

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2023MO002
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Junior Junction Preschool
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Unit 1 Pound Lane, Swinford, Co. Mayo
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<b>Eircode:</b>	F12 N768
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Rachel Hanahoe
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<b>Service type:</b>	Part Time, Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	06/01/2026
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	15	PM	11
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate, TUSLA, Child and Family Agency, 2nd Floor, St. Mary's HQ., Castlebar, Co. Mayo.
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	M Farrell
<b>Title:</b>	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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not Applicable.
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### Description of service

Junior Junction Preschool is privately owned and is registered to provide parttime and sessional services to children aged between two and six years of age. The service operates from 08:30 - 13:30 hours. The premises is in a section of the ground floor area of a two-storey commercial unit building. The premises has been adapted for childcare service provision. There is a large playroom with a small quiet, sensory room located off it, a kitchen, office and sanitary accommodation in the premises. The service has direct access from the rear of the building to an enclosed outdoor space used solely by the service.

### Staffing

There are five staff working in the service including the registered provider who works directly in the service, relief staff and staff employed through the Access and Inclusion Model scheme.

### 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 registered provider, 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.*

*(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 in the service and there was a named person to deputise in her absence.
- (b) The deputy designated person in charge was present on the inspector's unannounced arrival at the service and was present throughout the inspection. The designated person in charge was also present at times during the inspection but was not working directly with the children. The attendance records showed that the designated person in charge or deputy were present in the service during opening hours.
- (2) Discussion with the staff and review of records found that there were five adults working in the service at the time of the inspection including relief staff. The following vetting documentation was available for the staff:
- (a) Two written validated references from past employers particularly the most recent employer for the five staff members.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all five staff members. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting for staff members every three years.
- (d) International police vetting documents was available as required for one staff member who had lived outside of the State for longer than six months as an adult.
- (4) Evidence of the required qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education or equivalent was available on file for the five staff members who worked directly with the children.

### 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.*

*(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) An adequate number of adults worked directly with the children attending the pre-school service during the inspection. There were 3 adults working directly with a maximum of 15 children during the morning and 3 adults provided direct care to 11 children during the afternoon of the inspection.
- (2) Part-time services were provided following the morning session with 3 staff directly caring for 11 children. The minimum required adult to child ratios of 1:8 for children aged between three and six years of age were maintained during the provision of the part-time service.
- (3) During the sessional service in the morning, the minimum required ratio of adults to children were adhered to in the service as 3 adults cared for a maximum of 15 children on the day. Review of records found that a maximum of 21 children attended sessional services and were cared for by 3 adults.

### 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)

A random sample of ten records of children who currently attend the service were reviewed by the inspector and the information required under the regulation was available in writing.

(3) (c)

The required information was made readily available to the inspector by the designated person in charge on request.

### 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

Staff members informed the inspector that the children bring in enough food from home for two meals during the day which was stored in the service's refrigerator on arrival. On the day, the service had delayed opening due to icy weather, and the children ate their snack later than usual during the sessional service seated at tables in the playroom supervised by the staff. The children were observed to enjoy a range of healthy and nutritious foods such as sandwiches, wraps, cheese, yogurts and a range of fruit. Children's lunchboxes were adequately stocked with healthy foods and there was enough food remaining for the afternoon snack for the children that stayed in the service for parttime care. The staff informed the inspector that information on the service's healthy eating policy was provided to parents at enrolment.

Each child had an individual drink container that was accessible and available to them throughout the day.

### 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 entrance door was secured on the inspector's unannounced arrival to the premise and the inspector was admitted by staff following production and review of identification documents. The staff used a side entrance for accessing the service and there was a third external door at the rear of the premises used to access the outdoor play area. The doors were secured when not in use to prevent children from leaving the service unnoticed and prevent people accessing the service without authorisation. The toys and play equipment were in good condition and appropriate for the age and developmental stages of the children playing with them under adult supervision. Blind cords on windows in the playroom were secured with safety devices. The kitchen door was secured to prevent access by the children. Cleaning products were stored out of reach of children. The staff undertook daily risk assessments in the service and kept up to date written records of these assessments. The weather was extremely cold on the day of the inspection and a management decision had been taken in relation to safety following risk assessment to delay opening the service until 10:00 hours. The staff risk assessed the outdoor area during the sessional service and found that the ground cover was very icy in places and posed a safety risk to children. A decision was made by the staff not to use the outdoor area on the day in view of the safety risk.

##### Infection Control:

The staff were observed to frequently clean down surfaces after use for example tables after group work and mealtimes. The staff kept written up to date records of cleaning and disinfecting procedures undertaken in the service. The staff placed emphasis on hand hygiene and prompted the children at key times to wash and dry their hands for example before eating, following using the toilet and messy play activities. Warm water and liquid soap were used to wash hands with paper towels available and used to dry them. The staff supervised the children when washing their hands and disposing of the paper towels used for hand drying in the foot pedal operated bins provided. On arrival to the service, the children were observed to place their lunch boxes containing perishable food items into the refrigerator supervised by the staff. Boxes of tissues were accessible by the children at low levels and staff prompted children to clean their noses when needed and dispose of the tissue in the bins.

### Administration of Medication:

None of the children required medication to be administered to them during the inspection. During discussion with the inspector, the staff showed awareness of safe procedures for administration and storage of medication. Care plans developed in consultation with children's parents were in place where needed for children who may require medication to be administered while in the service.

### Safe Sleep:

Stackable beds were available in the service for children to sleep on if they were tired. The service was operating shortened hours on the day of inspection and no child was observed to sleep during the inspection.

### Fire Safety:

The emergency exits and escape routes were observed to be free from obstruction during the inspection. The staff checked the escape routes daily and kept written records of their findings in the service.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

*(1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.*

*(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-*

*(a) no person other than-*

*(i) pre-school child attending the service,*

*(ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,*

*(iii) an employee, or*

*(iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and*

*(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.*

### Compliance Information

- (1) All the children in attendance during the inspection were checked in and out of the service by an employee. Written and electronic records were available in the service of the checking in and out of the children by the staff.
- (3) (a) The deputy designated person in charge approved the entry of the inspector following review of identification documents.
- (b) Attendance details for the inspector were recorded in a visitor book which contained records for previous visitors to the service.

### 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) Two staff members held up to date First Aid Responder (FAR) training certificates. At least one staff member with FAR training was present in the service when children were present and available to provide first aid if needed.
- (2) (a) There was a suitably equipped first aid box stored in a conspicuous place at a high level in the playroom. The first aid box had adequate supplies for the number of children attending.
- (b) The first aid equipment was readily available if needed for a child.

### 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) Written records of the monthly fire drills undertaken in the service were kept by the staff. Records showed that the last fire drill was undertaken on the 4 December 2025.
- (b) Records were available of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the service. The records showed that the firefighting equipment was last serviced on the 30 September 2025 and the smoke alarms were last maintained on 11 November 2025.
- (4) Notices of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire with maps of escape plan were clearly 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 insurance certificate for the provision of parttime services for maximum of 22 children was displayed in a hallway in the service.