

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CE145
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Name of Service:	Tiny Tots Montessori
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Address of Service:	19 Elm Park, Gort Road, Ennis, Co. Clare
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Eircode:	V95 R898
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Name of Registered Provider:	Donna McNamara
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	04/11/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	10	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate Tusla Child and Family Agency Primary Care Centre Station Road Ennis County Clare.
Inspection undertaken by:	A.McCarthy
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 was established in 2003, as a private childcare facility in Ennis, County Clare. A programme of care and education is provided Monday to Friday from 09:30 to 12:30. The sessional service is facilitated in one care room in a single-storey building attached to a domestic dwelling. An enclosed outdoor play area is located to the rear of the childcare facility.

Staffing

On the 04 November 2024, the registered provider facilitated the sessional programme singlehandedly. An adult is available within close proximity to assist the registered provider in the event of an emergency.

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 an unannounced and focused on the areas of governance, health, welfare and development of child and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required. The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations:

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment (1)(a)(b), (2)(a)(b)(c)(d) and (4)

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels (1), (3), (8)(c)

Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

Regulation 19 - Health, welfare and development of child (1)(a)

Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

Regulation 25 - First aid (1), (2)(a)(b).

Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures (1)(a)(b)(4).

Regulation 28 – Insurance

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. 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 and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that-

- (a) the service has a designated person in charge and a named person who is able to deputise as required,
- (b) at all times during the period when the pre-school service is being carried on, the designated person in charge or the named person referred to in subparagraph (a) is on the premises, and

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

- (a) consideration of references from the person's past employers, if any, and in particular the most recent employer, if any,
- (b) consideration of references from reputable sources in the case of a person who has no past employers,
- (c) consideration of the vetting disclosure received from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána in accordance with the Act of 2012 in respect of the person, and
- (d) ensuring, insofar as is practicable, that where a person has lived in a state other than the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months, he or she provides police vetting from the police authorities in that state.

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

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

The registered provider was the person in charge and an emergency contact was available in the event of an emergency.

(b)

The registered provider was the person in charge during the inspection.

(2)

Two files were available in respect of the registered provider and the emergency contact person. The findings included the following:

(a)

Two written and validated references from past employers were available.

(b)

Two written and validated references from a source other than a past employer were available.

(c)

Garda vetting disclosures were available in respect of the adults working in the service. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d)

International police vetting was not required in respect of the registered provider and emergency contact person.

(4)

The registered provider and emergency contact person hold a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 6 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

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.

(8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-

(c) a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that, where the person in charge operates the service single-handedly, a second person familiar with the operation of the service and in a position to provide assistance to the person in charge in operating the service is, at all times, within close distance of the service and available to attend the service to assist the person in charge in the event of an emergency.

Compliance Information

- (1)
An adequate number of adults worked directly with the children in attendance.
- (3)
On the 04 November 2024, the ratio of adults caring for children was maintained. One adult cared for the ten children in attendance.
- (8)(c)
The registered provider operated the service single-handedly. A person familiar with the operation of the service and in a position to provide assistance to the registered provider in operating the service was available within close distance of the service.

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.*
- (3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-*
- (a) a parent or guardian of a pre-school child but only in respect of the record relating to that child,*
 - (b) an employee who is authorised in that behalf by the registered provider, and*
 - (c) an authorised person.*

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) is retained for a period of 2 years from the date on which the child to whom it relates ceases to attend the service.

Compliance Information

- (1)
The registered provider maintained records for the eleven children enrolled in the service. The records included the required particulars outlined from (a) to (i).
- (3)(a)(b)(c)
The children’s registration forms were open to inspection in the service.
- (4)
The registered provider confirmed that the records referred to in paragraph (1) are retained for a period of two years after the children cease to attend the service.

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)
The children’s learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the service through the provision of appropriate activities, interactions, materials, and equipment, having regard to age and level of development of the children:

Basic Needs of Children:

The adult cared for the children in a kind and caring manner and positive behavioural strategies were used during interactions. The children were treated in a sensitive manner, soft tones of voice were used, and the children’s needs were responded to promptly.

The children were encouraged to be independent in play and learning, whilst caring for their belongings and using the toilet. The children were supported in their choice of individual and group engagement in activities. The transitions in the children's activities were completed with ease. The children sat together during mealtime and conversed amicably with their peers and the adult. The parents/guardians provided the children's food. Mealtime was observed to be a relaxed and sociable occasion. The transitions in activities were completed in a calm manner and the children were notified in advance of these changes.

Physical and Material Environment:

One care room was in operation during the inspection. The children were offered a range of developmentally challenging activities and were observed to be fully engaged in the play-based programme. The care room was well-resourced and were laid out for the children to readily access the equipment and materials. Numerical, alphabetical learning aids and creative work were displayed on the walls in the care room. A variety of opportunities for play and learning activities were available and accessible in the indoor and outdoor environments with defined areas of interest. The care room was appropriately resourced with, pretend wooden kitchens, a shop and an area for the children to rest and relax. Low level shelving units were accessible to the children with a range of manipulative, imaginative and constructive toys and learning materials for the age and level of development of the children. The outdoor play area was located to the side and rear of the service. This area was partially covered and had a synthetic and natural grass surface. The children had access to a large wooden activity unit, a sand table, a goalpost, a mud kitchen, swings, a slide and an area with low level seating.

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 was secured to monitor the safe entry and exit of the children to and from the childcare facility.
- The outdoor area was secured to protect the children within and the children were supervised at all times during the inspection.
- The children's arrival and departure from the service was recorded in a record book.
- Cleaning agents were stored in a secured area out of reach of the children.

Infection Control:

- The service was maintained in a clean and hygienic condition.
- The sanitary facilities were equipped with running water, liquid soap, hand paper towels and lidded, lined pedal operated bins. Child friendly handwashing posters were located above the wash hand basins as prompters to promote good handwashing practices.
- The children washed their hands at appropriate intervals after activities, sneezing, using the toilet and before mealtime.

Administration of Medication:

- Medication was not administered during the inspection. The registered provider confirmed that medication is not administered routinely.

Fire Safety:

- The fire exit routes and passageways were clear from obstruction.
- The fire exit routes, and fire assembly points were readily identified with signage.
- The service demonstrated evidence of completing monthly fire drills to prepare the service to respond in the event of fire.

Outing:

- The registered provider stated that outings are not undertaken by the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 25 - First aid

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

(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)

One adult working in the service had a record of up to date First Aid Responder (FAR) training.

(2)(a)

A suitably equipped first aid box was stored in a readily identifiable area in the care room.

(b)

A first aid box was available in a central location in the room for use by an adult in the event of an emergency.

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)

Records were available to demonstrate that monthly fire drills were carried out in the service. A fire drill took place on the 07 October 2024.

(b)

A record of the number, type and maintenance for the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarm system were available. The most recent firefighting equipment and smoke alarm system service took place in November 2024.

(4)

A fire action notice demonstrating the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in the service.

Part VI – Safety

Regulation 28 – Insurance

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

Compliance Information

Up to date insurance cover was available for eleven pre-school children. The policy is valid until the 27 March 2025.