

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WD076
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Name of Service:	St. Josephs Childcare Centre
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Address of Service:	6 - 7 Lower Yellow Road, Waterford City, Co. Waterford
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Eircode:	X91 CK6N
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Name of Registered Provider:	Con O Riordan
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	12/06/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	61	PM	36
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Child and Family Agency, Community Care Buildings, Cork Road, Waterford.
Inspection undertaken by:	E Cullen
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

St. Joseph's Childcare and Community Centre opened in 1997 and is located in inner-city Waterford. The service operates full daycare under the auspices of the society of St. Vincent's de Paul. The service participates in the Early Childhood care and Education (ECCE) scheme. Opening hours are from 08:45hrs to 17:30hrs Monday to Friday for children ages 1 to 6 years of age. The service currently closes its early years rooms at 17:15hrs. A school age programme is available for children from 5 to 12 years of age until 17:30hrs.

The service operates from refurbished terraced houses with a large purpose-built extension. The service's extension has five early years rooms, two sleep rooms, sensory room, a full catering kitchen, adult and children's toilet facilities and a nappy changing room. The two outdoor play areas are safely secured and situated adjacent to the childcare rooms. The older building presently accommodates office space, meeting rooms, staff kitchen facilities and further sanitary accommodation.

Staffing

The service employs a manager, deputy manager and currently twenty early years staff. Six staff members are employed through Community Employment Schemes. The service also employs one maintenance person and one full-time chef.

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 regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child, 16 – Record of a pre-school service, 19 - Health, welfare and development of child, 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child and 27 – Supervision. As a result, the scope of the inspection included the wobbler, toddler and senior ECCE room.

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 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)(b)(c) The deputy manager was the designated person in charge on the day of inspection, and a named person was also available to deputise as required. An organisational chart provided details of the management and reporting structures within the service. Information was available detailing the role of each staff member and specific responsibilities such as fire officer and designated liaison person for example.

(2) Through review of records, and discussion with the person in charge it was determined that seven staff members had commenced employment since the last inspection and files required review. To assess compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years, ten vetting disclosures were also identified as requiring review:

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- (a)(b) Two validated references were available for each staff member from either a past employer, or from a source other than a past employer.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all staff. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d) International police vetting was available for four staff member who had lived outside the state for a period over 6 months.
- (4) Certificates of qualification were available on file demonstrating that relevant staff members held a qualification at the minimum level 5 and above on the National Framework of Qualifications.

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.*

Compliance Information

- (1) On the day of inspection there were adequate numbers of staff were working directly with the children at all times. There were 61 children with 14 staff members directly supervising them during the morning of the inspection and 36 children with 10 staff during the afternoon.
- (2) On the morning of the inspection, the staff to child ratios were maintained as follows throughout the service:
- The wobbler room there were 6 children aged 16 to 28 months old being cared for by 2 staff.
 - The toddler room, there were 10 children aged 2 to 3 years old being cared for by 4 staff.
 - The senior toddler room, there were 12 children aged 2 to 3 years old being cared for by 2 staff.
 - The junior ECCE room, there were 13 children aged 3 to 4 years old being cared for by 3 staff.
 - The senior ECCE room, there were 20 children aged 4 to 5 years old being cared for by 3 staff.

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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.*

Compliance Information

(1)(a) – (i) Prior to a child commencing in the service, all parents and guardians were issued with a child registration form. This registration form was developed by the service and contained all of the required information for parents and guardians to complete.

A sample of ten child registration forms were reviewed on the day of inspection, and all were completed in full with appropriate declarations signed by parents and guardians.

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;*
- (i) details of staff rosters 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)(a) – (k) The registered provider ensured that all relevant information was accessible and available for inspection by authorised persons. Information notice boards in the lobbies displayed relevant staff information, the Tusla registration certificate was on display providing confirmation of the class of service registered. Staff rosters were available.

Each early years room was responsible for maintaining records of attendance, administration of medication and any accident or incident records. Policies and procedures were available for staff in the office and a parent's handbook was also available.

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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-

(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.

Compliance Information

The service provided a hot meal each day, snacks were provided predominately by the service with some snacks also sent in from home. On the day the meal served was egg fried rice. Drinks were freely accessible to the children in each classroom throughout the day, drinks stations were on low level shelves. Mealtimes observed were unhurried social experiences in all rooms, staff sat with children and engaged in conversation. The children were encouraged to feed themselves appropriate to their stage of development and were assisted as required.

Regular nappy changing took place throughout the day and staff were observed to engage attentively with children during the process. Children who were toilet trained, used the toilet as needed and handwashing was promoted after both nappy changing and toileting. Attention was given to children's appearance with staff observed to use bibs to protect clothing and clean children's faces and hands after meals and as needed.

Sleep was child led and staff worked in partnership with parents to ensure consistency between home and service routines. Children attending the wobbler room were placed to sleep at varying times throughout the day. Rooms used for sleeping were sufficiently dark and quiet to promote a restful sleep. Low-level floor beds were available to meet the sleep needs of children over 2 years of age.

Children had free movement and choice of activities in all rooms observed on the day. An outdoor rota was displayed in each room and children were observed in the outdoor area throughout the day.

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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:

There was a keypad and buzzer entry and exit system in place on the main entrance doors of the building to prevent unauthorised persons gaining entry or children exiting unsupervised. The kitchen and staff areas were inaccessible to children. All cleaning agents were stored safely and out of reach of children.

Accident and incident books maintained a record of any incidents, these were completed in detail and signatures confirmed that relevant parents, staff and a manager were informed.

All tables and chairs used by children were in good condition and suitable for use by the age range of children using them. Equipment and materials used in each of the rooms were appropriate for use by the age range of children using them, for example small items which may pose a risk of choking were not observed in room occupied by younger children. The outdoor play area was maintained to a good standard and free from hazards.

Infection Control:

The service was clean and well maintained with cleaning schedules maintained daily by staff. Children were observed washing their hands before eating, after outdoor play, toileting, and nappy changing. There was warm running water, liquid soap and paper hand towels available for hand washing throughout the service.

A system was in place for the appropriate storage and sterilisation of children's soothers. Tables and equipment were cleaned prior to food being served to children and appropriate safe food storage and preparation was observed.

During nappy changing processes observed, staff adhered to the services nappy changing policy. Staff ensured that they wore gloves and aprons during the nappy changing process and both child and staff hands were washed after nappy changing had taken place.

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Administration of Medication:

Signed medication record forms documented the details of any medications which had been administered in the service in line with the service policy on administration of medication. Medications supplied by parents were stored securely and inaccessible to children. Health care plans were put in place where required.

Safe Sleep:

Staff were familiar with best practices in safe sleep and carried out physical checks on individual sleeping children, every 10 minutes, recording individual children's sleep positions, colour and breathing. The sleep room temperatures were continually monitored by staff, with a digital thermometer located in each sleep room. Staff were familiar with the services sleep policy which was displayed in the sleep room. The wobbler sleep room temperature was recorded at 19.6°C and the toddler sleep room was 20.4°C, which was within the required temperature range of 18°C to 22°C for children over the age of one.

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

There was appropriate supervision of children for the duration of the inspection. The layout of the early years rooms, sanitary accommodation and outdoor area allowed for clear lines of sight of the children. Staff sat with children during snack and mealtimes, ensuring appropriate supervision while food was being consumed.

All staff were suitably qualified, and the child staff ratios exceeded the requirements for care needed under the Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

Children using toilets in the lobby were observed to be escorted individually to the toilet area by a staff member when required. Staff in the senior ECCE supported children to toilet independently and were within hearing distance of children.

There were established protocols with parents and guardians for children transitioning to and from the centre. Parents or guardians used the external intercom system to call their child's classroom; a staff member then brought each child individually to the entrance and handed the child over to the parent.

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Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service demonstrated insurance cover under a group insurance scheme for the charitable organisation Saint Vincent de Paul. The insurance policy commenced 01 November 2025 and will expire 31 October 2026.