

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2016MO002
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Name of Service:	Stacks of Fun Pre & After School
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Address of Service:	Cooslughoga, Cong, Co. Mayo
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Eircode:	F31 TF34
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Name of Registered Provider:	Julia Stack
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	25/03/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	15	PM	N/A
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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, Early Year's Inspectorate, 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

This privately owned sessional service is located in the village of Cong, in a rural area of south county Mayo. The service is registered to cater for children aged from two to six years of age and currently provides a morning session from 08:50-11:50hrs. The service is provided from a dedicated section of the registered provider's home. There is one indoor playroom and sanitary facilities. Outdoor play areas exclusive to the service are located to the side of the premises.

Staffing

There are three staff employed in the service including the registered provider who works directly with the children. In addition, a relief staff worker is available if required.

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

The inspection was unannounced and focused on an examination of compliance under regulations:

9 Management and Recruitment

11 Staffing Levels

15 Record of a Preschool Child

19 Health, Welfare and Development of Child

23 Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child

28 Insurance.

These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report. 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 registered provider, 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) The registered provider is the designated person in charge in the service and a named person is available to deputise as required.
- (b) The registered provider was present in the service for the duration of the inspection.

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

- (a) Eight of the required eight written and verified past employer references were available for four adults employed in the service.

- (b) Not required because the adults employed in the service had references from past employers.
- (c) A Garda vetting disclosure was available for four adults working 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) Not required because no adult working in the service had lived outside of Ireland for a period exceeding six months as an adult.

(4)
Four 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 Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) to meet the regulatory requirement.

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 three adults working directly with fifteen 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:
Fifteen sessional children aged between 3-4 years and three 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 reviewed a random sample of ten children's records. The records contained the required details as laid out under the Regulation.

(3) (c) The required information was made readily available for inspection in the service by the registered provider 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 day.
- 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.
- Children sat at tables and chairs which were appropriate for their height and/or stage of development.
- The staff were observed sitting at the child's level and chatted in a respectful manner.
- The privacy and dignity of each child was respected during toileting.
- Appropriate rest facilities were available in the care room and children were observed spending time in this area for short periods of rest throughout the morning session.
- The adults working with the children were sensitive and responsive in promoting positive behaviours and supported children to find positive solutions to sharing toys and equipment and turn taking.
- Children had plenty of opportunities to move themselves, to practice and improve their emerging skills, such as co-ordination and balance. The children enjoyed time in the outdoor play area.

Supporting relationships

- The staff members demonstrated warmth and sensitivity in their interactions with the children. Staff were observed providing comfort to a child when they hurt their finger. The staff member offered reassurance and communicated using soft gentle tones.
- Staff supported children to engage positively with one another and the children were encouraged to engage in play activities that required turn taking and sharing. Staff members were heard encouraging children to be mindful of the feelings of those around them which promoted an ethos of friendship and working together.

- The service provided parents and guardians with daily information, including significant events or activities involving their child, for example, verbal communication at drop off and collection times and through a messaging service.
- The staff spent time listening to the children's news and special family occasions and it was apparent that the staff knew the children and their families well.

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:

- An electronically operated system was in place at the entrance gate to monitor the safe entry and exit of the children to and from the preschool.
- The outdoor areas were secured with fencing and gates to protect the children within.
- Medication and cleaning agents were stored in a secured area out of reach of the children.
- The blind cords were appropriately secured to the windows throughout the service.
- Internal doors were appropriately secured to prevent children from accessing unsafe areas and the outdoor areas unsupervised.

Infection Control:

- Warm water was available in all hand washing basins with temperatures ranging from 30.9°C to 35.9°C.
- Paper towel, liquid soap and lidded bins were available at the hand basins and sanitary areas in the service.
- The service was maintained in a clean condition.
- Perishable food items in the children's lunches were stored in the service fridge.
- Tabletops and work surfaces were cleaned with designated cloth towels/disposable paper towels and disinfectant spray.
- Adequate supplies of disposable tissues were readily available in the playrooms.

Administration of Medication:

- On the day of inspection, no child was on medication. Through discussion with the inspector the staff demonstrated that they were aware of the correct procedures for the storage and administration of medicines.

Fire Safety:

- The emergency exit route was observed to be free from obstruction during the inspection

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 27/03/2025, was for a sessional service, for a maximum number of 15 children. The insurance covered the following,

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