

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2022MH002
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Name of Service:	Jo's Early Learners
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Address of Service:	6 The Rise, Mill Tree Park, Ratoath, Co. Meath
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Eircode:	A85 WF74
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Name of Registered Provider:	Joanne Knowles
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Service type:	Childminder
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Date of Inspection:	10 January 2023
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No of pre-school children:	AM	5	PM	1
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Family Resource Centre, Commons Road, Navan, Co Meath
Inspection undertaken by:	D. Murray
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

Jo's Early Learners is a childminding service located in the registered provider own home. The service caters for children from 0 to 6 years and provides a home from home experience incorporating learning in a fun relaxed atmosphere. The service consists of a room off the registered provider kitchen; however the children have freedom to move from this area if they so wish. Sanitary facilities are situated in the main house off the hallway with an outdoor area located to the rear of the premises.

Staffing

The registered provider is the person in charge of the service, an emergency person is always available to 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/ safety/ premises and facilities. The inspections may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9,11,12,15,19,20,21,22,23,25, &26. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

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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 wish 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*

(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*

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(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 service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.

(b) The designated person in charge was on the premises when the inspector arrived unannounced to carry out the inspection and was present throughout the period of inspection.

(2) (a)(b)(c)&(d) From discussion with the registered provider it was confirmed that the emergency person had remained the same. Both files were reviewed at the previous inspection and met regulatory compliance.

(4) The registered provider held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 6 on the National Framework of Qualifications, or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

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.

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

(b) a childminder shall ensure that a second person familiar with the operation of the service and in a position to provide assistance to the childminder in operating the service is, at all times, within close distance of the service and available to attend the service to assist the childminder in the event of an emergency,

Compliance Information

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(1) On the day of inspection there was an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the service. One adult was present with 5 children.

(8)(b) The registered provider ensured that a second person familiar with the operation of the service and in a position to provide assistance is, at all times, within close distance and available to attend the service to assist in the event of an emergency.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 12 - Childminders

(1) A childminder shall ensure that-

(a) there are no more than 5 pre-school children in his or her care at any given time, including his or her own pre-school children,

(b) subject to paragraph (2), there are no more than 2 children under the age of 15 months in his or her care at any given time, including his or her own pre-school children, and

(c) there is a working telephone on the premises.

Compliance Information

(1)(a) According to the documentation available there were only 5 children in the care of the childminder at any given time.

(b) According to the documentation available there were no children under the age of 15 months attending the childminding service.

(c) There was a working telephone available on the premises during the inspection.

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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-

- (a) a parent or guardian of a pre-school child but only in respect of the record relating to that child,*
- (b) an employee who is authorised in that behalf by the registered provider, and*
- (c) an authorised person.*

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) is retained for a period of 2 years from the date on which the child to whom it relates ceases to attend the service.

Compliance Information

(1) Five records were inspected in relation to the children registered in the service and were found to meet the requirement as specified in (1)(a) to (i).

(3) (a),(b) & (c) The records in writing (enrolment forms) were available and open for inspection.

(4) The registered provider was aware that the records were to be retained for a period of 2 years from the date on which the child to whom it relates ceases to attend the service.

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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.

Compliance Information

(1)(a) The childminder was observed interacting with the children present with warmth and affection through being available, talking in soft tones and with smiling welcoming facial expressions. The play materials and equipment were suitable to the age and stage of development of the children. The children sought out the childminder for assistance when needed. Transitions were managed smoothly with children given plenty of time to complete their chosen activity before commencing a new one. Lots of conversation and laughter was observed especially during story and snack time. The themes of the month were Winter /Hibernation and the Chinese New Year with the children making Chinese lanterns. The children appeared confident and happy in the home from home environment.

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-

(b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day.

(3) A registered provider of a full day care service, a part-time day care service or a childminding service, other than such a service to which paragraph (2) applies, shall ensure that-

(a) a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the pre-school children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises.

Compliance Information

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(1)(b) There was no child attending the service requiring sleep. A cosy area consisting of a low child's rest couch was available should a child need to take a break during activities and rest.

(3)(a) An enclosed outdoor space with an artificial grass surface cordoned off from the registered providers own garden was available to the rear of the premises.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

The care room had areas of interest with supporting equipment which incorporated natural/sensorial materials, art and crafts and a range of suitable toys. Equipment in the outdoor area included a wooden activity unit with a climbing ladder and a slide, mud kitchen, ride on toys and a free-standing unit with additional toys. An outdoor shed was available as an additional play area with a wooden kitchen, dolls house, puzzles and a white art and craft board.

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 children brought their own morning snack and drink which mostly consisted of sandwiches, wraps, crackers fruit and water. The childminder provided the remainder of the meals for the children availing of the additional hours. On the day of inspection, the childminder stated that dinner was served at 1pm which consisted of chicken, potatoes, carrots and broccoli. A snack of toasted sandwiches was served at 3pm with beans and toast served before leaving for home. Water was freely available at all times.

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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 play materials and equipment in the service were stored on stable-based low level shelving units. The play materials and equipment were observed to be safe for the developmental age of the children.
- All cleaning agents and equipment were stored out of reach of children.
- The emergency exit door was unobstructed.
- The door to the care room and the side gate was secured to ensure that a child did not exit unsupervised and restricted unauthorised entry to the care room and outdoor area.

Infection Control:

- The service was visibly clean with cleaning schedules available. The table was cleaned before snack time with placemat used.
- Liquid soap, hand paper towel and warm water was available in the sanitary facilities.
- Children wash their hands before snack time and after going to the toilet.
- A fridge was available for the storage of perishable items in children's lunch boxes.

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.

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- (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 had up to date First Aid Responders course and was available at all times to the children attending the pre-school service.

(2)(a) and (b) A suitably equipped first aid box was available and safely stored in the premises.

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 was available of the fire drills completed in the service. The last recorded fire drill took place on the 08/12/2022.
- (b) A record was maintained of the number, type and maintenance record of the fire fighting equipment and mains powered smoke alarms on the premises. The fighting equipment and mains powered smoke alarms were last serviced on the 12/07/2022.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was conspicuously displayed in the care room.