

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015RN028
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Name of Service:	Jack and Jill Community Playgroup
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Address of Service:	Main Street, Ballinlough, Co. Roscommon
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Eircode:	F45 K799
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Name of Registered Provider:	Aine Scally
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Service type:	Part Time, Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	12/06/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	22	PM	15
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Year's Inspectorate, Child and Family Agency, Government Buildings, Convent Road, Roscommon, Co. Roscommon
Inspection undertaken by:	A Kennedy
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

Jack and Jill community playgroup is in operation since 1996. It is managed by a voluntary management committee. It operates from the local community hall and consists of two playrooms namely Room A and Room B with a separate kitchen and sanitary accommodation for the children and staff.

It provides a part time preschool session from 09:00hrs to 13:45hrs and provides an Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) pre-school care session from 09:00hrs to 12:00hrs five days per week for 38 weeks of the year.

An outdoor play area is provided to the side of the premises.

Staffing

The registered provider does not work directly with the children and has employed a person in charge to operate the service. Four adults including the person in charge work in the service and hold a Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) from level 5 to level 8 in Early Childhood Care and Education. Two adults are also employed on the access and inclusion model (Aims). Two relief staff are available in event of staff absence.

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 person in charge and deputy 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*

(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 until 10:15hrs and the deputy person in charge facilitated the inspection as the person in charge had an prior engagement. The deputy person in charge 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. The staff were aware of who was the deputy person in charge in the absence of the designated person.

Eight staff files were presented to the early year inspector.

(2)(a) & (b) Sixteen of the sixteen written validated references, on file for the eight staff were from a past employer or from a source other than the past employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for the eight staff and the service did adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) One of the staff had worked outside the jurisdiction, for six months or more, while over the age of 18 years of age, and had the required police vetting for that jurisdiction.

(4)

Eight 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 eight staff

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 the inspection, the person in charge was on the premises until 10:00hrs and the deputy person in charge remained on site for the remainder of the inspection.

(2) On the morning of the inspection, there were 22 children present between 3-5 years There were five staff directly caring for these children until 10:15hrs and four staff directly caring for the children from 10: 15hrs.for the duration of the session

In the afternoon, of the inspection, there were 15 children present between 3 to 5 years.

There were four staff directly caring for the children.

(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.*

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 twelve records 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 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 received.
- Written parental or guardian consent was included to allow the child to have appropriate medical treatment if there was / is an emergency.

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

- The staff responded to children's individual personalities, sensitivities and needs in relation to toileting. The 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. It was advised on inspection that all children are toilet trained.
- 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 had plenty of opportunities to move themselves freely, to practice and improve their emerging skills, such as co-ordination and balance.
- The service supported the children in forming and sustaining positive relationships with staff.
For example, by:
 - 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 indoor and outdoor learning environments were encouraging and unhurried.
- The outdoor environment provided children with activities and opportunities for fresh air, and releasing energy (e.g., playing chase) physical exercise and play (e.g., jumping, running and climbing) and they also had opportunity for gardening, planting and digging.
- The children were supported to be confident about their identity and to have a strong sense of belonging each day while in the service.
- Children engaged in playing house / shop, matching cards, connecting, at construction, stacking, building, puzzle making, peg play, at dress up and role play, and at imaginative play.
- There was also circle and story time in the outdoor area.
- In the outdoor area the children were observed running, chasing, and playing with sand, building blocks and chalk.
- On speaking with staff, the inspector was informed that they verbally provided parents and guardians with daily information on their child's experiences in the pre-school including the child's likes, interests and preferences and play activities engaged in. This information was provided at collection times by text messages, by phone calls, and by email.
- 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.
- 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.
- The staff supported children to enter social groups, and to learn to help and positively engage with other children. The staff encouraged and praised children for specific, positive, and appropriate behaviours. The children were given choices on what to do next.
- The programme of care was flexible and guided by the children's choices. Children were supported by the staff during periods of individual and group-based activities, the staff sensitively supervised and intervened when necessary.

- 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 and activities.
- The staff provided significant opportunities for the child to decide their play activities and experiences.
- Staff used positive strategies to support children’s inclusion. For example, the inspector noted that the staff acknowledged a child’s engagement in an activity ‘that is great’ ‘well done’ and used open ended 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 children were given positive alternatives, rather than just being told ‘no’. The 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

- 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.
- The service had a healthy eating policy.
- At 11.05hrs, the children had their snack of sandwiches, wraps, brown bread, crackers, rice cakes, a selection of fruit pieces to include strawberries, raspberries, bananas apples, yogurt, and custards, provided by parents and guardians.
- Children’s drinks were available to allow the children the opportunity to ‘self-serve’.
- A refrigerator was provided in each room for the storage of perishable foods.

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 entrance door to the preschool and the external outdoor play area were secured so that children could not leave the area unsupervised and unauthorised persons could not enter the area.
- Fire doors were unobstructed.
- All cleaning agents were stored inaccessible to the children.
- Leads, cables, and flexes were secured and or inaccessible to prevent any trips or strangulation hazard.
- The playroom temperatures were thermostatically controlled, and maintained between 18°C to 22°C.
- Thermostatically controlled warm water not exceeding 43°C to facilitate hand washing was available to facilitate hygienic hand washing.
- Heavy equipment and furnishings were anchored appropriately.
- The playroom windows were high and thereby inaccessible to the children.
- All toys and play equipment were observed to be safe and in good condition.
- There were no pits or ponds in the outdoor area to cause any risk of injury to the pre-school child.
- The staff clearly identified to the early year's inspector, the drop off and collection procedures for children.
- A system was in place to ensure that daily records of attendance were kept for all the children, attending the pre-school.

Infection Control:

- The inspector observed that the children washed their hands regularly throughout the inspection to include, prior to consuming snack, after outdoor play and after toileting.
- Suitable hand washing facilities were provided with supplies of liquid soap.
- The playrooms and sanitary accommodations had foot operated lidded bins.
- The pre-school rooms and sanitary areas were well ventilated with the windows open throughout the inspection.
- Tabletops were cleaned immediately prior to children's snack break.

Administration of Medication:

- It was advised during the inspection that presently there is no child on medication.
- Through discussion with the inspector, the staff demonstrated that they were aware of the correct procedures for the administration of medicines.

Fire Safety:

- Monthly fire drills were carried out on the premises to ensure the children were familiar with the procedure in event of an emergency.
- All exit routes from the service were free from obstruction during the inspection.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. A section of the wooden radiator cover in preschool room A was in poor condition and damaged with the potential risk of injury to a child.
2. There was no step ladder provided at the nappy changing unit to enable a child to access the unit with the potential risk of injury to a staff member having to lift the child onto the unit.
3. A wooden shelf on a unit in one of the toilet cubicles off preschool room B was loose with the potential risk of injury to a child.

Infection Control:

4. The nappy changing unit was ripped and worn proving difficult to effectively clean.
5. In the sanitary areas, there was evidence of dust and debris on the ceiling mechanical ventilation covers and the light fittings.
6. The medium density fibreboard (MDF) was absent on a wooden unit in one of the toilet cubicles off preschool room B which could prove difficult to effectively clean.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

The person in charge submitted a written response on 8th of August to advise

General Safety:

1. The radiator cover has been repaired.
2. A new changing table with steps has been purchased and is located in the sanitary accommodation.
3. The wooden shelf on the unit in one of the toilet cubicles has been secured.

Infection Control:

4. The changing table has been replaced with a new table.

5. All areas have been given a deep clean. The mechanical vent and light fittings have been added to the cleaning schedule.
6. The wooden unit in one of the toilet cubicles has been covered to enable effective cleaning.

Supporting documentation submitted

General safety

Photographic evidence was submitted of

1. The repaired radiator cover in preschool room A.
2. The new nappy changing unit with steps provided.
3. The wooden shelf repaired in the toilet cubicle off preschool room B.

Infection Control:

4. Photographic evidence of the new changing table.
5. Photographic evidence of the cleaned mechanical vents and light fittings and documentary evidence that these have been included on the risk assessment.
6. Photographic evidence of the replaced covering on the wooden unit in the toilet cubicle of playschool room B.

Summary Comment

The Early Years inspectorate have assessed the actions taken and evidence submitted and deems it to comply with Regulation 23.

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) Six staff working in the pre-school service had evidence of a current first aid responder qualification, thereby ensuring a person trained was immediately available.
- (2)(a) The first aid box was suitably equipped in an easily accessible conspicuous position.
- (b) The first aid box was readily available, with content items within date.

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) Arrangements were in place to record monthly fire drills. The last documented fire drill was dated 14th of May 2024.
- (b) A record of the number, type, and maintenance of firefighting equipment in the service was on file. Records indicated that the last annual maintenance for the firefighting equipment was dated 24th of October 2023.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in each room.

Non-Compliance Information

- (1)(b) Records of the annual servicing by a competent person, of the smoke alarm was not available.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The person in charge submitted a written response on 28th of June to advise that the annual servicing of the fire alarm was carried out on 23rd of October 2023.

Supporting documentation submitted

Documentary evidence was submitted of the service record of the smoke alarm.

Summary Comment

The Early Years Inspectorate have assessed the action taken and evidence submitted and deems it to comply with Regulation 26.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

There was evidence of certification of adequate insurance which had an expiry date 27th of March 2025.

The insurance for 42 pre-school children was for a part time service, included the following: -

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