

# 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>	P36EV56
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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>	13/08/2024
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	41	PM	37
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate Administration Building St Mary's Health Campus Gurrabraher Cork
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	D Prendergast
<b>Title:</b>	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
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## Description of service

Tiny Tots Creche & Pre-School is a play based, full day care service, that also offers part time and sessional care. The privately owned childcare facility is registered to cater for children aged 0 to 6 years, along with school age children. The Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme is accommodated over 38 weeks of the year, with two daily sessional services from 9.30am to 12.30pm. Hours of operation are from 7.00am to 6.00pm and the setting is open 50 weeks of the year.

Located in a residential area of Killeagh in Co. Cork, the premises consists of a single storey, purpose built, detached building. There are four registered care rooms, each with adjoining children's sanitary facilities. A designated sleep room is accessible from the Baby room and the service also includes an office, a kitchen, a laundry room and staff sanitary facilities. An enclosed outdoor play area is provided beside the building.

## Staffing

There are nine adults employed at the service, each of whom are involved in the direct care of the children and have attained a relevant award in Early Childhood Care and Education. This includes the registered provider and one relief staff member.

## 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.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9 - Management and recruitment, 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service, 11 - Staffing levels, 16 - Record in relation to pre-school service, 19 - Health, welfare and development of child, 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child, 25 - First aid and 28 - Insurance; however, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under regulation 29 - Premises. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulation within this report.

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, 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 named person in charge at the service and two deputies had been appointed to deputise, should this be required.
  - (b) The registered provider facilitated the duration of the inspection process. The staff roster indicated that either the registered provider or one of the deputies were on duty throughout the hours of operation.
- (2) Recruitment records in respect of the nine adults employed at the service were assessed and the following information was obtained:
- (a) There were nine written and suitably validated references on file from a past employer.
  - (b) The remaining nine written and validated references had been obtained from sources other than previous employers.
  - (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all nine staff. The service also demonstrated compliance with

the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Employment history records demonstrated that police vetting from other jurisdictions was required for two of the adults and the relevant documentation was in place.

(4) Records demonstrated that all nine of the adults had achieved a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education, as listed on the National Framework of Qualifications.

### 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 service’s policy on Accidents and Incidents was reviewed and was found to meet the necessary requirements.

### 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) During part of the afternoon, the overall adult child ratio met the regulatory requirements, as outlined in the following table:

Room Name and Age Range of Children	Number of Children Present	Number of Adults Present

Baby Room - including 4 children from the Toddler room 1 - 3 years	9	2
Toddler Room 2 – 3 years	5	2
Pre-school 1 2 - 4 ½ years	21	2

Pre-school 2 was occupied by school age children.

(8)

(a) At least two were adults present at all times throughout the inspection period. This practice was also evidenced on the staff roster.

### Non-Compliance Information

(2)

The minimum ratio of adults to children was not met in the morning and during part of the afternoon. This posed a risk that an adequate number of adults may not be available to meet the children's needs.

In the morning, it was recorded that a total of 6 adults were available to 41 children, where 7 adults were required:

Room Name and Age Range of Children	Number of Children Present	Number of Adults Present
Baby Room 8 - 16 months (2 aged under 1 year 7 aged over 1 year)	9	2
Toddler Room 1 ½ - 2 ½ years (1 aged under 2 years 10 aged over 2 years)	11	2
Pre-school 1 2 - 4 ½ years	21	2

(7 aged under 3 years 14 aged over 3 years)		
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When ratios were noted between 1.07pm and 1.14pm, there was a total of 5 adults working directly with 37 children, where 6 adults were needed to meet the minimum requirements. During this period, the rooms were staffed as follows:

Room Name and Age Range of Children	Number of Children Present	Number of Adults Present
Baby Room - <i>including 5 children from the Toddler room</i> 11 months - 3 years (1 aged under 1 year 5 aged 1 – 2 years 5 aged 2 – 3 years)	11	2
Toddler Room 2 – 3 years	4	1
Pre-school 1 2 - 4 ½ years (8 aged under 3 years 14 aged over 3 years)	22	2

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

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

The written reply stated that one staff member had been on leave and that since she has returned, there is enough staff to cover. The adult child ratio will be maintained.

#### **Supporting documentation submitted**

A copy of the staff roster.

## Summary Comment

Based on the statements and evidence submitted by the registered provider, regulatory compliance is determined to have been met.

## 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

(k) A sample of 10 accident and incident records were assessed for compliance and deemed satisfactory.

## 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:

- Meal and snack breaks were facilitated for the children at regular intervals throughout the day; the mid-morning snack was observed shortly after 10.30am, followed by a hot lunch at 12.15pm, an afternoon snack at 2.30pm and a second snack shortly before 4.00pm.
- The children's reusable water bottles were available to them within the care rooms, should they require additional fluids outside of mealtimes.

- Nappy changing was sensitively managed by the adults, who chatted warmly to the children. Older children were supported to utilise the sanitary facilities in an independent manner, with supervision and verbal reminders offered, as needed.
- The children who attended the Baby room were noted to sleep at various times throughout the day, with an adjoining sleep room accessible to support this practice. The children who attended the Toddler room availed of a scheduled rest period in the afternoon, which was accommodated between the Toddler care room and the sleep room.
- Cosy areas were available across the care rooms, which encouraged the children to relax and opt out of scheduled activities, as necessary.
- Within the indoor environments, adequate space was ensured to accommodate the children's play and exploration. Outdoor activities were also included as part of the daily routine.

#### **Supporting relationships around children:**

- A calm atmosphere was ensured while the children were eating and drinking; the adults were observed to speak kindly and reassuringly to the children, who were afforded sufficient time to enjoy their meals.
- In the Baby room, staff were noted to use the adult size chair for bottle feeding the younger children, which promoted the adopting of a relaxed, unhurried pace when undertaking such care routines.
- Since the previous inspection, the service introduced the use of a childcare application, which allowed parents to instantly access information about their children's activities of daily living, as well as any photographs or videos uploaded by staff members. Staff reported that parents had responded positively to the increased communication and insight that the application facilitated.

### 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 adequately secured against the risk of unauthorised access and the unsupervised exit of a child.
- In the outdoor play area, an enclosure of walls and secured gates reduced the risk of unauthorised access and the risk of a child exiting, while unsupervised.
- Visibility markings were evident on low-level glass panel doors.
- There were no cables or trailing flexes within the children's reach.
- A soft-landing mat was provided underneath the slide, in the Toddler care room.
- Radiator covers were in place, to reduce the risk of a child sustaining a scald injury.

##### Infection Control:

- Handwashing was observed to be carried out after outdoor play.
- Individually labelled storage was provided for the children's nappies, wipes and barrier creams, which helped to minimise the risk of cross infection. Within the care rooms, the children's coats, bags and personal belongings were also appropriately stored; wall hooks and cubby shelving were in use.
- In Preschool 1, the available floor brushes were wall mounted.
- Adequate ventilation of the care rooms and sanitary areas was ensured through a combination of open windows and mechanical ventilation.

##### Administration of Medication:

- Medication was not observed to be administered to any of the children during the inspection period.

##### Safe Sleep:

- While occupied by sleeping children aged over 12 months, the air temperature of the sleep room fell within the required range of 18°C to 22°C; a temperature reading of 21.5°C was noted.
- Staff members maintained sleep records on a digital application, which reflected regular, 10-minute interval physical checks of children's breathing, colour and position, as they slept.

##### Fire Safety:

- Fire exits were maintained free from obstruction.

### Outing:

- Not applicable, as an outing was not undertaken.

### Non-Compliance Information

#### General Safety:

1. Safe storage of medication was not ensured, which increased the risk of a child accidentally ingesting said medication. One of the children had been prescribed an inhaler and said inhaler was kept in the child's bag, which was stored on a shelf at child height. It was also noted that the expiry date on said medication had passed. This posed an additional risk that expired medication, which may be unsafe to use, could be administered to a child.

#### Infection Control:

2. Warm running water was unavailable the wash hand basins in the sanitary facilities adjoining the Baby, Toddler and Preschool 1 rooms and at the wash hand basin in the staff sanitary facility. Recorded water temperature readings ranged from 21.4°C to 22.8°C. Cold water temperatures may impede effective handwashing.
3. Six of the eight available cot mattresses were not waterproof or fitted with waterproof mattress protectors, as required to reduce the risk of cross infection. One of the six cot mattresses was not fitted with any mattress protector.
4. In the following sanitary areas, hygienic hand drying was not ensured, which increased the risk of cross infection: the Toddler room sanitary facility and nappy changing area, the Preschool 1 sanitary facility and the staff toilet facility. As loose rolls of paper towelling were in use, this required each person to handle the roll of towelling after they had washed their hands, while their hands remained wet. This was also found at the previous inspection on 8 May 2023. The CAPA response at the time stated that the paper rolls had been removed and the paper towels from the dispenser would be used going forward. However, this was only found in practice in the nappy changing room adjoining the Baby room and remained an issue in the other sanitary areas.
5. Foldable green mats in the outdoor play area were not maintained in a clean condition, which increased the risk of cross infection. The mats, which had been discarded on the ground were dirty, wet and torn.

### Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective & Preventive Action

##### General Safety:

1. The reply stated that all parents have been informed that medication must be handed to staff, and not placed in the children's bags. All medication will be kept in the fridge or on shelves, out of children's reach, at all times. Any medication out of date will not be permitted on the premises.

##### Infection Control:

2. The registered provider outlined that extra pellets were required for the boiler at the time of inspection. Going forward, water temperatures will be checked throughout the day and pellets will be topped up to ensure that warm water is available.
3. Waterproof mattress protectors have been purchased for all mattresses. As a preventive measure, mattresses will be checked to ensure that all have waterproof protectors.
4. The written reply stated that a delivery of paper towels for the paper towel dispensers, was awaited at the time of inspection. An alternative company has since installed new paper towel dispensers. Going forward, staff will ensure that all paper towel dispensers are stocked at all times and will contact the company before running out of stock.
5. The mats have been disposed of. All equipment both indoors and outdoors will be checked on a weekly basis.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

##### General Safety:

1. Photographic evidence to demonstrate where medication will be stored.

##### Infection Control:

2. An invoice from the plumber and photographic evidence to demonstrate a water temperature reading of 37.4°C.
3. Photographic evidence.
4. Photographic evidence.
5. The statement from the registered provider is accepted as evidence.

### Summary Comment

The corrective action implemented by the registered provider has addressed the non-compliances identified under regulation 23.

### 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) Four of the adults who were employed at the setting held current First Aid Response (FAR) certification and the staff roster demonstrated that at least one of these adults was on duty at all times, during the hours of operation.

### Part VI - Safety

#### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

#### Compliance Information

The available insurance certificate demonstrated that adequate cover was in place for the full day care service, with an expiry date of 27 March 2025.

## Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

### Regulation 29 - Premises

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

- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

### Non-Compliance Information

- (d) The electric hand dryer in the staff sanitary facility was not functioning.
- (e) There was inadequate drainage at the wash hand basin in the Baby room nappy changing area and at the wash hand basin in the staff sanitary facility. Water from these taps was observed to accumulate and pool in the basins.

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

#### Corrective and Preventive Action

- (d) The written reply outlined that the hand dryer is no longer in use, paper towels are used instead.
- (e) A drain unblocker has been used on the wash hand basins. All sinks will be checked to ensure that the water is flowing freely.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

- (d) The statement from the registered provider is accepted as evidence.
- (e) Photographic evidence.

### Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider was assessed and deemed to meet regulatory compliance with regulation 29.