

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2021CC003
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Name of Service:	Macroom Family Resource Centre, St Josephs Preschool, St Josephs Services
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Address of Service:	St Josephs National School, Chapel Hill, Macroom, Co. Cork
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Eircode:	P12 RW14
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Name of Registered Provider:	Seamus O’Laoire
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	08/12/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	17	PM	n/a
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Department, Child & Family Agency, Hospital Grounds, Coolnagarrane, Skibbereen, Co Cork P81 PD78
Inspection undertaken by:	M. O Reilly
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	N/A
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Description of service

Macroom Family Resource Centre, St Josephs Preschool first opened in 2021 and is a registered community based early years sessional service that caters for children from aged three to six years and attending the Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme (ECCE).

Opening hours are from 09:00 to 12:30 hours each day Monday to Friday.

Macroom Family Resource Centre, St Josephs Preschool operates from the ground floor of a two-storey building situated on the grounds of St Josephs National School. The service is located in the centre of Macroom town. The service consists of, an entrance hall, one playroom, adequate number of adult and children's toilet facilities. An area in the playroom has been suitably cornered off to provide a kitchenette and administration area. The children have access to the national school yard for outdoor play in rotation with the various classes in the national school.

Staffing

There were 7 adults associated with the service. There were three childcare staff that worked directly with the children including the person in charge, a deputy and one staff member employed under the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM). The registered provider and childcare supervisor are office based in the sister service that is also located in Macroom town. The staff who work directly with the early years children all hold a recognised qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education. There was a third level student on placement in the service on day of inspection. There was a bus driver associated with the service who transports some of the children by bus to and from the sister service each day.

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/ premises and facilities. 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 named 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.

(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 was a named person in charge and a deputy available to deputise as required.
 - (b) The person in charge and the deputy were present on the premises on day of the inspection.
 - (c) There is a clear management structure in place in the service.
- (2)
- Documentation was assessed in relation to the requirements of Regulation 9 for seven adults including the named registered provider. The following records were available for the 7 adults:
- (a) Of the required 14 references, 8 references were from previous employers with the required records of validation on file.

(b) Of the remaining references, 6 references were from another source other than a previous employer with records of the required validation on file.

(c) A Garda vetting disclosure was available on file in respect of the 7 adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Processed police clearance was available for 1 staff member who had resided outside the jurisdiction for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months.

(4)
There was evidence that the 3 staff members that work directly with the children in the service held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education, or an equivalent qualification, as listed on the National Framework of Qualifications. There was a third level student on placement that was present in the service on day of inspection.

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) thereof at that reference number is satisfied.

particular reference number 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.

Compliance Information

(1)
The person in charge ensured that there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children on day of the inspection.

(3)
During the period of inspection, the ratio of staff to children was maintained as per the regulations and an adequate number of adults were working directly with the children.

There were 17 children aged between 2 years 8 months and 6 years present in the sessional service with 3 staff in attendance. There was one third level student on placement that was present in the service on day of inspection. The adult child ratio was correct.

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) to (i)

A sample of 12 children’s registration forms were reviewed and all were found to contain all of the elements of information as required by Regulation 15 (1) (a) to (i) inclusive.

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

- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis.*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis.*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

Compliance Information

(1)

(h) The attendance of each child on a daily basis was recoded on an online application that indicated the arrival and departure time to the service each day.

(i) A weekly staff roster was maintained that indicated the names of the staff in attendance, the arrival and departure times each day.

(k) The service had records detailing any accidents or incidents that had occurred in the service on an online application.

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

- The staff members were calm and relaxed whilst facilitating play opportunities and carrying out caring duties. Only low tones were used, and good eye contact was observed with the children during one-to-one engagement.
- The staff members were observed to work well together and the children were observed to be familiar with the routine.
- The service promoted healthy eating and the food provided by the service for the mid-morning snack was observed to be healthy and nutritious. The children had easy access to their water bottles which were stored at child height and allowed the children to help themselves to a drink when they felt thirsty.
- The mid-morning meal was observed to be a social occasion, as the children chatted freely in a relaxed environment. The staff sat with the children whilst they ate and were offered appropriate assistance by the adults, for example, the children were given plates and cutlery as required.
- Children's toileting and hygiene needs were promptly and sensitively attended to. The independent use of the toilet by the children was encouraged and supported as appropriate by the adults. The children were supported and encouraged prior to eating, post toileting, messy play and outdoor play.
- Staff helped children to recognise and understand sharing and waiting their turn and working together as a group as seen on day of inspection when children were involved in singing songs in preparation for the Christmas concert that was taking place the next day. The children were observed sharing the experience, which fostered the children's confidence in communicating in a group setting and promoted socialisation. The children's language skills, emotional, cognitive and social skills were all enhanced during this group activity.

- Staff were observed to interact in a caring manner with the children building their confidence and communication skills within the setting. During observed tabletop activities, the children were supported and encouraged by the staff, who acknowledged their efforts and achievements.

Physical and Material Environment

- The premise was found to be clean and bright and the openable windows allowed for natural light and ventilation.
- The playroom was furnished with an adequate number of tables and child sized chairs, and fixed open shelving displaying the range of play materials and equipment in an accessible way to the children.
- The layout of the room promoted the independent access to all the materials to foster children's autonomy and freedom of choice.
- The playroom afforded children the ability to move freely, as they participated in various activities, such as art and crafts, imaginary play and tabletop activities.
- The room was laid out in a thematic style to encourage and entice the children's interest to play, socialise and explore.
- The children's need for rest, relaxation and comfort was furnished with soft matting and seating as the rest area. The children were able to access this rest area as they chose for play or quiet time.
- There were multiple tabletop activities to encourage fine motor skill play such as, jigsaws, shape sorters and small construction items. Wall displays included the children's art works, pictures of the children and their families on the family wall.
- The children were observed appropriately dressed while playing outdoors in the school yard which they have access to in rotation with the classrooms in the national school.
- The national school has recently developed an outdoor play space beside the preschool. It is envisaged that the preschool will have access to this outdoor play area in rotation with the junior and senior classes attending the national school. There is a cement path leading to this new outdoor play space that has a large flat surface area with a combination of an all-weather and bark mulch surface. The work is almost complete and it is planned that the preschool will have access to this new outdoor play space early in the New Year.

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 provided all food items and the children had access to their own water bottle while the service was in operation.
- Healthy, nutritious food were observed being eaten at the mid-morning snack such as a selection of sliced fruits that included apples, bananas, kiwi and grapes served on a plate at each group table for the children to freely pick and choose under the supervision of staff. The children were also given the choice of buttered cream crackers, water biscuit and crème cheese.
- Perishable food items were stored in the service fridge located in the kitchenette area of the playroom.
- The children were provided with appropriate cutlery and crockery at snack time.

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:

- On the inspector's arrival at the service, the main entrance door was found to have been secured and was maintained secure when not in use.
- There were no cleaning agents accessible to the child.
- The first aid box was appropriately stored and inaccessible to children.
- The emergency fire exit door was unobstructed.

Infection Control:

- Handwashing by the children was observed before mid-morning snack, after toileting, messy play and outdoor play. Liquid soap and disposable paper towels were in place.
- Tables were observed to be sanitised before snack time.
- The premises was maintained in a clean and hygienic condition. The openable windows allowed for natural light and ventilation.
- Personal waste including used tissues and all cleaning waste was appropriately disposed of in foot operated pedal bins in the service.

- The children had access to a sufficient number of toilets and wash hand basins. A supply of liquid soap, paper towels and thermostatically controlled hot water were available in the children's toilet facility.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

- There was no thermostatically controlled hot water and the water pressure was very low in the wash hand basin in the adult toilet on day of inspection. The low water pressure and lack of thermostatically controlled hot water in the wash hand basin impeded the staff from washing their hands properly therefore increasing the potential risk of cross infection while in the service.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control:

- In the corrective and preventative response (CAPA) received, it was stated that, prior to the inspection, the service had already noted the plumbing issues and had brought the issue up with the school principal. A plumber was called by the principal of the national school where the preschool service is located to review both water issues in the wash hand basin in the adult toilet. There is now thermostatically controlled hot water and the flow of water is adequate in the wash hand basin in the adult toilet. Both issues are now adequately addressed. The service will continue to take note of maintenance issues as they arise and deal with them in a timely manner.

Supporting documentation submitted

Infection Control:

- Photographic evidence of email sent to school principal informing of the water issues in the service wash hand basin in the adult toilet.
- A copy of the maintenance record to record issues/equipment that need to be repaired or replaced in service going forward.
- The written response from the service stating that non compliances have been addressed is accepted as evidence.

Summary Comment

- Correspondence forwarded to the Early Years Inspectorate was examined and deemed to meet the requirement of Regulation 23, Infection Control, of the Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

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) The registered provider did ensure that there were staff available at all times with appropriate first aid responder (FAR) training. The FAR certification on file indicated that two staff held current up to date training.

(2)

(a) The first aid box was safely stored out of children's reach in the service. The first aid box was stored in an easily accessible position on the premises

(b) The fully equipped first aid box was available at all times to adults if in the event that a child may require treatment.

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 of monthly fire drills carried out was available and indicated that the last fire drill took place on the 13 November 2025.
- (b) A record of the number, type and maintenance record of firefighting equipment was maintained. It was recorded that the fire equipment was last serviced on 13 May 2025 and the emergency fire alarm system was last tested and serviced on the 15 August 2025.
- (4)
The fire evacuation procedure for the service which contained details in relation to the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

An up-to-date insurance certificate was available to indicate that up to 18 children were insured to attend the service. The expiry date was 28 February 2026. The records detailed the name and address of the premises and details regarding public liability cover, fire, theft, buildings, and outings cover.