

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015CC429
--------------------------	-------------

<b>Name of Service:</b>	Tiny Tots Creche & Pre-School
-------------------------	-------------------------------

<b>Address of Service:</b>	Killeagh Gardens, Killeagh, Co Cork
----------------------------	-------------------------------------

<b>Eircode:</b>	P36 EV56
-----------------	----------

<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Hazel O'Mahony
-------------------------------------	----------------

<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
----------------------	--------------------------------

<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	12/06/2025
----------------------------	------------

<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	40	PM	38
-----------------------------------	----	----	----	----

<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate, 13 Mallow Square, Mallow, Co Cork, P51 DD5Y
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	J Dennehy & D Prendergast
<b>Title:</b>	Inspection Registration Manager & 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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	N/A
---------------------------------	-----

### Description of service

Tiny Tots Creche & Pre-School is a privately owned, full day care service, which also offers sessional and part time care. While it is registered to cater for children aged 0 to 6 years, it currently accommodates children from the age of approximately 9 months. Sessional services are provided from 9.30am to 12.30pm daily, over a 38-week annual period, in conjunction with the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme. The setting is open 50 weeks of the year, with daily opening hours from 7.00am to 6.00pm. School age care is also provided.

The childcare facility operates from a purpose built, single storey premises, which is located in a residential area of Killeagh, in east Cork. It comprises four care rooms, each with adjoining children's sanitary facilities, one designated sleep room, a kitchen, an office, a laundry room and adult sanitary facilities. The children have direct access to the enclosed outdoor play area, from three of the four care rooms. There is parking available onsite for the safe drop off and collection of the children attending.

### Staffing

The service employs 10 adults, including 1 relief staff member. All 10 of the adults work directly with the children who attend and each holds a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education.

### 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/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 inspection was triggered by receipt of information to the inspectorate.

A referral was made to the Better Start Quality Development Service on the 24 June 2025 with the permission of the registered provider.

A referral was made to the Child Safeguarding Statement Compliance Unit (CSSCU) on the 24 June 2025.

### Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, deputy 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.

(7) A registered provider shall ensure that all employees, unpaid workers and contractors are appropriately supervised and provided with appropriate information, and where necessary training, including in relation to the following:

- (a) the policies, procedures and statements of the service specified in Schedule 5;

#### Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) The person in charge of the service was the registered provider, who had also nominated two deputies, to deputise in her absence.
  - (b) Both deputies were working at the childcare facility when the inspection commenced. The registered provider arrived within 10 minutes and was present thereafter. Examination of the staff roster demonstrated that the registered provider or a deputy were present on the premises during the hours of operation.
- (2) It was established that 1 adult had commenced working at the setting since the previous inspection on 13

August 2024. Therefore, recruitment records in respect of this adult were reviewed:

- (a) Both of the required written and validated references were from past employers.
  - (b) None of the references had been provided by sources other than previous employers.
  - (c) A Garda vetting disclosure had been obtained for the staff member. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
  - (d) Not applicable, as international police vetting was not required for the adult.
- (4) There was evidence that the staff member had attained a level 6 award in Early Childhood Care and Education.

### 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

On the day of the inspection, the following policies were deemed to meet the minimum regulatory requirements:

- Complaints
- Accident and incidents

#### Non-Compliance Information

1. The policies listed below did not meet the necessary requirements:

- The statement of purpose and function did not set out the number of children that could be catered for at the service.
- The behaviour management policy did not specify that the procedures for the protection and welfare of children were managed in line with the service’s safeguarding statement. While the policy stated that all staff members would be provided with support to deal with stressful situations arising from dealing with challenging behaviour, it did not outline the specific supports offered to staff. It was also noted that reference was made to the staff supervision policy, which was unavailable. The behaviour management policy referenced a staff supervision policy that was not available.

2. The registered provider did not have the following policies as required by legislation:

- Recruitment

- Risk management
- Staff training
- Supervision of staff

## Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

### Corrective and Preventive Action

- The service's statement of purpose and function was amended to include the number of children that the service can cater for.
- The service's behaviour management policy was amended to include that the procedures for the protection and welfare of children were managed in line with the service's safeguarding statement.
- The following policies were submitted, recruitment, risk management and staff training.

### Supporting documentation submitted

Copies of each policy were submitted.

## Summary Comment

The inspectors have reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliances identified under the listed policies above in relation to Regulation 10 have been addressed adequately.

## 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.*

*(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

(1) At the time of inspection, there was an adequate number of adults responsible for the direct care and supervision of the children.

(2) The adult to child ratios were maintained appropriately in the morning on the day of inspection.

In the morning the ratios were as follows:

- There were 3 staff in the Baby Room with 10 children aged between 8 months and 2 years.
- There were 2 staff in Toddler Room with 8 children aged between 2 and 3 years.
- There was 1 staff member in Preschool Room 1 with 7 children aged between 3 and 4 years.
- There were 2 staff in Preschool Room 2 with 15 children aged between 3 and 5 years.

In the afternoon the ratios were as follows:

- There were 3 staff in the Baby Room with 10 children aged between 8 months and 2 years.
- There were 2 staff in Toddler Room with 8 children aged between 2 and 3 years.
- Preschool Room 1 was used for school age childcare in the afternoon.

(8)

(a) Review of the staff roster from the six weeks preceding the inspection and observation on the day demonstrated that the service was consistently operated with at least two adults present.

### Non-Compliance Information

(2) The ratios were not maintained in line with regulation in Preschool Room 2 in the afternoon as 20 children were present in the care of 2 adults. The required ratio is 1 adult to every 8 children. Not operating in line with minimum ratio requirements could impact the wellbeing of children and affect staff members ability to meet the individual needs of each child.

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

#### **Corrective and Preventive Action**

The written reply stated that additional hours have been allocated to a staff member to ensure correct adult child ratios.

#### **Supporting documentation submitted**

The statement from the registered provider is accepted as evidence.

### Summary Comment

The inspectors have reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 11(2) has been addressed adequately.

## 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.*

#### Non-Compliance Information

(1)  
(k) From a sample of 10 accident and incident records from September 2024 to February 2025, it was noted that 2 of the records had not been signed or dated by the children’s parents or guardians. This posed a risk that parents or guardians may be unaware of accidents or incidents that involved their children.

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

##### Corrective and Preventive Action

The written reply stated that all accident and incident forms had been signed and processes had been put in place to ensure that the forms are signed the day of the incident or accident.

##### Supporting documentation submitted

The statement from the registered provider is accepted as evidence.

#### Summary Comment

The inspectors have reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 16(1)(k) has been addressed adequately.

## 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*

*(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)

#### Basic needs:

- Children who required additional fluids outside of the allocated mealtime had access to their reusable water bottles. In the Baby room, the children's sippy cups and water bottles were visible at their eye level and could be retrieved by the adults as requested.
- The deputy advised the inspector that nappy changing was attended to every two hours and as required.
- Younger children were supported with self-care tasks, such as cleaning their faces after snack time.
- The children in the Toddler room were supported to wash their hands prior to having their morning snack.

#### Supporting relationships:

- Snack time in the Baby and Toddler room was observed to be a relaxed occasion. The children were readily and appropriately assisted by the adults and were afforded plenty of time.
- During free play activities, adults in the Baby room engaged with the children at their level.
- Adult led singing and action songs were also observed in the Baby room and the adults actively acknowledged the children's interests and efforts, as they played and explored.
- In the Toddler room the children were observed to engage in imaginary play, taking a trip to Dublin Zoo and singing songs with the staff.
- The Toddler room staff were attentive to the individual care needs of each child. Napping changing was observed to be carried out in a respectful and unhurried manner. Each child was supported to engage in activities and given choice on how they would like to engage in the activity. For example, practitioners gave children the choice on where they would like to sit and what songs they would like to sing.
- Regular communication with the children's parents was ensured through the use of a digital application. Staff members were observed to use tablet devices to input and share details regarding the children's daily activities and personal care, such as sleep checks and nappy changes.
- The deputy stated that monthly meetings took place at the setting and that these meetings were used to discuss any issues arising, to facilitate planning and to review room layouts. This practice was evidenced through written meeting records, which were available for review.

(2) During the inspection the inspectors did not observe corporal punishment being used against any child while attending the service.

(3) On the day of inspection disrespectful, degrading, exploitive, intimidating, emotionally or physically harmful or neglectful behaviours were not observed to be carried out against any child.

### Non-Compliance Information

#### (1)(a) Basic needs:

1. In Preschool 1 and 2, children's needs for rest and relaxation were not always met as observed in the following examples:
  - A designated rest area was unavailable to meet the children's need for rest and relaxation in Preschool 1. During discussion, the registered provider outlined that the sofa previously available in this room was now only brought into the room when needed, or when requested by the children. However, a clearly identifiable space for children to rest is required to be available at all times.
  - During free play periods, the rest facilities in Preschool 2 room were unable to accommodate children who required rest at this time. In the afternoon one child had become visibly upset as the child sized couch within the room was unavailable for use and the staff within the room were unable to respond to the needs of the child in a timely way. The inspector heard the child communicating their need to rest to a staff member who tried to get additional soft furnishings but was unable to do so.
2. On the day of the inspection, the children in the Baby room were not provided with the opportunity to engage in outdoor play. This did not meet the children's need for mobility and a change of environment, while attending full day care. A staff member in this room advised that the children would not be going outside, as the ground was wet. However, it was noted that a sheltered area was available in the outdoor play area.
3. In Preschool 2 room, inadequate support was offered to children with toileting. The inspector observed that one child was not being supervised while toileting and required support and had become visibly upset. The inspector had to alert a staff member that a child required support; the staff member then attended promptly to the care needs of the child.

#### Programme of activities

4. In Preschool 2 room, the inspector observed activities that did not support children's active participation, resulting in frustration for the children. The staff member laid out puzzles and connectors on two separate tables for the children to engage with. However, there was limited space, and materials available, for

example, there were only eight puzzles available. The inspector did not observe alternative materials or solutions being offered to the children to support children with turn taking. The impact of this was observed as children became frustrated, crying and shouting at times.

## Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

### Corrective and Preventive Action

The written reply stated that additional couches had been added to Preschool 1 and 2. It was also stated that children from the Baby room would go outdoors daily and that children would be supported further with toileting by asking each child if they need help as they enter and exit the toilet.

### Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence was submitted in relation to point one. The statement from the registered provider is accepted as evidence in relation to points two, three and four.

## Summary Comment

The inspectors have reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 19(1)(a) has been addressed adequately.

## 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 main entrance door was found to have been appropriately secured prior to the inspector's unannounced arrival. This minimised the risk of unauthorised persons gaining access to the service.
- An enclosure of high-level walls and secured gates was provided in the outdoor play space, at the rear of the building.
- There were no cables or flexes accessible to the children.
- Cleaning agents were maintained out of reach of the children.
- Visibility strips were fitted to the low-level glass panel doors in the Baby room.
- The service's fire extinguishers were wall mounted.

### Infection control:

- Warm running water and liquid soap were available at each of the wash hand basins. It was also noted that new, sensor operated paper towel dispensers had been installed since the previous inspection and were well-stocked.
- In the nappy changing area adjoining the Baby room, the following reduced the risk of cross infection:
  - individually labelled containers were provided for the children's nappies, wipes and barrier creams
  - zip locked bags were used for the storage of spare clothing
  - the nappy changing mat was maintained in a clean condition.

### Safe sleep:

- Appropriate air temperatures were maintained in the designated sleep room, while this room was in use by children. Readings of 19.8°C and 20.7°C were recorded, which both fell within the required range for children aged over 12 months. During a scheduled rest period in the Toddler room, an air temperature of 21.8°C was noted.
- Digital sleep logs indicated that children were monitored at 10-minute intervals, in relation to their position, colour and breathing. During conversation, a staff member demonstrated familiarity with the appropriate procedure for conducting physical checks of sleeping children.

### Fire safety:

- Fire exit signage was illuminated.

### Non-Compliance Information

#### General safety:

1. The service did not have a child protection and welfare policy available as stated in the child safeguarding statement. This posed a risk as it was unclear if staff were aware of what procedures are to be followed if there is a child protection concern within the service. Staff who spoke with inspectors were aware that the registered provider was the designated liaison person, and staff had completed the Children First e-learning training.
2. The outdoor area was cluttered with equipment and materials which posed a trip hazard. This also reduced the amount of space that children had to run around and play with scooters, bikes and other ride on toys.

### Infection control:

3. The children in the Baby room did not wash their hands before eating their morning snack. This increased the risk of cross infection and was also at variance with the service's hand hygiene policy, which outlined that staff encourage children to wash their hands before eating.
4. During the same meal break in the Baby room, some of the children were observed to eat snacks such as raisins and sandwiches directly from the table, as no crockery was provided. This posed a risk of cross infection.

### Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective & Preventive Action

##### General safety:

A copy of the child protection and welfare policy was submitted and the service stated that it could not be located at the time of inspection. The service stated that the outdoor equipment was now being stored in the shed and taken out as needed.

##### Infection control:

The service stated that all staff were reminded again of the handwashing policy. Placemats have now been provided when children are eating snack.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

##### General safety:

A copy of the policy was received in relation to point one and photographic of the outdoor area was received in relation to point two.

##### Infection control:

The statement from the registered provider is accepted as evidence in relation to point three. Photographic evidence was submitted in relation to point four.

### Summary Comment

The inspectors have reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 23 has been addressed adequately.

### 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 service was observed to be of sound and stable structure.
- (b) The building was safe and secure with a buzzer system in operation at the front door.
- (c) The building was well lit. The building was heated appropriately and ventilated.
- (e) The service had adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.

#### Non-Compliance Information

- (d)
  1. The toilet area adjacent to Preschool 2, one of the toilets was missing a toilet seat and this posed a potential safety risk to the children.
  2. The toilet area adjacent to Preschool 2 had a residue on the ceiling and the wall behind the toilet in the cubicle located on the right-hand side. This posed a potential health risk to the children.

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

##### Corrective and Preventive Action

The service stated that the toilet seat in Preschool 2 was now repaired and that the residue had been removed from the toilet and the area had been painted.

##### Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence was submitted.

#### Summary Comment

The inspectors have reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 29(d) has been addressed adequately.

### Part VIII - Notifications and Complaints

#### Regulation 32 – Complaints

- (1) A registered provider shall ensure that the complaints policy of the service specifies-
- (a) the procedure to be followed by a person for the purposes of making a complaint in relation to the service,
  - (b) the manner in which such a complaint shall be dealt with, and
  - (c) the procedures for keeping a person who makes such a complaint informed of the manner in which it is being dealt with.
- (2) A registered provider shall ensure that-
- (a) a record in writing is kept of a complaint made to the provider in respect of the pre-school service, and
  - (b) the complaint is duly dealt with in accordance with the provider's complaints policy.
- (3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall-
- (a) include the nature of the complaint and the manner in which the complaint was dealt with, and

#### Compliance Information

- (1) The registered provider had a complaints policy for the service:
- (a) The policy outlined the procedures to be followed by someone wanting to make a complaint to the service.
  - (b) The policy outlined how such a complaint would be dealt with.
  - (c) The policy outlined how and when the complainant would be kept updated.
- (2)
- (a) The registered provider maintained a file of a complaint received to the service.
  - (b) There was one complaint available in the file to review from 2013. The registered provider confirmed verbally that the complaint was dealt with in line with the service policy and that no other complaints had been received directly by the service.

#### Non-Compliance Information

- (3)(a) The service did not have any records of how the complaint was dealt with and therefore it could not be determined if the service adhered to their complaints policy. Not following the services policy on the management of complaints may lead to a complaint not being fully addressed by the service.

## Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

### **Corrective and Preventive Action**

The service stated that all complaints are stored in the office and dealt with according to the service's complaints policy.

### **Supporting documentation submitted**

The statement from the registered provider is accepted as evidence

## Summary Comment

The inspectors have reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 32(3)(a) has been addressed adequately.