

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015MO080
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Name of Service:	McConville Park Community Playgroup Ltd.
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Address of Service:	Reek View Terrace, Westport, Co. Mayo
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Eircode:	F28 KT50
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Name of Registered Provider:	Joseph Carty
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	11/06/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	20	PM	No.
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Year's Inspectorate, TUSLA, Child and Family Agency, 2nd Floor, St. Mary's HQ., Castlebar, Co. Mayo
Inspection undertaken by:	B Lavin
Title:	Early Years Inspector

Authority to Inspect

The Tusla Early Years Inspectorate carries out inspections of Early Years Services under Section 58(J) of the Child Care Act 1991 (as inserted by Section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013).

Conditions if applicable	Not applicable
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Description of service

McConville Park Community Playgroup Ltd. is a non-profit, community-based sessional service located in a residential area of Westport in county Mayo. The service caters for children aged from 2 to 6 years of age between the hours of 09:00-12:00 hours. The premises are in a purpose-built section of a community centre. There is 1 large playroom with kitchenette, an office and sanitary facilities provided. The service has a large outdoor play area located to the side of the premises where children have access to outdoor play equipment.

Staffing

There are 3 adults working directly with the children in the service. The registered provider is not involved in the day-to-day operation of 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. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 15 Record of a preschool child.

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

(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 is a designated person in charge in the service and a named person is available to deputise as required.

(b) The person in charge was present in the service for the duration of the inspection.

(2) The records of three adults employed in the service were reviewed.

(a) Five of the required 6 written and verified past employer references were available in respect of the 3 adults employed in the service.

(b) One written and verified reference from a source other than a past employer was available.

(c) A Garda vetting disclosure was available for the adults three in the service. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every 3 years for the 3 adults.

(d) International police vetting was not required.

- (4) Evidence of the required qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education or equivalent was available on file for the three staff who worked directly with the children.

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) There were 3 adults working directly with 20 children on the day of inspection.
- The minimum adult to child ratios were provided on the morning of inspection in accordance with the required ratios considering the ages of the children and the length of time each child spent in the service as outlined below:
- Twenty sessional children aged between 3 - 5 years and 3 members of staff caring for the children.
- (3) The registered provider ensured that the minimum ratio of adults to children specified was maintained.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:

- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;*
- (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;*
- (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;*
- (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;*
- (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;*
- (f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;*
- (g) the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner;*
- (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;*
- (i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.*

(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-

- (c) an authorised person.*

Compliance Information

- (1) (a) to (i) The inspector's reviewed a random sample of 10 children's records. The records contained the required details as laid out under the Regulation.
- (3) (c) The required information was made available for inspection by the person in charge on request.

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

Basic needs:

- Drinking water was available to all children in individual beakers throughout the morning session.
- Children were observed eating their snack which consisted of fruit, yogurt, cheese and sandwiches which was provided by their parents/guardians. Children were supported during mealtimes with opening food items when needed. Independence was encouraged with self-help skills. Pleasant social conversation took place between the staff members and children during snack time.
- Children sat at tables and chairs which were appropriate for their height and/or stage of development.
- The privacy and dignity of each child was respected during toileting.
- A child's nappy was changed as necessary and in a timely manner.
- Appropriate rest facilities were available in the care rooms and children were observed spending time in this area for short periods of rest throughout the day.
- Sunscreen was applied carefully by the staff members and children were encouraged to wear their sun hats while playing outside.
- Children had easy access to the outside areas throughout the day and children moved freely between both indoors and outdoors.
- The adults working with the children were sensitive and responsive in promoting positive behaviours and supported children to find positive solutions to sharing toys, equipment and turn taking.

Supporting relationships

- The service supported the children in forming and sustaining positive relationships with staff.
- The staff were actively involved in children's play, where appropriate initiating games and joining in when invited to by children.
- The staff behaved in a way that created a positive atmosphere, having frequent social conversations, joint laughter and showing affection.

- The staff listened to the voice of the child as they communicated their needs, thoughts and experiences both verbally and non-verbally, by reading children’s cues, gestures and body language.
- Soft tones were used with the children, along with the child’s individual name, getting down to their level and making eye contact.
- The atmosphere in the learning environment was encouraging and unhurried.
- Staff guided and supported children who needed more help. Staff used positive strategies to support children’s inclusion for example using personal greetings, using the child’s first language, news of the day, looking at family photographs, choice board, visual routines chart and giving appropriate encouragement.
- Staff communicated with parents and guardians by sharing knowledge and observations of the child’s interests, strengths, developmental and care needs, approaches to learning, changes in their life and any other concerns at drop off and collection times, by phone and by text.

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:

Perishable food items within the children’s lunches were stored at room temperature and not in the service fridge. The children entered the service with their lunch provided from their parents/guardians at 9am. The lunch was consumed at 11.35am. This exceeded the 2-hour time limit for the consumption of perishable food items not stored in a fridge set by the Food Safety Authority of Ireland.

Infection Control:

Liquid soap was not available in the children’s sanitary area. The use of liquid soap supports effective handwashing. A shared hand towel was used by a number of children to dry their hands. This poses a risk of cross infection.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

Children's perishable lunch items will be stored in the service fridge. Staff members will ensure that all perishable items are stored in accordance with the Food Safety Authority of Ireland.

Infection Control:

The service will only use liquid soap and paper towels to wash and dry children's hands. A weekly check of sanitary supplies will take place to ensure supplies are maintained.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Documentation submitted to the Inspectorate.

Infection Control:

Documentation submitted to the Inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventative actions submitted by the registered provider have adequately addressed the non-compliance found on inspection.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures

- (1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of-*
- (a) any fire drill that takes place in the premises, and*
 - (b) the number, type and maintenance record of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.*
- (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 written record was available to demonstrate monthly fire drills completed in the service with the last fire drill completed on 06/05/2025.
- (b) Records were available in relation to the number, type, and maintenance of fire-fighting equipment and smoke detection system with the last annual service on 29/08/2024 and 19/04/2025.
- (4) There was evidence of the fire evacuation procedures setting out the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire in the playrooms and in the entrance lobby.

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 with an expiry date of 27/03/2026, was for a sessional service, for a maximum number of 22 children. The insurance covered the following,

- public liability,
- personal accident,
- insurance against fire and theft,
- buildings,
- outings undertaken as part of the service provision.