

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015SO021				
<b>Name of Service:</b>	Jollytots Playgroup				
<b>Address of Service:</b>	Srananagh, Sooeey, Co. Sligo				
<b>Eircode:</b>	F52 DE42				
<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Patricia Gorman				
<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional				
<b>Date(s) of Inspection:</b>	01/04/2025				
<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>AM</td> <td>25</td> <td>PM</td> <td>16</td> </tr> </table>	AM	25	PM	16
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate, TUSLA Child & Family Agency, Markievicz House, Barrack St, Sligo, F91 XC84
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	L Costello and M Farrell
<b>Title:</b>	Early Years Inspectors
<b>Authority to Inspect</b>	
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

Jollytots Playgroup is a community run full day care early years service, which was first established in 1995. It is based beside a church in a rural village of Sooey in County Sligo. The service operates from a two-storey building with five care rooms. The Wobbler room was not in operation on the day of inspection. The service also provides a service for school age children. The registered provider is a committee member and does not work directly with the preschool children.

### Staffing

There are a total of eight adults working in the service. The six adults that work directly with the preschool children hold an award in early childhood care and education at level 5 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) or above. One adult is employed as a cook and one adult is employed to work with the school aged 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/ safety and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under sections of regulations 9, 10, 11, 16, 19, 22, 23 and 32. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

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.

### Additional Information

This unannounced inspection was carried out in response to a feedback and concern received by the Early Years Inspectorate in March 2025.

### Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish 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.*

*(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.*

*(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.*

*(7) A registered provider shall ensure that all employees, unpaid workers and contractors are appropriately supervised and provided with appropriate information, and where necessary training, including in relation to the following:*

*(a) the policies, procedures and statements of the service specified in Schedule 5;*

### Compliance Information

(1) (a) (b)

There was a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required. Both staff were present on the day of inspection.

(1) (c)

The service demonstrated a clear management structure with room leaders identified, deputy person in charge and person in charge.

(2) (a) (b)

The records of all eight adults employed in the service were reviewed.

Twelve written and verified past employer references and four verified references from another source in the absence of a past employer, were available in respect of all eight adults employed in the service.

(c)

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

(d)

International police vetting was available for one adult employed in the service that had lived outside the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

(3)

These vetting procedures were carried out prior to the adults working directly with the pre-school children.

(4)

Six adults had attained major awards in Early childhood care and education at level 5 or above on the national framework of qualifications, or qualifications deemed by the Minister to meet the regulatory requirement.

### Non-Compliance Information

(2) (d)

It is acknowledged that one adult had a police clearance certificate however did not have the required international child protection certificate as required.

(7)

The service did not demonstrate that all staff members were provided with the appropriate information and training in relation to policies, procedures and statements of the service specified in Schedule 5.

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

In a written response the registered provider stated:

#### **Corrective and Preventive Action**

(2) (d)

The ICPC has been applied for Management is now aware this specific clearance is needed going forward.

(7)

An in-depth staff handbook, containing all our core policies is in production. We are going to set aside specific time to go through this with each staff member when they arrive. We will be including policies/ policy development in our support and supervision meetings with staff going forward.

### **Supporting documentation submitted**

- Documentary evidence submitted to the inspectorate.

### **Summary Comment**

The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider and evidence provided adequately addressed the non-compliance found on inspection. This regulation is now compliant.

### **Part III – Management and Staff**

#### **Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service**

*A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.*

### **Compliance Information**

The following policies were reviewed and found to be compliant:

- (b) Complaints policy.
- (c) Policy on Administration of Medication.
- (e) Policy on Managing Behaviour.
- (j) Policy on Accidents and Incidents.
- (l) Policy on Healthy Eating.

### **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 were 5 adults working directly with 25 children on the inspectors' unannounced arrival to the service. A review of a sample of attendance records showed that an adequate number of adults worked directly with the children during service hours of operation.

(2)

The minimum adult to child ratios were provided on the morning of the unannounced 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:

- Senior Preschool: 1 adult cared for 7 children aged 3 to 4 years of age.
- Junior Preschool: 1 adult cared for 6 children aged 3 years of age.
- Toddler Room: 2 adults cared for 6 children aged 2 years to 3 years of age.
- Playschool Room: 1 adult cared for 7 children aged 4 years to 5 years of age.

After the children attending sessional services had left the service at noon, all 16 children remaining and 4 staff were present in the dining room for lunch.

(8)(a)

The registered provider ensured that there were always at least two adults on the premises when children were present in the service as evidenced in a sample of attendance records reviewed.

### Part IV – Information and Records

#### Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

*(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:*

- (a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;*
- (b) details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services;*
- (c) details of the adult:child ratios in the service;*
- (d) the type of care or programme provided in the service;*
- (e) the facilities available;*
- (f) the opening hours and fees;*
- (g) the policies, procedures and statements the service is required to maintain in accordance with Regulation 10;*
- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*
- (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

*(3) A record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection on the premises, and the documents and records referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall be open to inspection whether on the premises or elsewhere, by an authorised person.*

*(4) A record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection on the premises by a parent or guardian of a child but only in respect of information concerning that child.*

#### Compliance Information

(1)

The following records were reviewed on the day of inspection and deemed to be compliant.

- (a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor.
  - (b) details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services.
  - (c) details of the adult:child ratios in the service.
  - (d) the type of care or programme provided in the service.
  - (e) the facilities available.
  - (f) the opening hours and fees.
  - (g) the policies, procedures and statements the service is required to maintain in accordance with Regulation 10.
  - (h) Up to date attendance records were available in each of the care rooms.
  - (j) Details of medication records were available for review.
  - (k) accidents and incidents were recorded in a book that was stored in a central location.
- (3) These records were made available on the day of inspection to the inspectors.
- (4) The service demonstrated that parents were made aware of any accidents or incidents occurring in the service involving their child or administration of medication by evidence of parent signature on a sample of records reviewed.

### Non-Compliance Information

- (i) The staff attendance record for the Toddler room had not been completed for the day of inspection or previous day and it was unable to confirm the staff present on these dates.

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

#### **Corrective and Preventive Action**

In a written response the register provider stated:

- (i) A reminder has been sent to all staff that it is as important to sign the staff into the books as it is to sign the children in. Management will do intermittent checks to ensure this is being completed

#### **Supporting documentation submitted**

Photographic evidence of attendance records submitted.

### Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider adequately address the non-compliance found on inspection. This regulation is now compliant.

### 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)

- Meals and snacks were provided at regular intervals for the children. On the inspectors' arrival to the service, children from the Toddler and Senior Preschool care rooms had joined together in the dining room and were eating a mid-morning snack. The children from the Toddler room were eating yogurt and chopped fruit provided by the service and the older children were eating snacks provided from home. The staff informed the inspectors that children and staff from two care rooms join for snacks for socialisation and where possible for siblings to meet each other during the day. At lunch time during the inspection the children ate celery soup made in the service in the dining room.
- Older children who were toilet trained were encouraged to use the toilet by themselves when they felt that they needed to. Younger children in the Toddler room in the process of toilet training were reminded by staff to use the toilet. Supports and help were provided for children by staff where needed. The adults advised the inspectors that the children's nappies were changed regularly in response to the children's individual needs, and this was observed in practice in the Toddler room.
- The adults were observed to prompt and supervise the children to wash their hands before eating at lunchtime and after playing outdoors and using the toilet with appropriate levels of support provided for the younger children in the service. Bibs were used to protect clothing of the younger children when eating soup in the dining room at lunch time.

- There was a separate sleep room off the Toddler room for the younger children to sleep in when they needed to. Stackable beds were provided for older children. There was a structured rest/sleep time for the children in the Toddler room after lunch and all the children attending the room slept on the day. The care rooms had rest areas with soft furnishings for children to relax in when they wanted to.
- The children were observed to move around freely in the care rooms during the inspection. The children in all care rooms spent time playing outdoors in their respective outdoor play areas during the inspection.
- The staff were observed to manage the children’s behaviour consistently during the inspection with praise and encouragement provided to the children. The staff encouraged the children to share and take turns with toys and intervened quickly when a disagreement arose between children in the Toddler care room. The staff member got down to the children’s level to speak with them in a sensitive way about being “gentle” and comforted a child who was upset. The staff let the children know when transitions between activities were approaching to prepare them and help make transitions smooth. For example, in the Playschool room a doorbell playing different chimes and tunes was sounded before lining up to go outside to meet parent/guardians at the end of the sessional service.
- The staff in the Toddler room showed the inspector how they used communication books to support communication with parents. The books contained information on the younger children’s days in the service including information on food and drinks they had, sleep, nappy changes and play activities that they had engaged in.
- Family tree walls with photographs of children and their families and birthday walls with children’s birth dates were displayed in the care rooms creating links between the service and home. Paintings and drawings made by the children were also displayed on care rooms walls.
- There were four care rooms in operation at the time of the inspection. The care rooms were resourced with different toys and play equipment depending on the children’s ages. The toys and play items were positioned at low levels to allow children to access them and choose play activities and were arranged in defined interest areas such as home corners, doll areas, small world toys and construction areas. The care rooms had selections of tabletop activities and age-appropriate books for the children to look at. Messy play was facilitated for example with play dough equipment in the Toddler care room and a messy play table for activities such as water play. A large plastic activity table was set up in the Playschool room with rice and coloured egg-shaped toys reflecting the Easter theme being explored in the care room. The

children in the Toddler room were observed to play a game with coloured sensory tiles that had a range of different textures with the staff member using it as an opportunity to teach the children different colours.

- The care rooms had access to different enclosed outdoor play areas with varieties of play equipment such as ride on toys, large plastic blocks to build structures, waterwalls, balance beams and low-level climbing systems. Seating was provided in outdoor areas including a bench in an outdoor shelter that was observed to be used by the children to rest on when they needed to. Before lunch, children from three of the care rooms played together in the outdoor area at the front of the premises with balls, on ride on toys and on a climbing system supervised by staff.

### 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

The service operates a full day care service and meals are cooked freshly onsite daily. The service has a healthy eating policy in place. There is a menu plan that includes a variety of meals such as breakfasts, and lunches of potato cakes, homemade soups and brown bread, baked potato and turkey wraps. A variety of dinners for example beef casserole, chicken casserole, pesto pasta and fish fingers and mashed potato are provided. Children attending the sessional service had the option to bring in a snack from home. Snacks observed on the day included a variety of fruit, yoghurts and sandwiches. The service also provided snacks of fruit platters, yoghurts and cheese and crackers.

The cook onsite explained to the inspectors how food is prepared for children with allergies and intolerances. Water and milk are served with main meals, and each room has a water station to support children to keep hydrated throughout the day. The children’s drink containers were provided from home and the staff were observed to supervise children ensuring that the children selected their own container to drink from.

### 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 main gate to the service operates a three-pin release ensuring children cannot exit the area unsupervised.
- The main entrance was secure on the inspectors unannounced arrival to the service.
- All cleaning products in the care rooms were stored out of the reach of children.
- The kitchen was inaccessible to the preschool children.
- Highchairs were provided with harness safety straps fitted in good condition.
- Leads and flexes were secure and inaccessible to the preschool children.
- The outdoor perimeter was secure with waste bins stored out of reach of children.
- Blind cords on windows were observed to be appropriately secured.

### Infection Control:

- The materials and resources throughout the service appeared clean, with cleaning schedules displayed in each room. The dining room was observed to be clean and staff were observed cleaning tables and sweeping floors after each meal. The staff informed the inspectors that deep cleaning of care rooms was carried out as needed and a deep clean of toys was observed to be carried out during the inspection by a designated staff member.
- Warm water, liquid soap and paper towels were provided for effective hand hygiene.
- Child friendly hand wash posters with picture instructions were placed above the wash basins. Children were observed to wash their hands prior to mealtimes and after messy play or using the toilet.
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### Administration of Medication:

- On discussion staff members were knowledgeable about the service procedures in relation to medication administration.
- Medication administration was observed to be recorded in line with the service policy. Care plans for children requiring medication were developed in conjunction with parents and medical staff where relevant.

### Safe Sleep:

- Standard cots with mattress containing safety standard information and waterproof covers were provided for younger children to sleep in. Safe sleep guidance was displayed on the walls of the sleep room. The air

temperature of the sleep room was recorded at 18.1°C during the inspection within the required safe sleep temperatures. The staff made observations of sleeping children including their colour, position and breathing patterns at least every 10 minutes and recorded their findings in writing.

### Fire Safety:

- Fire doors remained unobstructed on the day of inspection.
- Fire emergency evacuation plans were displayed in all the care rooms.

### Non-Compliance Information

#### General Safety:

1. A rodent monitoring box with a sign stating “do not touch” was accessible to children in a low-level cupboard in the Playschool room.
2. A window in the Toddler nappy changing area, beside the nappy changing unit with steps, opened outwards without restriction with the potential for a child to leave the area posing a risk to the preschool child.
3. The door on a toy kitchen in the Toddler room was broken with a potential pinch point that cause an injury to a child.

#### Infection Control:

4. One of the staff members was observed to proceed to change a child’s nappy without using the aprons provided as an infection control measure. The service’s nappy changing policy on display in the nappy changing unit stated that aprons should be worn by staff when changing children’s nappies.
5. A low-level open bin with no cover or foot pedal control mechanism was provided for the disposal of waste and posed a potential infection control risk.

### Action submitted by the Registered Provider

In a written response the registered provider stated:

#### Corrective & Preventive Action

#### General Safety:

- (1) The box has been removed, and pest control have been informed that these boxes cannot be accessible to preschool children.
- (2) A new safety latch has been installed and all windows will be checked regularly.
- (3) The door has been repaired. Staff have been informed to report maintenance issues.

#### Infection Control:

- (4) The nappy policy has been signed of by all staff members. Refresher training will be ongoing.

(5) The bin has been replaced. Bins will be checked regularly.

### Supporting documentation submitted

#### General Safety:

- (1) Documentary evidence submitted.
- (2) Photographic evidence submitted.
- (3) Photographic evidence submitted.

#### Infection Control:

- (4) Documentary evidence submitted.
- (5) Photographic evidence submitted.

### Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions submitted adequately address the non-compliance found on inspection. This regulation is now compliant.

## Part VIII - Notifications and Complaints

### Regulation 32 – Complaints

- (1) A registered provider shall ensure that the complaints policy of the service specifies-
- (a) the procedure to be followed by a person for the purposes of making a complaint in relation to the service,
  - (b) the manner in which such a complaint shall be dealt with, and
  - (c) the procedures for keeping a person who makes such a complaint informed of the manner in which it is being dealt with.
- (2) A registered provider shall ensure that-
- (a) a record in writing is kept of a complaint made to the provider in respect of the pre-school service, and
  - (b) the complaint is duly dealt with in accordance with the provider's complaints policy.

*(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall-*

- (a) include the nature of the complaint and the manner in which the complaint was dealt with, and*
- (b) be open to inspection on the premises by an authorised person.*

*(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (2)(a) is retained for a period of 2 years from the date on which the complaint has been dealt with.*

## Compliance Information

(1) (a) (b) (c)

The service's complaints policy outlines the procedures to follow in making a complaint, informs how the complaint will be dealt with and how the complainant is kept up to date with the outcome of the complaint.

(2)(a)

Written records were kept of complaints made to the registered provider in relation to the service.

(2) (b)

The records show that the services complaints policy was followed by the service in relation to these complaints.

(3) (a)

Written records on file in the service available for inspection included the nature of the complaint and how the complaint was addressed by the service.

(b)

Records were made available for inspection by the person in charge on the premises by the inspectors' request.

(4) From discussion with staff and records available showed that information was kept for 2 years from the date on which the complaint has been dealt with.