

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CW048
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Name of Service:	Tots to Teens
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Address of Service:	Shillelagh Road, Tullow, Co. Carlow
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Eircode:	R93 A073
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Name of Registered Provider:	Aisling Dunne
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	05/04/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	26	PM	17
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Child and Family Agency Early Years Inspectorate, Ely hospital Ferrybank, Wexford
Inspection undertaken by:	E Mc Garry
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

This preschool service is located just outside the town of Tullow Co Carlow. The service offers full day care, part-time and a sessional Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme to preschool children aged between 6 months and 6 years of age. The service also provides a school aged service. The service operates from 7.30am to 6.00pm from Monday to Friday for 51 weeks per year. The service operates from a purpose-built premises. There are five preschool rooms, a baby room, wobbler room, junior toddler room ECCE room one, and a sessional room on the first floor. The service has access to four outdoor play areas to the rear of the premises. There are two sleep rooms available for children attending the service.

Staffing

The service employed a total of 16 staff, including the registered provider. All staff held an award in Early childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Qualifications Framework.

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 the following regulations:

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

Regulation 11 Staffing levels (1) (2),

Regulation 19 Health, Welfare, and Development of the Child (1) (a)(b),
Regulation 22 Food and Drink,
Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety, and Welfare of the Child,
Regulation 25 First aid (1) (2) (a) (b),
Regulation 26 Fire Safety (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 inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, person in charge, 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) (b)

The manager of the service was the designated person in charge on the day of the inspection and remained in the service for the duration of the inspection.

(2)

Following a discussion with the manager and on review of documentation, it was established that there were 16 staff employed in the service including a receptionist and a cook. All staff files were examined on the day of inspection.

(a)(b)

There were 27 written and validated references available on file from past employers.

- (b)
There were 5 written and validated references available on file from reputable sources.
- (c)
Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for 16 staff. However, the service did not adhere to the re vetting time frames as outlined in the preschool inspectorate regulatory notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every 3 years. Please refer to the information outlined under regulation 23.
- (d)
There was Police vetting available on file in the service for four staff members who had lived in a state other than Ireland for a period of longer than six consecutive months.
- (4)
All staff working directly with the preschool children held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework.

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 was an adequate number of staff working directly with the children attending the preschool service for the duration of the inspection.

(2)

Baby room

Closed on the day of inspection.

Wobbler room

10.30am there were 5 children aged 1 to 2 years of age in the care of 2 staff members

2.45pm there were 2 children aged 1 to 2 years of age in the care of 1 staff member.

Junior toddler room

10.40am there were 6 children aged 2 to 3 years of age in the care of 2 staff.

2.50pm there were 6 children aged 2 to 3 years of age in the care of 1 staff.

Bizzy Bees

10.45 am there were 15 children aged 3 to 6 years of age in the care of 2 staff.

2.55pm there were 9 children aged 3 to 6 years in the care of 2 staff.

Preschool room upstairs

Closed on the day of inspection.

The manager and the assistant manager were on the premises on the day of inspection and were available to assist in the rooms when required.

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

(1) A registered provider shall, in providing a pre-school service, ensure that-

(b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

The following observations and discussions with staff reflected the children's experience within the service.

Children in the wobbler room enjoyed playing with rice on large trays in the room during the morning of the inspection. Staff were observed to be engaged and interested in the children's activities. The daily routine was very calm and relaxed, with the children transitioning between activities seamlessly. Children were helped with handwashing before eating, and personal care was attended to regularly. For example, faces were cleaned after eating and children's noses wiped as needed. The room was well resourced with open shelves, homes corners, toys, books, and soft seating area. Artwork, birthday walls and family photos were on display. Staff were observed while settling children to sleep.

Children in the toddler room were observed during circle time. Staff ensured the children were made comfortable in the rest area. There were soft cushions and blankets for the children to sit on and get cosy. Staff were observed reading stories to the children. Staff were observed bringing the children in the toddler room outside to play. The children were wrapped up warmly in their coats and hats to ensure they were comfortable in the outdoor play area. Staff were kind and reassuring to a children when encouraging them to enjoy free play in the outdoor area.

In the afternoon children in the toddler room were engaged in a variety of tabletop activities such as playing with a large tray of shredded wheat and trays of coloured pasta and rice. The transitions between activities were calm, the staff gave the children prompts. The children were given flexibility and choice in the service. For example, one child in the toddler room slept through dinner time and was given their dinner when they woke up.

All the children attending on the day of inspection got out to play for extended periods of time in the outdoor area. Staff who spoke to the inspector said the service prioritised outdoor play for the fun and enjoyment of the children. One child in the toddler room was observed to get very excited when they saw the staff getting their outdoor gear ready to go outside.

(b)

Staff were observed handling the children’s individual sleep needs with care and attention. For example, picking up on cues which prompted them to settle the children to sleep. Such as when the children started to rub their eyes. They had their nappies changed and were promptly undressed and placed in their cots to sleep. Children who wore nappies had them changed regularly throughout the day and at other times when required. Children were encouraged to wash their hands afterwards. Older children were supported to use the toilet independently and were encouraged to wash their hands afterwards. Children were served a variety of healthy meals and snacks from the onsite kitchen. Water was freely available for all the children to drink in the preschool rooms.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 22 – Food and drink

A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

The service promoted healthy eating and had a healthy eating policy. The service had recently employed a cook to prepare main meals and snacks for the children from the onsite kitchen in the service. The freshly cooked dinner was served at mid-day and consisted of fish cakes, mixed vegetables and potatoes. Children were served homemade leek and potato soup and brown bread for their afternoon snack. Children also enjoyed homemade carrot cake muffins on the afternoon of the inspection.

The food provided was prepared and served to meet the stages of development of the children. For example, the food for younger children was a mashed/lumpy texture and the older children’s dinner was served whole. The meals for the older children were served in the dining room in the service. Children were observed to sit at tables that could seat up to six children. Staff were observed to sit with the children making the mealtime a sociable time for them. Water was given to the children to drink with their meals.

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 to the service was secured to prevent children from exiting unsupervised and to prevent unauthorised access to the service. Access to the service was gained by pressing a buzzer at the front door of the service. The receptionist could see people approaching to allow them access the service. The outdoor areas were safe, suitable and secure.

INFECTION CONTROL:

The service had an infection control policy. The service appeared to be clean with no obvious maintenance required. Cleaning schedules were maintained daily. Nappies and barrier creams provided by parents were clearly labelled and stored appropriately in the nappy changing areas. All toilets had access to warm water to support handwashing, liquid soap, disposable hand towels and pedal operated bins. The standard of hygiene in the service on the day of inspection was observed by the inspector to be high. Children were observed washing their hands before eating, after toileting and after messy play.

SAFE SLEEP:

The service had a safe sleep policy. Staff who spoke to the inspector demonstrated that they understood the importance of following safe sleep guidelines. There was documentary evidence in the service that the sleeping babies colour, position and breathing were observed to be physically checked and recorded every 10 minutes as per safe sleep guidelines.

Non-Compliance Information

Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all 16 staff members. However, the service did not adhere to the re vetting time frames as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate regulatory notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every 3 years for 3 staff members.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Garda vetting has been renewed for the three staff which had not adhered to the revetting time frames. Copies of the renewed garda vetting documents have been sent to the inspector. The Manager will ensure going forward that all staff will have Garda vetting renewed every 3 years as outlined in the preschool regulatory notice.

Evidence submitted.

Copies of the renewal of Garda vetting for the three staff which had not adhered to the revetting time frames on the day of inspection was received by the inspector.

Summary Comment

The response and evidence submitted is satisfactory to meet the requirements of The Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

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)

There was a person trained in a first aid responder course available to the children attending the service.

(2)(a)(b)

There was a suitably equipped first aid box stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position on the premises and was available to the children attending the preschool service.

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 firefighting 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)

There was a record of fire drills that had taken place in the service. The last fire drill was recorded as having taken place in March 2024.

(b)

The annual record of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment was carried out in October 2023. The smoke alarm in the premises was last serviced in January 2024.

(4)

There was a notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire displayed in a conspicuous position in the entrance door to the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

There was insurance in place to cover the children who were present on the day of inspection.