

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2023LK001		
Name of Service:	Joani's Preschool		
Address of Service:	Gibbonstown, Kilmallock, Co. Limerick		
Eircode:	V35 PA09		
Name of Registered Provider:	Joani Hargrow		
Service type:	Sessional		
Date(s) of Inspection:	08/05/2025		
No of pre-school children:	AM	10	PM N/A
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Early Years Inspection Services, 2 nd Floor Estuary House, Henry Street, Limerick		
Inspection undertaken by:	M Riordan		
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		

Description of service

Joani's Preschool is a private sessional service that commenced operations in September 2023. It is situated in Gibbonstown, Kilmallock, Co. Limerick, within a rural setting. The facility operates from Monday to Friday and has the capacity to accommodate 11 children, aged between 2 and 6 years.

The service is housed in a custom-designed, stand-alone building located at the rear of the registered provider's residence. It offers a dedicated pre-school room, a spacious indoor basketball court, designated sanitary facilities both indoors and outdoors, and an enclosed outdoor play area adjacent to and behind the premises.

Staffing

The registered provider is the owner/manager of the service. Relief staff are available if required. A second person is available to assist close to the service if needed in an emergency. All adults who have access to the children have the required childcare qualifications.

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/ 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 registered provider 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) The registered provider was the designated person in charge of operating the service and was present on the day of the inspection. There was a named person available to assist in an emergency if needed.

(b) During the period of the inspection, the registered provider was present, and the staff roster indicated that this person was available on the premises each day.

(2)(a) Two written and validated references from past employers were available for the registered provider, relief staff and for the assistant in an emergency.

(b) All references were from past employers, and references from other reputable sources were not required.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures received from the National Vetting Bureau of An Garda Síochána were available for the registered provider and her assistant. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Police vetting was available for the registered provider who had resided outside the jurisdiction for a period of time.

(4) The registered provider held an appropriate qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education.

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.

(8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-

(c) a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that, where the person in charge operates the service single-handedly, a second person familiar with the operation of the service and in a position to provide assistance to the person in charge in operating the service is, at all times, within close distance of the service and available to attend the service to assist the person in charge in the event of an emergency.

Compliance Information

- (1) The registered provider ensured an adequate number of adults were working directly with the children at the service.
- (3) On the day of the inspection there were 10 preschool children present with 1 adult. The adult child ratio was correct.
- 8(c) A second person, familiar with the service and with the children, was close by and could be called to attend the pre-school in the event of 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, and*

Compliance Information

BASIC NEEDS:

The service adhered to a healthy eating policy, advising parents to provide nutritious snacks for their children each day. On the day of inspection, children's lunches included sandwiches, bread rolls, a variety of fruits, crackers, and cheese. Children's drinks were stored outside their bags and were accessible at all times, both indoors and outdoors.

Indoors, children had unrestricted access to toilets situated adjacent to the pre-school room, equipped with hot water, liquid soap, and paper hand towels for handwashing. A nappy changing facility was also available if required. The facility included a disability access bathroom. Recently, an additional outdoor toilet facility was added, simplifying supervision of children using the bathroom while outside.

Tissues and wipes were readily available to children, with all waste disposed of properly in foot pedal-operated, lidded bins. A playhouse under the stairs, furnished with soft floor mats, cushions, and books, provided an attractive space for children to rest and relax if tired during the session. Furthermore, an indoor basketball court was accessible to the children and was located adjacent to the pre-school room.

With an extensive, well equipped outdoor space, children had opportunity for prolonged periods outdoors every day.

PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

The service operated within a large, well-designed classroom, featuring a range of developmentally appropriate, well-resourced interest areas for the children, such as a construction area, home corner/imagination play area, and a rest and relaxation reading area. All play materials and equipment were visibly organised and easily accessible to the children on open low-level shelving. A sensory tray filled with sand offered opportunities for sensory development and messy play. Low-level tables and chairs were used for various tabletop activities.

Educational posters with colourful charts displayed information at children's eye level on the walls. A large family wall showcased photographs of each child's family on a family tree mural.

Adjacent to the pre-school room was a large indoor basketball court, where children had access to ride-on toys, bikes, scooters, dress-up clothes, and basketball nets and balls.

The recently extended outdoor play area provided space for more active play opportunities. The yard and garden were secure with fully enclosed fencing and hedging. Children had access to swings, slides, a playhouse, picnic benches, climbing frames, and a timber castle. A pirate ship encouraged imaginative play. Various water features were available outside, with rainwater collected in a tank for messy play. Gardening and planting activities took place, with numerous plants and flowers growing in individual pots. A large pergola recently added to the service provided a sheltered space when needed. Additionally, a hen hutch at the rear of the garden offered opportunities for children to learn about and appreciate the care of animals and birds.

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 was trained as a first aid responder, and her certificate was in date until the 31 October 2026.

(2) The registered provider ensured that a suitably equipped first aid box for children-

(a) was safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position in the main pre-school room of the service.

(b) was available to the children attending the pre-school service at all times.

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) Fire drills took place on a monthly basis. The most recent fire drill took place on the 30th April 2025.

(b) All fire extinguishers and smoke alarms were serviced on an annual basis. The most recent check was carried out on the 31st of August 2024.

(4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were displayed in the main pre-school room in the premises.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider had a current insurance certificate, which outlined that adequate insurance was available for up to 11 children to attend the service. The insurance cover commenced on the 28 March 2025 and was due to expire on the 27 March 2026.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-

- (a) of sound and stable structure,*
- (b) safe and secure,*
- (c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated*
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

Compliance Information

- (a) The building appeared to be of sound and stable structure both internally and externally and no obvious defects were noted on inspection.
- (b) The premises appeared safe and secured. The outdoor area was well secured with steel fencing and gates surrounding the perimeters of all outside areas, thus preventing any unauthorised access to or exit from this area of the service.
- (c) All areas were well lit by natural light and by artificial light when needed. There was no evidence of mould, mildew, stale smells, stuffiness or condensation.
- (d) The areas outside were all well maintained, and routine cleaning schedules were in place for all internal and external areas.
- (e) There were an adequate number of toilets available in the service for both the number of children and adults at the service.