

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2023WH001		
Name of Service:	Juniper Autism Service T/a Sundancers		
Address of Service:	Unit 7 Castlepollard Shopping Centre, Castlepollard, Co. Westmeath		
Eircode:	N91 RX24		
Name of Registered Provider:	Sarah Mulligan		
Service type:	Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	21/11/2023		
No of pre-school children:	AM	16	PM NA
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla, Child and Family Agency, SAP Office, St. Loman's Campus, Mullingar, Co Westmeath		
Inspection undertaken by:	C. O' Connor Hughes		
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

This service provides an Early Education and Childcare programme to children. The hours of operation are 09:00 to 12:00 on a Monday to Friday basis. The afternoon session is not in operation. The age range of children attending the service is 2 to 6 years.

The Early Years Service is located in an adapted unit at the Castlepollard Shopping Centre, Co. Westmeath. The service consists of a large pre-school room and kitchen/office. An outdoor play area is available adjacent to the pre-school service.

Staffing

The deputy designated person in charge and two staff members were working directly with children. The designated person in charge facilitated the inspection and attended the closing meeting.

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/ 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.

Additional Information

27 November 2023

An immediate action notice was issued to the Registered Provider in respect of Regulation 15 (i) Record of pre-school child.

28 November 2023

A response was submitted by the Registered Provider and accepted by TUSLA Early Years Inspectorate.

Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the designated person in charge, deputy designated 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*

(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 designated person in charge and a named person to deputise were available in the service.

(b)

The designated person in charge was present for the duration of the inspection.

(2)(a)

Two written validated references were available from past employers in respect of the staff members.

(b)

Not applicable as references were available from a previous employer.

(c)

Garda Vetting disclosures were available in respect of the staff members.

(d)

Police vetting was not required as no staff member had lived outside the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

(4)

The staff members held a major award at Level 5 to Level 8 in Early Childhood Care and Education on the National Framework of Qualifications.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.

Compliance Information

The following policies were reviewed and the content was found to be in keeping with the requirements of Regulation 10.

- Statement of Purpose and Function
- Administration of Medication Policy.
- Infection Control Policy.
- Behaviour Management Policy.
- Fire Safety Policy.
- Healthy Eating Policy.

Non-Compliance Information

1.The accident and incident policy reviewed did not contain the required information in keeping with the requirements of Regulation 10.

- Measures to be taken in the service to prevent accidents and incidents.

- The procedures to be followed when an accident or incident involving a pre-school child occurs while the child is attending the service.
- The policy did not include the steps that are to be taken to contact the parent or guardian of the child or the emergency services if necessary.
- The policy clearly defines how a record should be shared with the parent or guardian of the child to whom it relates.
- The policy sets out how notifiable incidents will be informed to the Early Years Inspectorate.
- A risk assessment is taken following an incident/accident occurring in the service.

2. The following policies were not available in the service.

- Risk Management policy.
- Outdoor Play policy.
- Staff absence policy.
- Toileting policy.
- Settling in policy.

3. Evidence to show that all staff had reviewed the updated policies and agreed to their implementation was not available.

4. The policies and procedures on the day of the inspection noted the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Registration of School Age Services Regulation 2018.

The designated person in charge subsequently submitted the policies and procedures underpinned by the Child Care Act 1991 Child Care Regulations 2016 to the Early Years Inspector.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

1. Accident & Incident policy has been reviewed and updated in accordance with the requirements of regulation 10.

- Measures to taken in the service to prevent accidents and incidents.
- The procedures to be followed when an accident or incident involving a pre-school child occurs while the child is attending the service.
- The policy did not include the steps that are to be taken to contact the parent or guardian of the child or the emergency services if necessary.

- The policy clearly defines how a record should be shared with the parent or guardian of the child to whom it relates.
- 5. The policy sets out how notifiable incidents will be informed to the Early Years Inspectorate.
- 6. A risk assessment is taken following an incident/accident occurring in the service.

All policies to be regularly reviewed by person in charge, with input from the staff - yearly (sooner if changes are needed).

2. A risk management policy, outdoor play policy, staff absence policy, toileting policy and settling in policy are attached.

Policy documents will be cross checked to ensure comprehensive required policies are in place and available.

3. Please see attached evidence all staff have reviewed, understood and agreed to the implementation of the updated policies and procedures.

Staff will be included in policy review, yearly where they will be signed off and agreed for implementation.

4. Policies have been double checked to ensure proper Regulations and Acts details are recorded (Already submitted).

All policies and procedures are checked to ensure they are underpinned by the Childcare Act 1991 and Childcare Regulations 2016.

Supporting documentation submitted

Policies and Procedure.

Summary Comment

Evidence submitted and reviewed by the Early Years Inspectorate met 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)

The minimum ratio of adults to children was exceeded during the inspection.

(3)

There were sixteen children attending the service supervised directly by three staff members.

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)

In a review of twenty child enrolment records information relating to (a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f) and (g) was available in respect of the children attending the service.

(h)

Fourteen child records held information in respect of immunisations.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(f)

A detailed health care plan was not available for a child with a defined medical condition.

(1)(h)

There was no record of immunisations documented in respect of six children.

(1)(i)

Ten children attending the service did not have written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment in the event of an emergency.

An immediate action notice was issued to the Registered Provider in respect of Regulation 15 (i) Record of pre-school child on the 27 November 2023.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

15(1)(f)

A detailed care plan was completed by the parents/lead educator and emailed to inspectorate on 22 November 2023.

Manager to ensure a detailed care plan is completed before the child with a defined condition starts in the pre-school service.

(1)(h)

Immunisation documents were provided by the parents.

Manager to ensure immunisation documentation is provided before a child commences with sundancers.

If there is a case where a parent is unwilling to provide immunisation records parent must sign a disclaimer form. All registrations to be double checked before child starts in the preschool service.

(1)(i)

Ten written parental consent forms for appropriate medical treatment in the event of an emergency were completed by parents (emailed to inspectorate).

Manager to ensure registration forms are completely filled before a child commences in the preschool service.

Supporting documentation submitted

Written documentation.

Summary Comment

Evidence submitted and reviewed by the Early Years Inspector met the Regulatory requirement.

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 service:

- (a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;*
- (b) details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services;*
- (c) details of the adult:child ratios in the service;*
- (d) the type of care or programme provided in the service;*
- (e) the facilities available;*
- (f) the opening hours and fees;*
- (g) the policies, procedures and statements the service is required to maintain in accordance with Regulation 10;*
- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*

(j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;

(k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.

Compliance Information

(1)

The service kept and maintained written records of information in relation to the service in accordance with Regulation 16 (1)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(g)(h)(j) and (k).

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 17 – Information for parents

A registered provider shall ensure that a parent or guardian of a child proposing to attend the service is provided with the information referred to in subparagraphs (a) to (g) of Regulation 16(1).

Compliance Information

A parent handbook was available for review.

Non-Compliance Information

The parental information available was underpinned by the Child Care (Pre-school Services) (No 2) Regulations 2006 and did not contain all the necessary information in respect of 16 (1)(a) to (g).

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Sundancers parent handbook has been reviewed and updated to include 16(i) (a) to (g).

Parent handbook to be reviewed pre-enrolment to ensure all relevant information is included.

Supporting documentation submitted

Parents handbook.

Summary Comment

Evidence submitted and reviewed by the Early Years Inspector met the Regulatory requirement.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 18 – Copy of Act etc.

A registered provider shall ensure that a copy of Part VIIA (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013)) of the Act and of these Regulations is kept on the premises and the said copies shall be open to inspection on the premises by-

- (a) a parent or guardian of a child attending or proposing to attend the service,*
- (b) an employee, unpaid worker or contractor, and*
- (c) an authorised person.*

Compliance Information

A copy of the of Part V11A (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No.40 of 2013)) of the Act and Regulations was available for inspection by (a)(b)(c).

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)

Children moved from one play experience to the next in the indoor and outdoor environment supported by staff members. Children played in individual and small groups in the developed areas of defined interest that included a home area with a fireplace, construction area, hairdressers, a creative station, cosy rest area with library /music and dress up.

Learning materials that supported a child's innate interest in learning was noted and included sensorial, mathematics, language and practical life elements of the Montessori curriculum. Children's artwork was noted in the pre-school room, some children were observed to make Christmas bells.

Children participated in rolling lunch eating a healthy snack provided by their parents supported by the staff member in the dining area.

A key person system was in place in the service. Staff were familiar with each child and their personality. Staff held children in positive regard using individual names, maintaining eye contact during conversations and giving praise on the completion of activities.

Partnership with parents was noted in the service as the deputy designated person in charge stated that information updates are given to parents using a short messaging system (SMS) and electronic mail. The child's learning journal depicting the child's play and work activities are shared with parents at the end of the pre-school term.

Children's artwork is sent home to parents on a regular basis. Parents will attend the children's upcoming Christmas show in the service.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

(1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day, and

(b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.

(2) A registered provider-

(a) of a full day care service, a part-time day care service, a sessional preschool service or a childminding service that is registered for the first time on or after 30 June 2016 shall ensure that a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the preschool children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

Suitable play equipment was provided indoors and outdoors which included toys and equipment for construction, tabletop activities, arts and crafts, sand play and home corners.

(b)

Cosy rest areas were noted in the pre-school room for children to rest and relax.

(2)(a)

The outdoor play area was safe and secure surrounded by high fencing. In the outdoor play area, toys and equipment included sand play, a mud kitchen, a basketball hoop, tyres, construction toys and a garage area.

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 entrance to the service was secure to ensure the safety of the children within. The inspector signed the visitors book on arrival. The service met the necessary safety requirements in respect of the indoor environment, toys and equipment and the safe storage of cleaning agents.

Infection Control:

Children washed their hands before snacks and after using the toilet.
Childrens' lunches were stored in the main fridge in the pre-school room.

Administration of Medication:

No medication was given at the time of the inspection. Temperature reducing medication was stored safely in the office if a child presented with a high temperature. Upon discussion, staff were familiar with the administration of medication procedures in the service.

Fire Safety:

Emergency exits were unobstructed from the pre-school room. The fire assembly point was noted to the front of the service. Upon discussion, staff were familiar with the fire evacuation procedures from the service.

Outing:

The designated person in charge stated the service does not undertake outings.

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 adults were qualified in First Aid response (FAR) and available in the premises.

(2)(a)

The first aid box was available in accessible and conspicuous location in the service.

(b)

A first aid box was accessible to children in the pre-school service.

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 written record for the completed monthly fire drills was available on the premises. The last fire drill was recorded as taking place on the 23 November 2023.

(b)

A record was available demonstrating the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises. The smoke alarms were serviced on the 17 December 2022.

(4)

A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in a conspicuous position in the premises.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(b)

An annual maintenance certificate for the firefighting equipment was not available. The fire extinguishers were last serviced on the 24 September 2022.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Fire Extinguishers have been serviced.

À contract has been established with Fire Safety company to provide yearly servicing of our fire safety equipment.

Supporting documentation submitted

Fire Extinguisher maintenance certificate.

Summary Comment

Evidence submitted and reviewed by the Early Years Inspector met the Regulatory requirement.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.

Compliance Information

Children were supervised in the indoor and outdoor environments during the inspection.

At 12:00 staff members were observed to hand children over to their parents at the side gate in the outdoor play area at collection time.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

There was evidence of current insurance cover for the number of children attending the service and the expiry date noted as 27 March 2024.

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 premises visually appeared to be of sound and stable structure.

(b)

The main entrance was secure to ensure the children's safety within the service. A magnetic lock was in place on the main entrance doors. A bell system is used for entry for parents and visitors.

(c)

Natural lighting is supplemented by adequate artificial lighting in the pre-school room.

Openable windows provided natural ventilation as required in the pre-school room.

(d)

The premises were visually clean. All toys and materials were easily cleanable. A cleaning schedule was available and reviewed.

(e)

Two toilets and two wash hand basins are available in the children's sanitary accommodation. A wall mounted nappy changing unit is located in one of the children's cubicles. Warm running water, soap and paper hand towels were in place. The water temperature recorded at wash hand basins was 32 degrees Celsius.

Foot operated pedal bins were available in the pre-school room and in the associated sanitary accommodation for the hygienic disposal of waste.

Non-Compliance Information

(c)

1. Appropriate environmental temperatures were not maintained in the pre-school room and areas occupied by pre-school children.

At 10:45 approximately the environmental temperature of the pre-school room felt cold.

The room temperature was recorded at 14.7 degrees Celsius in the home area section.

The room temperature was recorded at 16.6 degrees Celsius in the dining area.

The temperatures recorded were below the recommended temperature of 18 to 22 degrees Celsius.

At 11:55 the room temperature when rechecked and the environmental temperature recorded remained cold at 16.3 degrees Celsius.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

All radiators are fitted with time clocks, the heat is timed to start earlier in the morning to reach regulation temperatures by start of preschool service.

Temperatures will be monitored closely throughout the day to ensure constant 18 – 20 degrees is achieved.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence.

Summary Comment

The Early Years Inspector rechecked the environmental temperature in the service on the 19 December 2023.

The temperature recorded was 17.9 to 18 degrees Celsius.

Evidence submitted and reviewed by the Early Years Inspector met the Regulatory requirement.