

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CW019
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Name of Service:	Jigsaw Childcare
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Address of Service:	34 Highfield, Dublin Road, Carlow, Co. Carlow
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Eircode:	R93 PD74
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Name of Registered Provider:	Sulinder Finn
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Service type:	Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	03/06/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	25	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla Child & Family Agency, Athy Road, Carlow.
Inspection undertaken by:	Norma Thornton
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).

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Description of service

Jigsaw Childcare service is a registered sessional and part-time service located in the residential estate of Highfield in Carlow town. The service operates from a two-storey dwelling house and is comprised of two classrooms, one on the ground floor and one on the first floor. The service is currently providing early childhood care and education sessions for children aged 2 to 6 years. The Bumble Bee room on the first floor operates between 09:00 hours to 12:00 hours and the Dragonfly room on the ground floor operates between 09:15 to 12:15 hours.

A part-time service is currently not being offered.

A secure outdoor play area is provided in the back garden of the house which can be directly accessed via the French doors at the back of the Bumble Bee Room.

Staffing

There are seven staff members employed in the service including the registered provider. All staff members who as part of their role in the service was to work directly with the children, held qualifications in early childhood care and education ranging from Level 5 to Level 8 on the national Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) framework. Two early years care and education students are currently on placement 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

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This inspection was unannounced 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.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under the following regulations.

Regulation 19- Health Welfare and Development of the Child

Regulation 23- Safeguarding the Health, Safety and Welfare of the Child

Regulation 27- Supervision

As a result, the scope of the inspection included both classrooms and the outdoor plat area.

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.

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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 and designated person in charge were present in the service for the duration of the inspection.

(b) The staff roster demonstrated that one of the following, the registered provider, designated person in charge or a named deputy designated person in charge, was always onsite while the service was in operation.

(c) A clear outline of the management structure of the service was displayed in the service, outlining the lines of authority and responsibilities of individual staff members in the service.

(2) Staff files for one new staff member employed in the service and two students who had commenced placement in the service since the last inspection on 09 September 2025 were reviewed by the inspector.

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- (a)(b) Two validated references were available on file for the new staff member and two students, from either a past employer or from a reputable source.
- (c) Garda vetting certificates were available on file for all staff members and students employed in the service. The registered provider demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d) An International Police Vetting disclosure certificate was on file for a new staff members employed in the service who had lived outside of the state for a period of longer than six months.
- (4) A certificate of qualification was available for inspection, demonstrating that a new staff member held a minimum Level 5 qualification in early childhood care and education on the national QQI Framework.

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)-*
- (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,*
- (9) In assessing compliance with the adult: child ratios specified in Schedule 6, unpaid workers and, where applicable, the person referred to in Regulation 24(2), shall not be taken into account.*

Compliance Information

- (1) The registered provider ensured that there was an adequate number of staff members working directly with the children attending the service. There were 25 children aged 2 years and 8 months to 5 years present in the service with 5 qualified staff members and 1 student directly caring for them.
- (2) The service is registered to operate a part-time service however the registered provider is currently operating only a sessional ECCE service in the morning.
- The following adult to child ratios were observed in each of the two classrooms throughout the ECCE session. In the Bumble Bee classroom on the first floor, there were 13 children aged 2 years and eight months to 4 years in attendance for an ECCE session between 09:00 to 12:00 hours.

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In the Dragonfly classroom on the ground floor there were 12 children aged 4 to 5 years of age in attendance for an ECCE session between 09:15 to 12:15 hours.

(8)(a) The staff roster demonstrated that there were always at least 2 adults on the premises in each of the classrooms, while children were in attendance in the service.

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

(b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.

(2) A registered provider shall ensure that no corporal punishment is inflicted on a pre-school child whilst attending the service.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that no practices that are disrespectful, degrading, exploitive, intimidating, emotionally or physically harmful or neglectful are carried out in respect of a pre-school child whilst attending the service.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)(b) In observation of the service in progress, review of curricular planning and in discussion with the staff present on the day of inspection the following was observed by the inspector in relation to the service meeting the needs of the children and the programme of activities provided for the children.

In both classrooms a visual photographic overview of the day in the preschool provided children with a reminder of the daily activities such as free-play, circle time, art and creativity time, snack-time, outdoor play and home time.

The inspector observed children throughout the morning referring to the visual routine to reassure themselves of activities that were forth coming.

Each classroom had well-resourced interest areas where children were drawn to simulate play such as family life in the doll's house or home corners provided. The staff were observed to prepare tables with play resources and materials such as play dough and art and creativity resources, providing invitations to children who were interested in those aspects of play. Staff were responsive to individual children's requests for certain activities,

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and one staff member was observed sitting with a child interested in connective and manipulative materials awhile another read to a group of children in the soft rest and reading area.

Staff prepared children for the transition from one activity to another with a five-minute alert, for example informing them that 'in five minutes it's time to clean up and prepare for snack-time' to which children responded 'Great! I love clean up time!' explaining to the inspector that after cleaning up they knew it was snack time, which they would prepare for by washing their hands and engaging in setting up their tables to enjoy snack time with their educators.

At snack time the inspector observed that staff ensured that one staff member sat at each table with a group of children enjoying their own snacks while supporting children with opening yogurts and positively reinforcing healthy eating habits while also engaging in conversations with children around daily life such as news from home or learning topics such as the discussion on the day of inspection as to why we should not feed ducks bread! Both classrooms took turns on the day of inspection to access the outdoor play area where children played in groups or individually. Staff supported children with emergent interests such as imaginary play in the wooden shop /stall/ kitchen area, providing physical challenge walking up a wooden plank to a low stage area, while also ensuring they promptly responded to children's emotional needs, if they fell or had minor conflicts with their friends during play.

Staff were observed to support children with conflict resolution encouraging children to voice their emotion for example if hurt during play while also helping children resolve situations by supporting children to identify the impact of certain behaviours on one another. Children were observed to have formed strong bonds with their educators and friends, demonstrating caring practices and respectful manners, hugging each other and praising each other on accomplishing tasks.

(2) The registered provider ensured that all staff were aware of their responsibilities in safeguarding the children in their care and ensuring that no child experienced any form of corporal punishment while in the care of the service. The inspector observed on review of documents evidencing staffs continued professional development that all staff had recently completed their child protection and welfare training. The staff assured the inspector that they were well informed on best practice and the service's policy on protecting and safeguarding the children in their care.

(3) On observation of the interactions between the staff and children, the inspector observed that staff were respectful, inclusive, kind and responsive to the children ensuring that each child was listened to, their needs

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responded to, their thoughts and ideas acknowledged and respected. Staff were frequently heard and observed to use positive reinforcement and praise further instilling children's positive behaviour and confidence in themselves.

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:

A wooden enclosed area at the front of the service provided a safe barrier for the structured drop off and collection of the children to and from the service. Parents took turns to enter this area and access the main entrance door at drop off times and at collection time were observed to remain behind the wooden barrier and take turns collecting their children. The service's main entrance door was secured with a call bell system to prevent any unauthorised person from entering the building and to prevent any child exiting the building unsupervised. The outdoor play area was secured with a high wall and a secured wooden side gate.

The inspector observed that the children accessed the outdoor play area through the rear patio doors from the Dragonfly classroom or via the enclosed fenced area at the front of the building which provided a safe pathway to the outdoor play area via the side of the premises.

The inspector observed that all cleaning products and equipment had a designated storage area and were stored out of the reach of the children.

The service's child safeguarding statement was displayed on the service parent's noticeboard.

Infection Control:

On the first floor, adjacent to the Bumblebee Classroom, there were two child sized toilet units with two hand wash basins and a nappy changing table provided.

Downstairs in the Dragonfly Classroom, toilet facilities were also provided adjacent to the classroom comprised of two children's toilet units and two handwash basins. A designated staff toilet was also provided in the service.

Each toilet unit was supplied with liquid hand soap and paper towelling, which the children could easily access and use.

Staff were observed to support and prompt the children to wash their hands correctly after using the toilet, nappy-changing, after messy and outdoor play, and before snack times.

Administration of Medication:

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At the time of inspection no medications were required to be administered to any child in the service. In discussion with the registered provider and staff present, the inspector was assured that the staff were well informed of the procedure to be followed in administering any type of medication to a child, in line with the service's administration of medication policy.

Outing:

The service had an adequate outings policy in place in the service for any proposed outings away from the service which included communicating with parents and obtaining consent from parents prior to any outing undertaken. The policy outlined all possible procedures to mitigate against any potential risk which might arise during the outing.

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) There were four staff members employed in the service with current certification in the required first aid responder (FAR) training. At all times while the service was operating, the staff roster demonstrated that at least two staff members with FAR training were onsite.

(2)(a)(b) There was first aid bag available in each of the Bumble Bee and Dragonfly classrooms with a larger supplied first aid bag available in the office.

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.
- (2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-
- (a) a parent or guardian of a pre-school child attending or proposing to attend the pre-school service,
 - (b) an employee, and
 - (c) an authorised person.
- (3) A registered provider shall ensure that a record referred to in paragraph (2) is retained for a period of 5 years after its creation
- (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) The registered provider ensured that the following fire records were maintained.
- (a) There was a written record of the monthly fire drills that took place in the service. The last fire drill was recorded as having taken place on the 26 May 2026.
 - (b) A record was maintained of the dates of checking and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and fire alarm system in the service, by a reputable contractor. The last maintenance check for the firefighting equipment was recorded as having taken place in June 2025 and for the smoke alarm system was recorded as having last taken place on the 30 June 2025.
- (2) The fire safety records were available and open for inspection by the early years inspector or by a parent / employee on request.
- (3) The registered provider demonstrated that records were maintained for the five years prior to inspection.
- (4) Evidence of a fire evacuation procedure notice was clearly displayed in the entrance hall with an assembly point clearly sign posted in the front drive.

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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

The registered provider ensured that all children attending the service were appropriately supervised throughout the inspection. All staff were suitably qualified with the staff ratios exceeding the requirements under the Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

In both classrooms staff worked together as a team ensuring that all areas of each classroom were under constant observation by a staff member. The inspector observed that the transition from the upstairs classroom via the side pathway was effectively supervised ensuring children safely transitioned in single file with a staff member at the front and back of the line. Staff in the Dragon fly classroom on the ground floor were observed to assist their colleagues in the outdoor play area with the Bumblebee class when children required access to the downstairs toilet facilities ensuring that the child requiring to use the toilet was appropriately supported and or helping to ensure adult to child ratios were maintained across the service with supervision over all aspects of the classroom and outdoor play area.