

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC430
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Name of Service:	Tiny Tots Montessori School
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Address of Service:	1 Townview, Mallow, Co. Cork.
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Eircode:	P51 XH63
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Name of Registered Provider:	Catherine Cronin
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	30/05/2023
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No of pre-school children:	AM	14	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	134 Bank Place, Mallow, Cork. P51 EC59
Inspection undertaken by:	E. Friel
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).

Conditions if applicable	Not Applicable
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Description of service

Tiny Tots Montessori School is a private early years sessional service in operation since 1989. The service is registered for children aged from two years to six years of age and currently takes children aged from two years and 8 months to six years of age. The Early Years Care and Education (Scheme) is facilitated between the hours of 9:00 am until 12 noon, Monday to Friday, 38 weeks of the year.

Tiny Tots Montessori School is located in residential housing estate in the urban town of Mallow in North Cork. It operates from a purpose-built extension of the family home which has its own entrance at the side of the house. The service comprises a care room, sanitary accommodation is provided for both adults and children. There is a large outdoor play area located at the side of the service.

Staffing

There are two staff members including the registered provider.

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 and safety. The inspections 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.

Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, deputy 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*
- (c) there is a clear management structure in the service that identifies the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and unpaid worker.*

(2) A registered provider shall ensure that each employee, unpaid worker and contractor is suitable and competent taking into consideration the nature of the needs of children, including by-

- (a) consideration of references from the person's past employers, if any, and in particular the most recent employer, if any,*
- (b) consideration of references from reputable sources in the case of a person who has no past employers,*
- (c) consideration of the vetting disclosure received from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána in accordance with the Act of 2012 in respect of the person, and*

(d) ensuring, insofar as is practicable, that where a person has lived in a state other than the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months, he or she provides police vetting from the police authorities in that state.

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that, without prejudice to the generality of paragraph (2) and subject to paragraphs (5) and (6), each employee working directly with children attending the service holds at least a major award in Early childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) The registered provider was the designated person in charge and a second person was available to deputise.
 - (b) At all times the designated person and the deputy were in the service while the pre-school children were present.
 - (c) Both the designated person and the deputy were aware of their roles and responsibilities.
- (2) Recruitment records and files were reviewed with regards to the designated person and the deputy.
- (a) (b) There were four references available from sources other than previous employers.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures from the National Vetting Bureau were available for both adults.
 - (d) Recruitment records indicated that international police vetting was not required as both adults had not lived outside of the State for a period of six consecutive months.
- (4) One staff member had a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications and the second adult had a letter deemed equivalent by the Minister.

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) There were at all times an adequate number of adults working with the children at all times.

(2) The adult/child ratio was met. There were fourteen children in attendance with two adults.

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

The registered provider ensured that a record for each of the seventeen pre-school children was kept in the service. The inspector reviewed the pre-school records of each child and found they contained the necessary particulars of (a)-(i) above.

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) The name, position, qualifications and experience of the designated person and the deputy were available in the recruitment records and files.
 - (b) The class of service and age profile of the children was stated on the service's Tulsa registration certificate which was displayed on the wall in the service.
 - (c) (d) (e) (f) These particulars were available in the service's parent handbook.
 - (g) The service had available, in soft copies, the policies, procedures and statements required to be maintained in accordance with Regulation 10.
 - (h) Attendance details were kept in an attendance book and were recorded by the registered provider as children entered and left the service.
 - (i) Staff rosters were available, and staff were noted to have signed in and out each day.
 - (j) An individual medical plan was available for one child for whom medical consent had been signed for by the parents in the event of an emergency.
 - (k) The accident/incident report book contained five records dating from 2016 to 2021, each record contained the core requirements including the parent's signature.

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

BASIC NEEDS:

- The parents/guardians provided the morning snack which was observed to be healthy and nutritious and conformed with the service's healthy eating policy. A variety of food was noted including wraps, filled sandwiches, yogurt, cheese and a selection of various fruits. Water was available throughout the morning.
- Children were encouraged to manage their own personal care and were observed accessing the toilet independently and washing their hands hygienically afterwards. Staff were on hand to provide support.
- Children were observed resting and relaxing throughout the morning in the rest/quiet area which had a child sized sofa.
- The children were able to move freely in both the indoor and outdoor areas and were accommodated individually, in small groups and large groups.

SUPPORTING CHILDREN'S RELATIONSHIPS:

- Staff were observed throughout the morning engaged in conversation with the children helping, assisting, encouraging and praising them in various activities including tabletop counting puzzles, constructing a Hoover from cubes, putting on dressing up outfits and providing paper for a painting activity.
- Children who required additional learning materials were facilitated with staff seeking and providing resources, in consultation with the children, that satisfied their learning needs. This was demonstrated when two of the children completed a puzzle and called on the staff member to share their achievement. In the conversation that followed the children wanted a more difficult puzzle and the staff member consulted with them about which one they wanted and brought the puzzle over.
- New water equipment had been bought for the outdoor play area and the children were supported and encouraged to turn take and share.

- At collection time staff were observed in conversation with the parents/guardians. In discussion afterwards staff stated that they use the phone, a messaging application, and notes to communicate with parents/guardians. The registered provider stated that they have an open-door policy and the parents can call at any time.
- Meetings were stated as happening informally on a daily basis with staff exchanging ideas and discussing seasonal plans in relation to the curriculum.
- The children were given advance warning of transitions between the change of activities with staff ringing a bell and verbalising how long they had left at that time and what was happening next.
- Staff members displayed a positive attitude to teamwork and were observed to be supportive to each other throughout the morning.

PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

- The care room was laid out in clearly defined areas, there was a book area with a selection of age and stage appropriate books which supported the children's language development and imagination. A well stocked home corner with play food and utensils which encouraged imagination and role play including dolls and two wooden kitchens, dolls house and tool bench. Sensory equipment including kinetic sand and plasticine were available and in use. Equipment which supported fine motor skills was notes including threading spools and peg boards.
- Additional materials and resources were available from baskets on low-level shelving which facilitated choice, independence and curiosity, and were easily accessible.
- The walls of the care room were brightly decorated with the children's artwork including sticky butterfly pictures and photographs of each child with a poem "This is me". There were additional photographs of all of the children engaged in activities both indoors and outdoors.
- The children were observed playing in the outdoor play area which provided an alternative change of environment for the children. A range of developmentally appropriate equipment and opportunities were provided including tree swings, slides and riding down the ramp on a car which provided a degree of risk and challenge, which the children happily engaged in. A covered area was available where children were observed transporting sand from the trough to the mud kitchen, while others were drawing on flower black boards and squirting water toys. A rest area was available with soft furnishings along with dressing up outfits with one child requiring assistance from a staff member to put it on.

PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES:

- Observations of the children were available, and these detailed the children’s learning while in the service. Scrap books were furnished to the inspector with children’s drawings, arts and crafts, pencil work and colouring of shapes.
- Children’s language development was supported through one-to-one discussions and group discussions throughout the morning. Stories were read which included a rhyming farm book and songs including “I am a little teapot, Here are the beehives and The old man from Peru” were heard being sung. The children engaged enthusiastically answering questions and joining in with the singing.

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:

- All internal and external doors were secured to prevent children exiting the building unsupervised or unauthorised adults gaining entry.
- Windows were fitted with restrictors preventing children exiting or falling.
- A handrail was present on the ramp to the outdoor play area enabling children to walk safely and independently.
- All indoor and outdoor toys appeared in good condition and well maintained.
- Heavy equipment and furniture were secured to ensure that they did not tip over.
- All flexes and cables were stored out of reach of the children.
- Locks were fitted on storage areas making them inaccessible.
- Cleaning agents were stored in the kitchen, the children did not have access to this area.
- The TV was mounted securely to the wall.
- The outdoor play perimeter was secured by a high concrete block wall with a high metal gate which was bolted.

Infection Control:

- Children were observed handwashing before eating their morning snack, after toileting and upon return from outdoor play. They had access to thermostatically controlled hot water (33°C), dispensing soap, blue roll to dry their hands and a pedal operated bin was available to dispose of the roll. Staff were nearby to provide assistance, if required.
- Perishable food was stored in the fridge to prevent spoilage.
- Tissues were available and a staff member was observed offering a child a tissue to wipe their nose, the child took the tissue and when finished disposed of it in the pedal operated bin.
- Staff were observed disinfecting the tables before and after snack and sweeping the floor maintaining a safe and healthy environment and preventing accidents.
- The care room was kept adequately ventilated with the open windows.
- Children’s belongings were stored on hooks with their names, off the floor area.
- Cleaning rotas with details of areas to be cleaned were completed and up to date.

Administration of Medication:

- Anti-febrile medication was available, stored in its original container, and clearly labelled.

Safe Sleep:

- A rest/quiet area was available, it was furnished with a children’s sofa. Children were observed sitting looking through books and chatting with their friends in this area throughout the morning.

Fire Safety:

- Emergency fire doors were unobstructed and fitted with thumb twist cylinders aiding the quick evacuation of the adults and children in the event of an emergency.
- The fire extinguishers were secured to the wall.
- The fire assembly point was visible in the outdoor area, a safe distance from the service. [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Part VI – Safety

Regulation 25 - First aid

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a person trained in first aid for children is, at all times, immediately available to the children attending the pre-school service.

(2) A registered provider shall ensure that a suitably equipped first aid box for children-

(a) is safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position on the premises, and

(b) is available to the children attending the pre-school service at all times.

Compliance Information

(1) Both the registered provider and the deputy had valid First Aid Responder (FAR) certificates. The expiry dates were recorded as July 2023 and October 2023.

(2)

(a) (b) A suitably equipped first aid bag which was easily accessible and visible at all times was stored on a shelf in the care room.

Part VI – Safety

Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of-

(a) any fire drill that takes place in the premises, and

(b) the number, type and maintenance record of fire fighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.

(4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire shall be displayed in a conspicuous position in the premises.

Compliance Information

(1)

(a) A written record of regular fire drills which took place in the service were available and were furnished to the inspector to review. The last fire drill was recorded as taking place on 28 April 2023.

(b) Written records were available detailing the number, type and maintenance of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms. The maintenance certificate for the firefighting equipment was dated 13 January 2023 and the smoke alarm certificate was dated 31 March 2023.

Part VI – Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured that the service had insurance. A written record of the insurance stated the service was insured for 22 sessional children and the expiry date was noted as 27 March 2024. Other particulars in the policy included items such as fire and theft, public liability and outings cover.