

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2023MO002			
Name of Service:	Junior Junction Preschool			
Address of Service:	Unit 1 Pound Lane, Swinford, Co. Mayo			
Eircode:	F12 N768			
Name of Registered Provider:	Rachel Hanahoe			
Service type:	Part Time, Sessional			
Date of Inspection:	14/11/2023			
No of pre-school children:	AM	4	PM	1
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Year's Inspectorate, TUSLA, Child and Family Agency, 2nd Floor, St. Mary's HQ., Castlebar, Co. Mayo.			
Inspection undertaken by:	M Farrell			
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

Junior Junction Preschool is registered to provide parttime and sessional service 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 that has been adapted for childcare service provision. There is a large playroom, office, kitchen, storeroom and sanitary accommodation in the premises. The service has direct access to the rear of the building to an enclosed outdoor space for the sole use of the service.

Staffing

Two staff including the registered provider work directly with the children in the service.

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 announced and focused on the area of governance/ health, welfare and development of child. 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, 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) There was a designated person in charge and a named adult to deputise in her absence.
 - (b) The designated person in charge was available on the premise throughout the inspection. A sample of attendance records viewed showed that the designated person in charge and the deputy were present in the service whenever it was in operation.
- (2)
- It was confirmed by the person in charge that there were two staff members working in the service. The following documents were available on file or not required for the two staff:
- (a) Two written references from past employers, in particular the most recent employers for both staff.
 - (c) Vetting disclosures from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána for the two staff.
 - (d) International police vetting documents for one staff who had lived in a different state for more than six months as an adult.
- (4)
- Evidence of the completion of a major award at Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) level 5 in Early Childhood Care and Education or an equivalent qualification was available for the two staff members.

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.

(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) On the morning of the announced inspection there were two adults working directly with four children in the service.
- (2) Two adults were available and provided direct care to the child who remained in the service following the session to avail of parttime services on the day of the inspection.
- (3) The registered provider ensured that the minimum ratio for sessional service of 1 adult to each 11 children aged from 2 years and 6 months to 6 years was adhered to with 2 adults working directly with 4 children on the day of the inspection. A review of a sample of attendance records found that the registered provider ensured that an adequate number of adults worked directly with the children.
- (8) (a) Two staff members were present in the service during the inspection. The staff attendance records sampled by the inspector found that two staff members were recorded as present during service operation hours.

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)

The staff arranged appropriate activities throughout the day to meet the children needs. The children ate at a mid-morning meal of food provided from home including sandwiches, crackers, fruit and yoghurt. Individual drink containers were provided for each child set up in a drink station on a low-level windowsill. The children helped themselves to their drinks when thirsty promoting their independence. At mealtime the children sat in groups at tables with staff who chatted to them while supervising them and helping them when needed. A child availing of parttime services was given choice as to when they wished to eat a second time during the inspection.

The children who were able to use the toilet by themselves were supported to do so. Some children wore nappies, and the staff changed the nappies when needed in response to the children's individual needs. The staff wore aprons and gloves when changing nappies and spoke to the children while doing so involving them in the process. Care was taken with the children's appearances and aprons were provided to protect children's clothing during messy play activities. Children were prompted by staff to clean their noses with tissues when needed and to cough into their elbows.

The staff incorporated outdoor play into the daily routine that was displayed on the playroom wall. One outdoor activity on the day involved water play at a plastic table with water that had been warmed by a staff member before use and bubbles. Three children enjoyed the activity playing with a staff member, filling and emptying recycled plastic cartons. The children ran about on the artificial grass outdoors, stopping at times to listen to sounds such as road machinery nearby. When playing inside, the children moved around freely in the playroom without restriction. There was a rest area available to the children in one corner of the playroom with soft furnishings including bean bags that was used for children to relax in for example at story time.

Staff were warm in their approaches and interactions with the children and showed familiarity with their individual interests. The children were reminded of the service's rules in simple language as and when needed. Coloured sand timers were used with good effect to help the children transition from one activity to another.

The playroom was laid out in defined interest areas and the children were observed to move from one play area to another as they chose. There was a farm area reflecting the rural countryside surrounding the town the preschool was located in. Children enjoyed playing with toy tractors and round plastic bales of hay, moving them from one space to another. Other children made “dinner” in the home corner for one of the staff “cooking” dry cannellini beans in the toy metal pots provided. One of the children wore a chef’s hat during the cooking play activity. The staff member used the activity as an opportunity to develop counting skills, for example asking the children to count how many food items they needed. Opportunities for messy play were accessible to the children with playdough and shape rollers/cutters set up at a table. The staff had planned a colour mixing activity for the session in line with the week’s theme of colours. The children engaged enthusiastically with the activity that involved using pipettes (droppers) to mix different colours in containers for example yellow and blue to create the colour green. The staff also used the activity as an opportunity to show children how it is important to take turns and let each child have an opportunity to have a go at mixing colours of their choosing. Low level and open shelving were used to display toys allowing children to select toys for play and to replace them after use. A wall family tree display with photographs of the children and their families provided a link between the service and the children’s homes.

An electronic communication system was in use to supplement verbal information given by staff to parents/guardians when collecting their children. The staff used the system to record photographs of the children for parents to access for example engaging in the colour mixing play activity on the day. Each child had a learning journal recording information on their progression and learning in the service. The journals contained information on the children’s favourite things such as food, place and colours and their special interests which helped the staff in settling the children into the setting. A large black book recorded photographs of groups of the children taking part in different activities and celebrations including celebrating Halloween dressed up in themed costumes and carving pumpkins in the service. The staff had templates displayed on the walls of the playroom providing details of their daily curriculum plans, short-term and long-term curriculum plans including planned events such as taking part in “pyjama day”.