

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

**TUSLA Identifier:** TU2015CC430

**Name of Service:** Tiny Tots Montessori School

**Address of Service:** 1 Townview, Mallow, Co Cork

**Eircode:** P51 XH63

**Name of Registered Provider:** Catherine Cronin

**Service type:** Sessional

**Date of Inspection:** 10/11/2025

<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	11	PM	N/A
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**Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:** 13 Market Square  
Mallow  
Cork  
P51DD5Y

**Inspection undertaken by:** B Fraher

**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** N/A

### Description of service

Tiny Tots Montessori is a private early years sessional service located in a residential housing estate in Mallow, Cork. The service is registered for children from 2 to 6 years and currently has children from 2 years 8 months to 6 years. The Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme runs between 9:00 and 12:00, Monday to Friday, 38 weeks of the year. The service comprises of a care room, sanitary accommodation and an outdoor play area located at the side of the house.

### Staffing

There were four staff attached to the service and a total of two staff were working directly with the children on the day of inspection. The registered provider was on leave currently.

### 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 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.

## Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the children, person in charge and staff 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 service had a designated person in charge on the day of inspection and a named deputy in the service that could deputise as required.
- (b) The deputy was on duty at the service when the inspector arrived. The staff roster indicated the deputy was on duty at all times during the hours of operation as the registered provider was on leave.
- (2) Following a review of previous inspection information, information available on inspection and discussion with the person in charge it was determined that two new staff members had been employed since the previous inspection.
- The two new staff members worked directly with the children. A total of two files were reviewed. In addition, Garda vetting for two staff members whose disclosures were identified as due for renewal were requested for review.
- (a) Of the four required references, four were from previous employers with required records of validation on file.
- (b) Of the four required references, none were from a source other than a past employer.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures were obtained and were on file for the four staff. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d) Police vetting was not required for any of the adults as they did not live outside of the state for longer than six consecutive months.
- (4) Three adults directly working with the children held a relevant qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education from level 5 to level 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

### Non-Compliance Information

- (4) There was no evidence available to demonstrate that the qualification held by one of the adults met the minimum requirement of a level 5 award in Early Childhood Care and Education as listed on the National Framework of Qualifications.

## Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The following statement was received from the registered provider:

### **Corrective and Preventive Action**

The qualifications have been assessed and are not recognised on the National Framework of Qualifications. The staff member is no longer employed in the service.

### **Supporting documentation submitted**

The statement from the registered provider has been accepted.

## Summary Comment

The corrective action submitted by the registered provider has addressed the non-compliance identified under Regulation 9(4).

## 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 met the regulatory requirements:

1. The infection control policy
2. The healthy eating policy

The above policies and procedures guide the staff in their care practices.

## 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.*

*(3) Subject to paragraph (5), a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 2 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) therefore at that reference number is satisfied.*

### Compliance Information

- (1) At the time of inspection, there were the adequate number of adults required, responsible for the direct care and supervision of the children in attendance at all times.
- (3) The service exceeded the minimum ratio required as per regulation in the care room. The 11 children attending the service were supervised directly by 2 adults.

### 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

On the day of inspection, the following information was obtained through direct observation and discussion with the staff and examination of relevant documents.

#### Basic needs:

- Snack provided by the parents/guardians was observed to be healthy and nutritious. Children were observed eating ham sandwiches, cheese, rice cakes, crackers, yogurt and a variety of fruits.
- Each child had access to an individual water bottle and they were easily accessible throughout the morning.
- The inspector noted that one child sat longer at the snack table than the other children, who had finished snack, was given sufficient time to eat without being rushed.
- Children were observed accessing the sanitary area independently with adults available to provide assistance if needed.
- Children observed playing in the outdoor play area were appropriately dressed in keeping with the weather.
- Children had the opportunity to rest or relax with soft seating in the form of a child size vinyl sofa. Age and stage appropriate books were positioned nearby on a book rack.

### Supporting relationships:

- The staff were observed to show positive regard for the children on the day of inspection. The children were encouraged and praised during tasks in a warm and caring manner for example when children played with toys, painted, coloured and built items.
- Staff informed the inspector that the service operated in partnership with the parent, communicating in person with parents or guardians at collection or drop off, contacting via telephone, text message or email if needed.
- The atmosphere was observed to be relaxed in the care room at all times during the inspection and teamwork was evident between the staff and the children.
- Family photos were displayed on the walls which promoted a sense of belonging for the children.
- Staff engaged with the children in both group and individual activities by getting down to their level and maintaining eye contact while discussing, questioning and helping children with their chosen task. This was observed on numerous occasions for example when staff played captain America, with the kitchens and during outdoor play.
- Staff members were observed to sing with the children during circle time where the children heartily enjoyed the fun. This supported positive relationships with the children.
- Staff were observed encouraging positive behaviour. This was observed when staff encouraged children to take turns when children were using the slide in the outdoor area.

## 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 entrance door was secured appropriately. This restricted unauthorised access to the building and prevented the risk of children exiting unsupervised.
- The windows in the care room were adequately secured to ensure the safety of the children.
- Cleaning agents were stored out of reach of the children.

- The outdoor area was enclosed by a stone wall and had metal gates and was observed to be a safe and secure space for the children. This prevented children gaining unsupervised access to an unsafe area.

### Infection control:

- Handwashing facilities were accessible to the children with warm running water, liquid soap and paper towels.
- Children were observed to wash their hands before meals and after using the sanitary facilities.
- Children's coats were hanging on hooks on the walls.

### Administration of medication:

- The registered provider informed the inspector that no regular medicine was being administered to a child currently in the service. The service has a medication administration record that they can use if needed.

### Fire safety:

- Fire exits were noted to be free from obstruction.
- Fire extinguishers were secured to the walls.

### Non-Compliance Information

#### Infection control:

The inspector observed the children playing on a cloth single bed mattress on the ground in the outdoor roofed play area. Staff informed the inspector that this mattress remains uncovered outdoors throughout the year. This poses an infection control risk.

#### Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The following statement was received by the registered provider:

#### Corrective & Preventive Action

#### Infection control:

The mattress has been removed and no mattress will be used in the future in the outdoor setting.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

#### Infection control:

Photographic evidence was received in the office of the inspectorate.

#### Summary Comment

The corrective action submitted by the registered provider has addressed the non-compliance identified under Regulation 23.

### 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 attendance book was available and the inspector observed that all the children present on the day had their check in and out times completed.

(3)

(b) A daily record of visitors to the premises was maintained. The inspector was signed in and out on a record book.

### Part VI - Safety

#### Regulation 27 – Supervision

*A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.*

#### Compliance Information

Children were supervised primarily by sight at all times, with enough staff on-site to effectively monitor the preschool children. Closer supervision was provided during risky activities like using the small slide. The layout of the indoor and outdoor environments facilitated visual and sound supervision of all children by staff while also allowing children some quiet space.

### 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 services was adequately insured. The insurance policy commenced on 2 March 2025 and will expire on 27 March 2026.