

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015KK039		
Name of Service:	Johnstown Community Childcare Centre		
Address of Service:	Chapel Street, Johnstown, Co. Kilkenny		
Eircode:	E41 EH32		
Name of Registered Provider:	Sean Hennessy		
Service type:	Part Time, Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	27/03/2025		
No of pre-school children:	AM	10	PM N/A
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		

Description of service

Johnstown Community Childcare centre operates a part-time childcare service between 08:30 to 13:00 hours, An early childhood care and education (ECCE) service is operated between the hours of 09:00 to 12:00 hours Monday to Friday . The service closes for a week and a half at Christmas, a week at Easter and for 4 to 5 weeks from mid-July to the end of August.

The service operates from a purpose-built premises off Chapel street in the village of Johnstown in north county Kilkenny. The premises contains a spacious classroom, a sensory room, children’s toilet facilities and a designated kitchen area as well as an outdoor classroom and outdoor play area.

Staffing

There were five staff employed in the service. The registered provider does not work in the service. All five staff who work directly with the children in attendance 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 following regulations were selected for inspection, Regulations 9, 11, 15, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, and 28.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under the following regulations 15, 21, 22, 23, and 24.

As a result, the scope of the inspection included the classroom and outdoor area.

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 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) There was a designated person in charge on the day of inspection who facilitated the inspection. There was also a named person who was able to deputise as required.

(b) Both the designated person in charge and deputy designated person in charge were on the premises throughout the inspection. The staff roster demonstrated that the designated person in charge or named deputy designated person in charge were on site daily while the service was in operation.

(c) The inspector observed that there was a clear management structure in place in the service and each staff member was aware of their roles and responsibilities.

(2) Staff files for the five staff members employed to work directly with the children in the service were reviewed by the inspector and the following observations found.

- (a)(b) There were two validated references available in each of the five staff member's files from either a past employer or reputable source in the case of a person who had no past employers.
- (c) Garda Vetting certificates were available on file for each staff member working directly with the children. The registered provider demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d) Police vetting was not required as no staff member employed in the service at this time, had lived in a state other than Ireland for a period of longer than six consecutive months.
- (4) Certificates of accredited qualifications were available in each of the five staff members' files demonstrating that each staff member held a qualification ranging from Level 5 to Level 8 on the national framework of qualifications.

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*
- (4) Subject to paragraph (5), where a registered provider contemporaneously provides-*
- (a) a sessional pre-school service, and*
 - (b) a full day care service or a part-time day care service, or both, the minimum ratio of adults to children applicable for the duration of the sessional pre-school service in respect of the children attending that service shall be the ratio specified in paragraph (3).*

Compliance Information

- (1) The inspector observed that there was always an adequate number of adults working directly with the children in attendance.
- (2) There were 10 children present in the service with 4 staff members.
- (4)(a) During the ECCE session from 09:00 to 12:30 hours there were 10 children aged 2.5 to 5 years present in the service with 4 staff members.
- (b) From 12:30 hours to 13:00 hours 8 children were directly supervised by the same 4 staff members.

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.*

Compliance Information

(1)(a) to (i) On review of a sample of 12 preschool records available for children registered to attend the service, the inspector was assured that all particulars (a) to (i) were recorded in detail by the registered provider.

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 spacious classroom was observed to be carefully planned with defined interest areas and the inspector noted that the interest areas had been moved around since the last inspection. The classroom contained a home corner, kitchen area, performance area, a rest and relaxation area composed of soft child sized couches, a rug and bookshelf. All storage shelving was at child level and children were observed to easily access their toys and activities of choice which were stored in visually labelled containers, so children knew exactly where the toys they wanted were and knew where to return the toys after they had finished playing with them. The service was well resourced with a variety of materials, connective and manipulative bricks, blocks, magnets and shapes of varying textures and colours. Small animal and person figurines as well as ponies, cars and trucks were provided.

An appropriate and adequate number of child sized tables and chairs were provided both in the indoor classroom and the outdoor classroom.

There was a designated sensory room of the main reception area which had been created for a child to have some one-to-one time or a smaller activity group time to allow time for self-regulation or relaxation. The room contained soft materials and cushions and ambient sensory lighting.

The outdoor classroom was directly accessed via the back door of the classroom and was observed to be a wide passageway which led to the outdoor playground. The passageway had been adapted with a covered plastic roof and soft play surface. The outdoor classroom contained a “creation station” where the children enjoyed painting, messy and sensory play. The outdoor playground was grass surfaced with a large wooden house which contained a large sandpit that had a roll over deck cover, which when open allowed the children to step into the sand pit and when closed provided an alternative area for the children to play in during inclement weather.

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

All food was stored and prepared in the designated kitchen area. At 10:00 hours the children had snack time, and the inspector observed that a trolley with a platter of fruit, strawberries, blueberries, oranges, bananas, yogurt and crackers was served. All the fruit had been freshly washed and prepared. Children always had access to a drinks station, where they placed their individual drinks cups or bottles. Plates, bowls and cutlery were provided, and children were encouraged to serve themselves more of their favourite food if they wanted more.

Later the children attending the part-time service had another serving of food comprised of three food groups. The inspector observed that the staff worked in partnership with parents regarding children's food likes and dislikes and where a child required certain foods to be brought from home, this was arranged with parents and stored appropriately in the kitchen refrigerator.

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 keypad call system which staff could only access. All other visitors to the service could be observed approaching the service through the large clear windows and had to be authorised access by the staff. This minimised the risk of any unauthorised person from entering the building and minimised the risk of a child leaving the service unsupervised. The perimeter of the service was secured with a high block wall.

Infection Control:

The children and staff were observed washing their hands after using the toilet, messy play, outdoor play and prior to snack times.

Liquid hand soap and paper towels were available in the toilet facilities provided. There were two child sized toilets and handwash basins available to the children attending the service. There was also a designated nappy changing area and a designated staff toilet.

The children had access to face tissues for nose -blowing and were observed to be supported by staff to blow their noses into the tissues, disposing of the soiled tissue in a pedal operated bin, and to wash their hands afterwards.

Administration of Medication:

The staff were well informed of the service's administration of medication policy and the procedures to be followed if a child required anti-febrile medication or a prescribed medication while attending the service. On review of a sample of administration of medication forms the inspector observed that staff carried out procedures of administering medication in line with the service's administration of medication policy.

Two children who had diagnosed allergies had child centred health plans outlining signs and symptoms and the correct emergency protocols to follow. Staff were all aware of how to easily access the plans and each child's emergency medication which was safely stored and easily accessible in a cabinet on the wall out of reach of the children.

Safe Sleep:

There were two stackable beds available with appropriate bed linen to be placed in the quiet sensory room if any child wished to sleep during their time in the service. Staff were well informed of the service's safe sleep policy and of their roles in ensuring physical checks of sleeping children's colour, breathing and sleep positions were carried out and recorded every ten minutes.

Outings:

A suitable outings policy was available in the service for staff to follow if they decided to take an outing away from the service.

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.

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (3)(b) is retained for a period of one year from the date to which it relates.

Compliance Information

(1) The designated person in charge ensured that staff checked all children in and out of the service with the individual child's name time of arrival and departure recorded daily.

(3) The staff ensured that-

(a) No visitors could enter the premises without that person's entry being approved by a staff member or the registered provider.

(b) A visitors' book was maintained recording the entry of any persons other than those referred to in paragraph (3)(a).

The inspector was requested to complete the written record upon arrival at the service, detailing the date, name, contact number, reason for entry, name of person who approved access and exit to the service.

(4) The inspector observed on review of the visitor's record book had they record had been maintained for longer than one year.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 25 - First aid

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a person trained in first aid for children is, at all times, immediately available to the children attending the pre-school service.

(2) A registered provider shall ensure that a suitably equipped first aid box for children-

(a) is safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position on the premises, and

(b) is available to the children attending the pre-school service at all times.

Compliance Information

(1) There were four staff members employed in the service with current First Aid Responder (FAR) training.

The registered provider ensured that there were at least three staff members accredited with FAR training, present in the service for the ECCE session while the preschool children were in attendance.

(a)(b) A first aid box was available in the service, stored in clear view on a high shelf in the classroom.

The first aid box was observed to be adequately supplied and was always available to the staff for the children in the service.

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.

(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)(a) The designated person in charge demonstrated that a record of any fire drills carried out in the service was maintained. The last fire drill was recorded as having taken place on the 27 February 2025.

(b) Records of the maintenance of fire-fighting equipment and smoke alarms were maintained in the service. The last date of the annual service for the firefighting equipment was recorded as having taken place on the 26 November 2024 and for the smoke alarms were recorded as having taken place on the 14 January 2025.

(4) a notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was 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

The service's insurance certificate was displayed on the parent's notice board in the entrance hall. The certificate detailed insurance cover for a childcare service for up to 20 preschool children. The date of renewal for the insurance certificate was the 27 March 2025.