main meal twelve children in the Baby and Toddler rooms were observed sleeping.
- Staff responded to children cues quickly. Staff guided and supported children who needed more help.
- The Baby room had safe and comfortable spaces for toddlers or children not walking to lie, roll, creep, crawl, pull themselves up, learn to walk and to be protected from children who were more mobile.
- The service supported the children in forming and sustaining positive relationships with staff.

For example:

- assigning a key person to each child;
- showing respect for each unique child and developing their trust;
- being actively involved in children's play, where appropriate (initiating games, joining in when invited to by children);
- behaving in a way that creates a positive atmosphere (having frequent social conversations, joint laughter and showing affection);
- listening to the voice of the child as they communicate their needs, thoughts, and experiences both verbally and non-verbally, by reading children's cues, gestures, and body language;
- encouraging children to think critically, ask questions and respond to them in a way that promotes sustained shared thinking; nurturing and comforting children;
- using soft tones, the child's individual name, and getting down to their level and making eye contact.
- Visual aids (picture and word reminders) and instructions were displayed and used with the children to support their learning. The atmosphere in the learning environment was encouraging and unhurried. The children were supported to be confident about their identity and to have a strong sense of belonging, each day, while in the service.

- The service provided parents and guardians with daily information, including significant events or activities involving their child, for example, verbal communication at drop of and collection times, a social media instant messaging application, a newsletter, an individual daily diary or via profile scrapbook. The staff have day to day message and monthly planning boards, as aid memoirs for enhanced communication with parents and guardians.
- The children in the Baby and Toddler room had individual communication diaries showing details of sleep provisions, meals, nappy changing / toileting, special activities, and a child's likes, needs and preferences and general observations / comments. There were learning templates and developmental checklists showing the child's strengths, interests, and developmental care needs.
- Staff collated for each child a profile scrapbook 'my learning journal', showing the child's journey, the themes engaged in and samples of the child's work. A sample of the themes and activities with descriptions included chicks visit, caterpillar, planting, parades, baking day, handprints, seasons, festivals and occasions such as Father's Day.
- Older children advised the inspector of an upcoming outing to a wildland activity centre. There was evidence of older children's outings to a coffee shop and the cinema. There were visits to the pre-school from the farmer, fire brigade personnel and nurse.
- Staff adjusted the level of support provided to children depending on the child's abilities, allowing for children's partial participation and participation with support.
- In the playrooms, the children were observed to free play, at story time, at circle time, at construction building, connecting, at sensory play, at pretend kitchen / house with play accessories, and sorting stacking materials. The children painted, played games, puzzles, and insets. The children enjoyed playing with a selection of transport vehicles. They fed, and dressed baby dolls, played with small world furniture, little people, cuddly toys, and dolls and musical instruments.
- In the outdoor areas, the children were observed playing with sand, filling buckets/ shapes, and building sandcastles. The children played in the mud kitchen, making dinners of bacon and cabbage and ice cream. Children enjoyed riding on push cars, scooters, tractors, on rockers, slides and pushing wheelbarrows. The children enjoyed drawing chalk shadows of each other, doing the shopping and having fun at water play. The children enjoyed playing ball, playing houses, at construction play, climbing on activity centres/ tyres, running, chasing, sorting, and exploring for bugs and insects.
- There was access to enough varied materials and equipment, which was rotated to suit the seasons and changing programme. In the outdoor area there was a large secure storage shed, a large all weathered

sheltered area and four sun umbrellas. In the playrooms materials and equipment were arranged so that they were visible and readily accessible to promote independent access by the children. There were different interest areas provided, where equipment and materials of similar use were arranged and grouped together for example, puzzles, insets and games, small world items, houses, shop / kitchen, and dress up clothing.

- The staff listened to children in a caring, gentle way when they expressed emotions, and reassured them that it is normal to experience positive and negative emotions at times. The staff acknowledged and accepted children's feelings (positive and negative) and the relationships between children's actions and other's responses. On the day of inspection all the children were given choice on what to do next.
- The staff were observed helping children to find solutions, supporting them, and talking to the children in a variety of ways, discussing, questioning, modelling, and commentating, extending a child's activities and initiating games. The staff provided significant opportunities for the child to decide their play activities and experiences. Staff helped children to recognise and understand the 'rules' of being together with each other for example sharing, taking turns, solving problems together, and waiting for their turn.
- Staff responded to the children in a timely and appropriate way when they were crying or when becoming upset.
- Staff used positive strategies to support children's inclusion. For example, the inspectors noted that the staff acknowledged a child's engagement in an activity 'that is great' 'well done' and used questions such as 'what should we do next?', 'is there any other way to do this?', to allow children to critically think and explore.
- The staff supported children to enter social groups, and to learn to help and positively engage with other children. They encouraged and praised children for specific, positive, and appropriate behaviours. Children were given positive alternatives, rather than just being told 'no'. Children were supported in preventing, managing, and resolving conflict. Children could identify, name, and explore their feelings both positive and negative.

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

- There was a healthy eating policy. The person in charge advised that healthy eating was promoted within the service by visual aids, and adherence to best practice guidelines. There was a three-week menu on display, in the lobby.
- The meals were provided by the service and prepared and cooked on site by the designated chef.
- Between 9.30hrs to 10.00hrs, the children had their breakfast of cereal, toast, and milk.
- At 11.00hrs, the children had chopped apples, bananas, corn snack and milk to drink. Additionally, five of the children in the Senior Pre-school room had yogurts, crackers, cheeses, meat slices, fruit pieces and sandwiches supplied by their parents and guardians.
- Between 12.30hrs to 13.00hrs, the children had a hot lunch of pork stew, mashed potatoes, or pasta, which was cooked on site by the designated chefs.
- At 15:15hrs, the children were offered French toast, cooked on site.
- At 17.30hrs, yogurts and crackers were provided by the service.
- Cutlery and plates were offered for children’s snack / mealtimes.
- Clean and safe drinking water was at a low-level and accessible to children in each of the playrooms and in the outdoor play area.
- There was a designated chef preparing, cooking, and serving the service meals. Adequate quantities of food and suitable portion sizes were available for children. Nutritious meals and snacks were served at regular times but there was flexibility.
- Children had two meals, two snacks, and two food groups in each meal / snack. If a child declined the main meal a healthy alternative was offered.
- No child required formula feds. Staff were observed holding and comforting any child requiring a bottle.
- Perishable items from children’s lunch boxes were stored in the fridge.

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. Garda vetting was available for the registered provider, twelve childcare staff, two chefs and two adults over the age of 18 years on a childcare placement, but the date was > 3yrs for two of these staff members. The two vetting disclosures were not dated within the previous three years in adherence to with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

On the 26th of the June and the 8th of July 2024, the person in charge advised of the following -

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. Going forward all files will be reviewed annually to ensure adherence with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. Garda vetting for the two staff members, dated 26th of June 2024 and 3rd of July 2024, was submitted to the office of early years inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 23 has been adequately addressed.

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 specifying the address of the service, catering for a full day care service for 55 children at any one time, with an expiry date of 27th of March 2025, was available. The insurance covered

- public liability,
- personal accident,
- against fire and theft,
- outings,
- building.