

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015CC429
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Tiny Tots Creche & Pre-School
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Killeagh Gardens, Killeagh, Co Cork
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<b>Eircode:</b>	P36 EV56
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Hazel O'Mahony
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<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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<b>Date of inspection:</b>	12/02/2026
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	44	PM	36
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate, Administration Building, St Mary's Health Campus, Gurrabraher, Cork T23 X440.
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	D Prendergast & B Fraher
<b>Title:</b>	Early Years Inspectors

### 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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	N/A
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### Description of service

Tiny Tots Creche & Pre-School is a privately run childcare facility, which has been in operation since 2008. It provides full day, part time and sessional care to children aged 0 to 6 years. Children can avail of the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme from 9.30am to 12.30pm, each Monday to Friday, over 38 weeks annually. The service operates 50 weeks of the year, with daily opening hours from 7.00am to 6.00pm. A registered school age service is also available.

The purpose-built, single storey premises is situated in a residential area of Killeagh in Co Cork. It consists of four care rooms, with adjoining child sanitary facilities, a designated sleep room, a kitchen, an office, a laundry room and staff sanitary facilities. Three of the four care rooms provide direct access to the enclosed outdoor play space, beside the building.

### Staffing

There are 10 adults in employment at the childcare facility, all of whom are involved in the direct care of the children. This includes the registered provider and a relief staff member. Two students were also undertaking work placements at the time of the inspection.

### 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 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.

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

The registered provider advised that the service had commenced engaging with the Better Start Quality Development Service, since the previous inspection, with two on-site visits having been facilitated to date.

### Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, deputies, 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 registered provider was the person in charge assigned to the service and two named deputies had been identified to deputise as required.
- (b) Either the registered provider or a deputy was available at the setting throughout the inspection. Examination of the staff roster also indicated that this requirement was met for the duration of the service's operational hours.
- (2) Following a review of previous inspection information, information available on inspection and discussion with the registered provider, it was determined that no new staff members had been employed since the previous inspection. On the day of inspection, two students were present on educational work placement programmes. A total of two files were reviewed.
- (a) Four written and validated references were required in total. None of these had been obtained from past employers.
- (b) All four references had been provided by sources other than past employers.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for both students. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d) Following review of the students' curricula vitae, police vetting was not deemed to be required.
- (4) Not applicable, as qualifications were not required for the students.

### 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:

- Policy on recruitment
- Policy on risk management
- Policy on staff training
- Policy on supervision of staff

These policies contained the information required to guide staff in their care practices for the children.

### Part III – Management and Staff

#### Regulation 11 - Staffing levels

*(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.*

*(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

(2) The requirements of the regulation in relation to the minimum ratio of adults to children within the rooms, were adhered to during the morning.

- At this time, there were 44 children, aged 1 to 4 ½ years, in attendance across the 4 care rooms. Eight adults were working directly with these children. Two students were not included in the adult child ratios.

In the afternoon:

- Two adults were available to the seven children present in the Baby room, who were aged 1 to 2 years.
- At 12.32pm, while Pre-school 1 remained in use for early years children, there was one adult working directly with five children, aged 3 to 4 years.

- (8)
- (a) At least two adults were consistently available at the setting, while it was in operation. This was observed at the time of inspection and was demonstrated through review of the staff roster.

## Non-Compliance Information

- (2) The required ratios were not maintained in two of the care rooms during the afternoon, as follows:
- At 12.34pm, the Toddler room was staffed with one adult, who was caring for seven children, aged 2 to 3 years. The ratio requirement for this age range is one adult to every six children. The two students present were not included in the adult to child ratio.
  - At 1.40pm, there were 20 children aged 3 to 4 ½ years attending Pre-school 2, in the care of 2 adults. As these children were attending full day care, the required ration is one adult to every eight children.
- Non-compliance in relation to adult child ratios was also noted at the time of the previous inspection on 12 June 2025.

## Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

### Corrective and Preventive Action

The written reply outlined that a staff member returned to the Toddler room after the ratio count had taken place and that there are currently three staff members based in Pre-school 2.

### Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of the staff roster.

## Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider is accepted in meeting the requirements of the regulation.

### 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:*

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

#### Compliance Information

(1)

(k) A sample of nine accident and incident records were reviewed and were found to have been correctly recorded and signed by the children’s parents or guardians.

### 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)

##### Basic needs:

- On the day of inspection, the mid-morning snack took place at 10.40am in the Toddler room and the lunch meal was observed shortly after 12.30pm. During these mealtimes, conversation was encouraged and sufficient time was afforded to the children.
- Younger children in the Baby room were observed sitting in highchairs at mealtimes, while older children were facilitated at low-level tables and chairs, which enabled the children to sit comfortably.
- The older children had access to their reusable water bottles, which were stored on low-level shelves in the care rooms. In the Baby room, individual water mugs were stored in a basket, that was visible to the children and these were observed to be offered to the children outside of mealtimes.
- Nappy changing was carried out at designated intervals and staff confirmed that it was also ensured according to the children’s needs. Older children were noted to access and utilise the sanitary facilities independently.

- In the Baby room, a spare set of clothing was available in each child's individual's storage box, in the event that a child requiring changing.
- Rest areas were incorporated into each of the playrooms, should any child wish to take some time to relax.
- Time in the outdoor area was facilitated for the children who attended all four care rooms. This allowed for participation in more active play and movement.

### Programme of activities:

- A play-based curriculum was in place. During the inspection, it was observed that the children had opportunities to participate in both free play and adult led activities.
- A written programme of activities was available, with medium and short term plans in place. The current medium term plan related to the theme of spring and was noted to include relevant songs, rhymes, arts and crafts activities and experiments. Provision was also in place to document the children's emerging interests. This was in keeping with earlier discussion with the deputies, who advised that, in addition to pre-planned seasonal themes, daily conversations with children also informed curriculum activities.
- Evidence of recently explored themes was displayed throughout the care rooms. For example, there was Valentine's Day artwork, a spring collage and weather themed art.
- Language development was promoted through singing and pretend play, as was observed when children in the Toddler room went on an imaginary bus trip to a wildlife park and when a group of children in Pre-school 1 role played being at the hairdressers. This allowed children to get hands on experience, as they used dolls heads and discussed the different events and conversations that may occur at the hairdressers.

## 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 windows in the care room were adequately secured to ensure the safety of the children.
- There were no cables from electrical equipment within the children's reach.

- Safe storage was in place for cleaning agents.
- Visibility strips were provided on the glass panel door in the Baby room, which reduced the risk of a child sustaining a collision injury.

### Infection control:

- Dispensers of liquid soap and paper towels were easily accessible at the wash hand basins. The children in the Toddler room and Pre-school 1 were observed to wash their hands before mealtimes.
- Staff members were noted to sanitise tables before meals were accommodated.
- Within the nappy changing areas, the children's toiletries were appropriately stored and labelled.
- Single use aprons and gloves were worn by adults during nappy changing procedures.
- Cot mattresses within the designated sleep room were either waterproof or fitted with waterproof mattress protectors.

### Administration of medication:

- Medication maintained in the service was stored safely out of the children's reach, appropriately labelled and was in-date.

### Safe sleep:

- The air temperature of the sleep room was recorded at 18°C, while one child was sleeping in this room.
- The room temperatures were maintained at the required temperature range of 18°C to 22°C, for children aged over 12 months.
- Staff were observed to maintain sleep records in relation to children's colour, breathing and position, at 10-minute intervals. The inspector reviewed 10 sleep records and these were noted to have been correctly documented.

### Fire safety:

- Fire exit signage within the service was clearly visible.
- Fire exits were unobstructed during the inspection.

## Non-Compliance Information

### Infection control:

1. Warm running water was not available at any of the wash hand basins across the service, which did not support effective handwashing. Recorded water temperatures ranged from 12.2°C to 15.6°C.
2. In Pre-school 1, the perishable foods for the children's first snack were not refrigerated. These foods were observed to be stored in the children's bags, which were located outside the door of the care room. This posed a risk of food spoilage.

3. During a nappy change in the Baby room, the inspector observed that the child's hands were not washed after the nappy change. This posed a risk of cross infection.

## Action submitted by the Registered Provider

### Corrective & Preventive Action

#### Infection control:

1. In her written reply, the registered provider stated that the boiler must be topped up with pellets, in order to ensure that the water is maintained at the correct temperature. This will be carried out throughout the day. A record sheet will be put in place, as a reminder to staff to top up the pellets.
2. The children's lunches will be stored in the fridge, in the kitchen. The lunches will be placed in the fridge when the children arrive and at lunch time, all children will go to the kitchen to retrieve their lunch boxes.
3. The registered provider spoke to all staff to remind them to wash the children's hands after nappy changes and to observe the children washing their hands, after using the toilet. As a preventive measure, staff will be reminded to wash the children's hands.

### Supporting documentation submitted

#### Infection control:

- 1.& 2. The statements from the registered provider are accepted as evidence.
3. A copy of the nappy changing policy.

## Summary Comment

Based on the statements submitted as evidence, the registered provider has been determined to meet regulatory compliance with this regulation.

### Part VI - Safety

#### Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

- (1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.
- (3) A registered provider shall ensure that-
- (b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.

#### Compliance Information

- (1) The registered provider ensured that each child was checked in and out of the service in digital or paper format.
- (3)
- (b) A daily record of visitors to the premises was kept in the reception area. The inspectors were requested to sign in and out of the service.

### 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.

#### Compliance Information

- (1) The registered provider had ensured that a person with up to date First Aid Response (FAR) training, was available to the children throughout the hours of operation. FAR certificates were presented in respect of three of the staff members. The inspector was advised that a fourth adult had also recently completed FAR training and was awaiting their certificate.

### Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

#### Regulation 29 - Premises

*A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-*

- (b) safe and secure,*
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*

#### Compliance Information

(b) The risk of unauthorised access and that of a child exiting the service unsupervised, were adequately controlled; the main entrance door was maintained secure when not in use the outdoor play environment was fully enclosed by high-level walls and secured gates.

#### Non-Compliance Information

- (d)
1. In the Pre-school 2 sanitary facility, dirt and debris were visible on the floor beside the skirting board, in one of the toilet cubicles. There was also a black speckled residue on the skirting board and on the ceiling leading up to the skylight window. Non-compliance in relation to residue was also found in the same sanitary facility, at the previous inspection.
  2. A malodour was evident in the sanitary facility adjoining Pre-school 2, despite two windows being open.
  3. Evidence that effective cleaning had taken place in the Baby room nappy changing area, was not available. It was acknowledged that cleaning records were available and signed, however, there was a build-up of debris along the edges of the nappy changing unit and the extractor fan had a build-up of dust.

#### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective and Preventive Action

- (d)
1. The CAPA response stated that this skirting board has been cleaned and repainted. The sky light has also been painted. Going forward, staff will ensure that the sky light is not opened during bad weather, in order to help prevent the area from getting wet and causing black spots.
  2. The malodour was no longer apparent when the toilets were flushed. Going forward, all toilets will be flushed before children enter the room.
  3. The changing area has been cleaned and the vent has been taken down and cleaned. The registered provider spoke to the staff about making sure that all of the changing area is cleaned. The registered provider also directed staff to check the vents regularly, in order to ensure that they are clean. Going

forward, the changing mat will be removed and the changing table will be cleaned and the mat will be cleaned in between nappy changes. The vents will be checked regularly, to ensure that they are clean.

### **Supporting documentation submitted**

1. Photographic evidence.
2. The statement from the registered provider is accepted as evidence.
3. Photographic evidence.

### **Summary Comment**

The response from the registered provider was accepted in meeting the requirements of the regulation.