

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier: TU2015CE148

Name of Service: Toddle Inn

Address of Service: Bru na Sionna, Shannon, Co Clare

Eircode: V14 D718

Name of Registered Provider: Cora Devaney

Service type: Full Day, Part Time, Sessional

Date(s) of Inspection: 28/05/2025

No of pre-school children:	AM	84	PM	73
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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:	J Hayes & M Riordan
Title:	Early years inspectors

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

Toddle Inn is a private full day care service located in Shannon in Co. Clare. It provides care for pre-school children on a sessional, part time and full day care basis. The service is open from 7.30am to 5.30pm, Monday to Friday. It is registered to cater for up to 99 pre-school children attending on a sessional basis or 86 children attending on a full day care basis.

There are six preschool rooms in the service, a kitchen, sanitary accommodation/nappy change areas and two dedicated sleep rooms. The outdoor play areas are divided into sections and are located to the front and rear of the premises. These areas are directly accessible from each individual preschool room.

Staffing

The registered provider is the owner of the service and the person in charge of the service on a daily basis. A designated deputy manager is also available. The registered provider and twenty six adults are employed in the service.

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.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under
Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment (1)(a)(b), (2)(a)(b)(c)(d) and (4)
Regulation 11 - Staffing levels (1) (2) and (8)(a)
Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service (1)(a) to (k)
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. 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 inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, 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)

On 28 May 2025, the registered provider was the person in charge and the assistant manager was available to deputise in their absence.

(b)

The registered provider and a named person to deputise was available at all times during the inspection.

(2)

Twenty-seven files were available in respect of the registered provider and the adults employed by the service. The findings included the following:

(a)

Twenty-seven written and validated references from past employers in respect of the adults working in the service were available.

(b)
Twenty-five written and validated references were available from a source other than a past employer in respect of the adults working in the service.

(c)
Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for twenty-seven adults. However, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. Please refer to the information outlined under regulation 23 of this report.

(d)
International police vetting was available in respect of three adults working in the service who lived in another state for a period longer than six months.

(4)
The registered provider, deputy manager and fifteen adults working directly with the pre-school children during the inspection held Early Childhood Care and Education qualifications at Level 5 to level 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a) There were only one reference each available for 2 adults working at the service. A second written and validated reference was not available.

(4) Three of the adults who worked directly with the pre-school children during the inspection did not hold an Early Childhood Care and Education qualification at a minimum of Level 5 on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(a) All staff files have been updated ensuring that two validated references are in place on each file.

The registered provider stated that the service will ensure all staff files are maintained up to date.

(4) Two of the staff members are no longer working in the service. Evidence of qualification for the third staff member has been forwarded.

The registered provider stated that all staff will have appropriate qualifications before hiring.

Supporting documentation submitted

Evidence of the qualification for the required adult was forwarded to the office of the Early Years Inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions, and the evidence submitted. The non compliances identified have been adequately addressed.

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)
During the inspection an adequate number of adults worked directly with the children in attendance.
- (2)
On the 28 May 2025 nineteen adults supervised eighty-four children in the morning and fourteen adults cared for seventy-three children in the afternoon.
- (8)(a)
The staff roster demonstrated that more than two adults were available in the service at all times.

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) Records in relation to the following were maintained and available at the service
- (a) The name, position, qualifications and experience of the registered provider, deputy person in charge and all adults in the service.
 - (b) Details of the type of service provided and the age profile of children that are catered for was displayed in the reception area.
 - (c) Details of the adult/child ratios in the service.
 - (d) The type of care or programme provided in the service was outlined in the childcare application system.
 - (e) The facilities available were outlined in the statement of purpose and function for the service.
 - (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 was recorded in the childcare application system.

- (i) Details of staff rosters on a daily basis were available in both hard and soft copies.
- (h) The children's arrival and departure times to and from the childcare facility were recorded on the childcare application system.
- (i) A staff roster was available detailing the rostered hours, roles and assigned rooms for the adults employed in the service.
- (j) Details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent was available.
- (k) Details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending 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

Basic Needs

A healthy eating policy was implemented at the service, ensuring the provision of nutritious foods and snacks to children daily. Breakfast was available for early arrivals, while a mid-morning snack included fresh fruit options, yogurts, crackers, and sandwiches. A nutritious hot meal was served for dinner with alternative choices provided if necessary to accommodate specific dietary needs. Mealtimes were adaptable to each child's individual requirements as food was provided for children who became hungry earlier than the allocated dinner time. For children who needed earlier sleep, dinner was postponed until after their rest period. An afternoon snack featuring brown bread sandwiches, a variety of fresh fruits, and yogurts were also provided. Children's drinks were removed from their bags each morning and stored on accessible shelves to encourage regular hydration throughout the day.

Nappy changing facilities were located adjacent to the Baby room and near the Manager's office. Waist-high changing units were accessible and maintained in good condition, with easy-to-clean change mats supplied. Steps were provided to ensure ease of access for children. Nappy changing procedures were displayed above the units, and staff were observed adhering to these guidelines as outlined in the policy. Open shelving units held children's

toiletries, all clearly labelled and within easy reach of staff. Handwashing facilities were situated next to each changing unit, and foot pedal-operated, lined and lidded bins were available for safe nappy disposal.

The service featured two sleep rooms, one positioned directly next to the Baby room and the other accessible for Toddlers. Each child had access to a cot when needed. Both rooms were equipped with blackout blinds to minimise lighting during sleep times. Air conditioning units in the sleep rooms ensured a consistent and safe room temperature. For children over two years old, requiring a nap, low-level beds were provided. Staff remained in the sleep room and closely monitored all children during sleep. All sleep checks were recorded electronically through a communication app.

Physical and Material Environment

The Baby room was large, bright, and spacious with soft mats for floor play. Low couches provide rest areas, while adult seating allowed staff to sit with children. Shelves with labelled boxes held age-appropriate toys, and each child had a personal basket for belongings. A fridge stored perishable drinks. Push toys and a ball pool aided early walking and climbing skills, while stationary toys helped with standing.

The Wobbler room offered ample floor space for activities. A central climbing frame included steps, crawl spaces, and a low slide. The home corner featured a kitchen unit with utensils, dolls, and prams for imaginative play. Soft seating was available for rest close to the library area.

The Toddler room has low tables and chairs for meals and tabletop activities. Construction materials, open-ended play items, and puzzles were easily accessible. A supervised small trampoline was accessible in the room.

Rooms accommodating children over three years of age were designed to meet their individual needs. Tuff trays with sensory materials and open-ended play items like building blocks and art supplies were available. Children's artwork, family photos and educational posters were displayed at children's eye level. Room layout and designs were rearranged depending on each child's evolving interests and their stage of development. A sensory room with soft matting and subdued lighting was available and provided a quiet space for children to relax and take time out from the large group activities.

Outdoor play areas were directly accessible from each room. Babies have a safely enclosed area. Canopies and trees provided shelter. Raised flower beds supported digging and gardening activities. Timber playhouses and models of trains and pirate ships offered imaginative play opportunities. Doors to outdoor areas remain open for easy movement between indoor and outdoor play.

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 internal and external entrances were secured to monitor the safe entry and exit of the children to and from the childcare facility.
- The designated outdoor areas were secured with fencing and gates to protect the children within.
- The children in attendance were recorded on arrival and on departure from the service in record book.
- The highchairs used by the younger children at mealtimes were in good condition and fitted with safety harnesses.
- Storage facilities were secured and inaccessible to the children.
- The blind cords were appropriately secured to the windows throughout the service.

Infection Control:

- The service was maintained in a clean condition and completed cleaning schedules were displayed and demonstrated measures taken by staff to clean and maintain the service.
- The children's perishable food items and infant formula were stored correctly in fridges in the care rooms. Artificial formula milk was prepared by parents at home and stored in the refrigerator in the care room.
- Suitable nappy changing areas were available, and a nappy changing procedure was clearly displayed on the wall close to the change mats.
- The children were supported by staff to wash their hands at appropriate intervals such as after activities, using the toilet and outdoor play and before mealtime.

Administration of Medication:

- The adults demonstrated an awareness of the service's administration of medication policy and procedure.
- Documentation was available for the adults to record medication administered to the children in attendance.

Safe Sleep:

- The sleep rooms accommodated standard sized cots for the babies to sleep.

- The sleep room and care room temperatures were maintained between 16-20 °Celsius in the areas where children sleep
- An electronic thermometer was available for the adults to measure and monitor the room temperatures.
- The adults demonstrated an awareness of the service's safe sleep policy.
- The children's sleep observations were completed every ten minutes. These observations included the children's colour, position and breathing.
- Low level beds with individual blankets and bedlinen were available for the older children who required sleep.

Fire Safety:

- The adults had evidence on file of up-to-date fire safety training.
- The fire exits 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 conducted by the service.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

- Garda vetting was available for twenty-seven adults employed by the service. However, three vetting disclosures were not dated within the previous three years in adherence with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice. It is acknowledged that evidence of applications for renewal of Garda vetting on 29 May 2025 were submitted by the service.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

Garda vetting for the staff members has been renewed and the service will ensure that all staff members garda vetting is up to date and dated in the previous three years, in adherence with the Early years inspectorate regulatory notice.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Evidence of the updated garda vetting disclosures for the three adults was forwarded to the office of the Early Years Inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions, and the evidence submitted. The non compliances identified have been adequately addressed.

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)

Eleven adults in the service held a record of up to date First Aid Responder (FAR) training.

(2)(a)

Suitably equipped first aid boxes was stored in each playroom, at reception and in the kitchen.

(b)

The first aid boxes were available in the care rooms for use by the adults 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 by the service. The last fire drill took place on the 23 May 2025.

(b)

Up-to-date records of the number, type and maintenance service were available for the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarm system. The most recent service of the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarm system respectively took place on 09 October 2024 and 23 September 2024.

(4)

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

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 thirty children. The insurance policy for the sessional service is valid until the 27 March 2026