

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015MH081
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Johnstown Childcare Centre
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Johnstown, Gerrardstown, Navan, Co. Meath
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<b>Eircode:</b>	C15 EC61
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	John F Burke
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<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	03/03/2025
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	11	PM	0
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Meath Child & Parent Support Hub, Commons Road, Navan, Co. Meath C15 CP23
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	S. Taaffe
<b>Title:</b>	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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not Applicable.
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### Description of service

Johnstown Childcare Centre is a privately operated early years service situated in a rural setting in Co. Meath which is registered to accommodate a maximum of 22 pre-school children from 2 years to 6 years on a sessional basis. The service operates from 9.30am to 12.30pm from Monday to Friday for 38 weeks each year, participating in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme. Johnstown Childcare Centre is conducted from a single story premises with two rooms in operation, the main pre-school room and a smaller room used for circle time and indoor physical activities. A spacious outdoor play area is provided to the rear of the premises. The registered provider operates a second early years service nearby in Johnstown near Navan. School age children are not accommodated in the service.

### Staffing

Two core staff members work directly with the children in this service on a daily basis. The registered provider also employs a manager who coordinates the day-to-day operations of both early years services and who is present in this service when required. A further staff member who is normally based in the registered provider's other early years service is available to work in this service in a relief capacity in this service when necessary. A bus driver is employed to transport the pre-school children from and to designated pick-up points in Johnstown village before and after the session.

The registered provider does not work directly with the children 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/ 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 manager, staff members 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) One of the two core staff members was the designated person in charge of the service. The second core staff member or the manager deputise in the role of person in charge when required.

(b) The designated person in charge was present in the service when the inspector arrived unannounced at 9.20am on the day of inspection and remained on the premises for the duration of the inspection. The manager of both services arrived in the service shortly afterwards and remained on the premises for the remainder of the inspection.

A total of 6 staff files were reviewed, maintained in respect of the registered provider, the manager, the 2 core staff members employed in this service, a staff member who works in this service in a relief capacity, and the bus driver who transports children to and from this service on a daily basis.

(2)(a)(b) There were 2 written references available for the registered provider and 2 written, validated references available for the 5 staff members.

(a) Five written references were from past employers.

(b) Seven written references were from sources other than a past employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for the registered provider and for the 5 staff members. However, one of these vetting disclosures were not dated within the previous three years in adherence with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'. Please refer to the information outlined under regulation 23 of this report.

(d) International police vetting was available as required for the 1 staff member who had resided outside of the Irish jurisdiction for more than 6 consecutive months as an adult.

(4) The manager, the 2 core staff members employed in this service and the staff member employed in a relief capacity, all of whom who work directly with the pre-school children in the service, held a major award in Early

Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 – 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

### 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.*
- (3) 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.*

#### Compliance Information

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

(3) The adult to child ratio was correct in the service throughout the inspection.

The following adult to child ratio was observed when the highest number of children were present during the session:

- There were 11 children aged 3 years 1 month to 4 years 11 months being cared for by 2 staff members. The manager was also present in the service providing support to the children and staff members when needed.

### 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) The registered provider ensured a record in writing was available in respect of all 18 children currently attending the service and each form was found to contain the required information as specified in (a) to (j) in this regulation.

## 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*

### Compliance Information

(1)(a) The following are examples of how each child's learning, development and well-being was facilitated in the service:

#### Basic Needs of the Children:

- The staff members were observed engaging warmly and respectfully with the children during the session, responding to the children in an interested and engaged manner.
- Children brought their own healthy packed lunches and drinks from home to the service and the staff members sat and chatted with the children during snack time, encouraging conversation and extending interactions in a sociable manner. Two children chose to delay having their morning snack until later in the morning when they felt hungry and this was positively facilitated by the staff members.

- All children who were present on the day of inspection were toilet trained and the staff members were observed to be responsive to the children's cues should they need to use the toilet, with prompting, discreet supervision and assistance provided by the adults when required.
- During the inspection children were observed taking a break from activities, resting and relaxing on the foam matting and cushions provided at the library area.
- The staff members were observed displaying anticipation and positive responsiveness when children chose to change or opt out of activities. An example of this was demonstrated when a child chose to opt out of circle time and they were positively facilitated to select a preferred alternative activity instead.
- All children enthusiastically engaged in outdoor play during the inspection and were dressed appropriately in coats, hats, wellies and waterproof trousers, for the weather conditions. The children's outdoor clothing was removed promptly on their return indoors.

### Supporting Relationships around Children

- Child-led play was facilitated during the inspection as evidenced by children playing in different areas of interest and by being involved in various activities, including when the inspector arrived unannounced to the service. The staff members were observed following the children's lead and engaging in play and activities with the children at an individual, small group and large group level.
- Children's language development was supported through one to one interactions, group discussions, action and movement songs, and storytelling which were observed during the course of the inspection.
- The staff members were observed affirming and offering praise and encouragement to the children for their efforts and involvement in activities.
- The inspector observed that children's transitions were well supported with verbal strategies including tidy-up-themed songs used by the staff members to inform and prepare children for up-coming activities and movement. A pictorial display of the daily routine and activities was on display at the children's eye level in the pre-school room.
- Parents were provided with the opportunity to exchange information about their children informally with the staff members at drop off and collection times.

### Physical and material environment:

- The care room was set up in clearly defined interest areas which were equipped with a broad range of developmentally appropriate play materials to support children’s play and learning. The interest areas included a home corner; an arts and crafts area; a construction area; a puppet theatre; and a library area. Play equipment to support the development of the children’s fine motor skills, stored on open-fronted shelving units, were provided including jigsaws, wooden and plastic bricks, magnets, interlocking toys, stacking toys, threading equipment and peg boards.
- The library area contained a plentiful number of books to support the children’s language development and provide choice for storytelling.
- Sensorial play was facilitated. For example, children engaged in an activity using playdough during the inspection and sand play was facilitated in the outdoor area.
- Family photographs were on display in the service which enabled the children to maintain links and bridge the gap between the service and home.
- The service’s spacious outdoor play area was fully enclosed by fencing and boundary walls, with additional fencing in place to subdivide the area into two distinct spaces. The lower section which adjoined the rear of the premises was surfaced in concrete and in impact absorbent matting, with ride-on toys, a well-resourced sand table and an outdoor wooden kitchen with real hob, sink and microwave amongst the play equipment provided in the lower area. Steps lead up to a raised area which was mainly covered in natural grass. A range of equipment including a swing and slide set, fixed spring sit-on rocking toys, a wooden climbing frame, a sit-in wooden bus, a metal dome climbing frame, and plastic playhouse provided in this section to support the children to play outdoors.

### 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

The following are examples of the measures undertaken by the registered provider and staff members to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of the children attending the service:

### General Safety:

- The entrance doors were appropriately secured which prevented children from exiting the premises unsupervised and prevented unauthorised persons from gaining access to the service.
- The spacious outdoor play area was enclosed by boundary walls, fencing, hedging and latched gates to prevent unauthorised persons from gaining entry or a child from gaining unsupervised access to neighbouring properties, roadway or other source of danger.
- The warm water temperature in the sanitary accommodation did not exceed the recommended maximum water temperature of 43°C which reduced the risk of scalding for the children.
- Cleaning agents were stored safely on high shelving out of reach of children.

### Infection Control:

- Thermostatically controlled warm water, liquid soap and paper hand towels were provided for handwashing in the sanitary accommodation.
- The children were encouraged and gently reminded by the staff members to wash their hands before eating, after using the toilet and after messy play, with assistance provided by the staff members when necessary.
- Tables were observed to be appropriately cleaned before and following snacks.
- Up to date documented cleaning schedules were on display in the service.
- The outdoor sand pit was fitted with a secure lid to prevent contamination by animals and birds.

### Administration of Medication:

- Medications were stored out of the reach of children.
- The manager and staff members demonstrated their clear understanding and responsibilities in caring for a child with a specific health issue attending the service, including the use of a continuous monitor with readings transmitted electronically to the child's parents and responding to the parent's return electronic communication outlining any necessary intervention required to be undertaken when the child was present in the service.

### Fire Safety:

- The emergency exit doors were clear and unobstructed.

### Outings:

- The inspector was informed that children were not taken on outings from the service.

## Non-Compliance Information

### General Safety:

1. In respect of 1 staff member the service did not demonstrate compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years as a period in excess of 3 years had lapsed since this document was issued.
2. A blind cord was not secured in the room used for circle time and physical activities. This posed a safety risk for the children in attendance.

### Infection Control:

3. The children's snacks provided from home were not refrigerated on arrival to the service which posed a risk of bacteria multiplying in the meat and dairy produce provided.

## Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider stated the following corrective actions and preventive actions have been carried out:

### Corrective Action

#### General safety:

1. Updated Garda vetting has been applied for the one staff member who was out of date.
2. The blind cord in the additional preschool room has been attached and fixed to the wall.

#### Infection Control:

3. All preschool educators are now placing the children's perishable items from their lunch in the fridge when they arrive.

### Preventive Action

#### General safety:

1. Records have been made as to when all further Garda vetting will expire so that applications can be submitted in advance.

#### Infection Control:

3. Educators will continue the practice stated above.

## Supporting documentation submitted

### General safety:

- Photograph of the blind cord appropriately secured.

## Summary Comment

The inspector reviewed the corrective actions and documentation submitted by the registered provider after the inspection. The non-compliances found on inspection under Regulation 23, points 2 and 3 have been adequately addressed. However, the regulatory requirement has not been met in relation to point 1 as the registered provider has not submitted a copy of the renewed Garda vetting disclosure for the relevant staff member. This information was sought from the registered provider by email on 14/04/2025 and also in the CAPA response form which was sent to the registered provider on 02/05/2025 but an up-dated Garda vetting disclosure for this staff member has not been submitted to the Inspectorate as of 13/05/2025. This non-compliance remains outstanding.

## 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.*

### Compliance Information

(1) The service maintained accurate details of all children in attendance during the inspection. The children were entered as present in a roll book attendance record, noting each child's arrival and departure times.

(3)(a)(b) The service ensured that no person other than the children and their parents or guardians, employees, approved students or authorised visitors could enter the premises. A visitor's book was maintained and on arrival the inspector was requested to record her attendance in the service and the purpose of her visit.

### 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) A training certificate was available to show that the designated person in charge of the service held in-date first aid response (FAR) training and her scheduled attendance in the service for the duration of the session on a daily basis ensured that a suitably trained first aider was at all times immediately available to the children when the service was in operation. Additionally, documentation was available to show that the manager of both services was scheduled to attend FAR training on 22/05/2025 to allow for unexpected staff absence.

#### Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a)(b) The first aid box contained an insufficient supply of sterile wound dressings and sterile eye pads.

#### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider stated the following corrective actions and preventive actions have been carried out:

##### Corrective Action

(2)(a)(b) The first aid box has been updated with the items that were missing. The box will be checked regularly to make sure everything is up to date.

##### Supporting documentation submitted

- Supporting evidence has not been submitted by the registered provider in relation to Regulation 25.

#### Summary Comment

Supporting evidence in the form of receipts or photographs was sought from the registered provider in the CAPA response form sent to the registered provider on 02/05/2025 to confirm that additional first aid supplies have been provided in the service but this information has not been received by the Inspectorate as of 18/06/2025.

The registered provider has not provided evidence to show that the first aid box has been replenished. Therefore, the non-compliance found on inspection under Regulation 25(2)(a)(b) remains outstanding.

### 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.
- (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) A record was maintained of fire drills which had been completed in the service. Based on the records maintained and as reported by staff members, fire drills were carried out monthly.
- (b) A record was kept of the number, type and maintenance of the fire fighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises. The fire extinguishers were certified as having been serviced in August 2024 and the smoke detection system was certified as having been serviced in February 2025.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was conspicuously displayed in the premises.

### Part VI - Safety

#### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

#### Compliance Information

The registered provider had insurance cover in place for 22 pre-school children attending the service on a sessional basis. The policy showed that the service was insured from 28/03/2024 to 27/03/2025.