

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015DL004		
<b>Name of Service:</b>	Amanda's Cots'N'Tots Creche		
<b>Address of Service:</b>	Annaugh, Clonmany, Co. Donegal		
<b>Eircode:</b>	F93 YP44		
<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Amanda Kelly		
<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional		
<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	04/02/2026		
<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	34	PM 27
<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate, TUSLA Child & Family Agency, Markievicz House, Barrack St, Sligo, F91 XC84		
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	K Folan		
<b>Title:</b>	Early Years Inspector		
<b>Authority to Inspect</b>			
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).			
<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not Applicable.		

### Description of service

Amanda's Cots 'N' Tots is a privately owned and operated full day care service situated outside the of Clonmany in Co. Donegal. The service is registered to provide sessional, full day and part time care to children aged 0-6 years. The service opens from 08:00- 18:00 and this includes a morning sessional service from 9.15am – 12.15pm. A school age service is also provided onsite. The service operates from the ground floor of a domestic dwelling that has been purposely adapted for the provision of an early years' service. The premises consists of three playrooms, two of which are located in the main building and a third playroom operates from a portacabin on the grounds of the service. There is a junior preschool room, a senior preschool room and a baby/toddler room which is subdivided to provide a designated area for younger babies. There is a dedicated sleep room, laundry store, small office and relevant sanitary facilities. There are three outdoor play areas at the rear of the building.

### Staffing

There are 19 adults employed in the service. Of the 19 adults, 17 work directly with the children including the registered provider. In addition, the service employs a chef and an office administrator. On the day of the inspection, 11 adults were present in the service, 10 of which were working directly with the children.

### 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 and facilities*. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9,11,19,23,25 and 28; however, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 27. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

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.

## Additional Information

An immediate action notice was issued to the registered provider on 05 February 2026 in relation to no Garda Vetting available for one staff member. An adequate response was received from the registered provider on 06 February 2026.

## 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
- (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.

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(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)

The registered provider ensured that:

- (a) There was a designated person in charge and named adults to deputise in their absence.
- (b) The designated person in charge was available on the premises throughout the period of inspection.
- (c) There was a clear management structure in place.

(2) On the day of the inspection 19 staff were employed in the service including the registered provider.

Nineteen staff files were reviewed, and the following information was available:

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for 18 staff. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years for these 18 staff. Garda Vetting was not available for one staff member who had commenced in the service. An immediate action notice was issued to the registered provider on 05 February 2026 in relation to no Garda Vetting available for one staff member. An adequate response was received from the registered provider on 06 February 2026.

(4)  
Seventeen of the staff files reviewed, evidenced they held a major award at level 5 or above in early childhood care and education on the national qualification framework, or qualifications deemed by the Department of Children, Disability and Equality (DCDE) to meet the regulatory requirement.

### Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a)(b)

1. Twenty-six written references from previous employers were available for sixteen of the staff and six written references from reputable sources were available for four of the staff. However, 15 of these references had no evidence of validation.
2. There were no references on file for three of the staff.

(3)

3. The required vetting procedures were not carried out prior to ten staff being appointed in the service.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective and Preventive Action

1. The references have now been validated.
2. References obtained for three staff.
3. The recruitment policy has been updated to include all procedures must be carried out before new staff are appointed.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

1. Documentary evidence submitted.
2. Documentary evidence submitted.
3. Documentary evidence submitted.

## Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider adequately address the non-compliance found on inspection. This regulation is now compliant.

## 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.*

*(4) Subject to paragraph (5), where a registered provider contemporaneously provides-*

*(a) a sessional pre-school service, and*

*(b) a full day care service or a part-time day care service, or both, the minimum ratio of adults to children applicable for the duration of the sessional pre-school service in respect of the children attending that service shall be the ratio specified in paragraph (3).*

## Compliance Information

(1)

On the day of inspection, there was an adequate number of adults working directly with the preschool children attending the service.

(4) On the morning of the inspection:

- In the Baby room, 2 adults cared for 6 children aged 1 year.
- In the Toddler room, 2 adults cared for 6 children aged between 1 and 2 years of age.
- In the Junior Preschool room, 2 adults cared for 9 children aged between 2 years and 10 months and 3 years of age.
- In the Senior Preschool room, 3 adults cared for 13 children aged 4 years.

In the afternoon:

- In the Baby room, 2 adults cared for 5 children aged 1 year.
- In the Toddler room, 1 adult cared for 5 children aged between 1 and 2 years of age.
- In the Junior Preschool room, 1 adult cared for 7 children aged between 2 years and 10 months and 3 years of age.
- In the Senior Preschool room, 2 adults cared for 10 children aged 4 years.

### 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)(b)

##### Basic need

- The service has a healthy eating policy in place and provides all breakfast, snack, dinner and afternoon snack for children in part time and full day care.
- Children attending for the sessional service only bring a snack from home which is stored in the refrigerator in the kitchen.
- On the day of the inspection the morning snack was kiwi, grapes and pancakes.
- The service provides a hot meal to the children in part time and full day care. On the day of the inspection this was Chicken with cheese, sweetcorn and rice and afternoon snack was brown scones.
- Drinks which the children bring from home are available to them throughout the sessions.
- The service has a key worker system in place with each staff member assigned responsibility for a group of children.
- Children were supported to use the toilet independently with assistance given to those who required it.
- On the day of the inspection the weather was cold, staff ensured that the children had outdoor coats, wellingtons and hats for going outside.
- On the day of the inspection all age groups spent time outdoors with areas of interest set up for each group. For example, the toddler children were observed "washing" miniature farm animals in a water tray.
- Children who demonstrated sleep cues were placed for sleep and did not have to wait for a scheduled sleep time.

### Supporting relationships

- Staff were observed speaking kindly to the children throughout the day and the atmosphere in the service was happy and playful.
- Staff communicated with each other throughout the day in relation to the children's needs and activities.
- Communication with parents took place verbally at pick up and drop off times and a software application is used to send parents pictures and updates in relation to their child's day and development.
- In each care room, pictures of the children and their families were on display to promote a sense of identity and belonging among the children.

### Physical and Material environment

- Each care room was spacious and laid out with interest areas suitable for the ages and needs of the children in each room for example:
- In the baby room, soft matting and objects to support gross motor development such as climbing, pulling to stand and pre walking were available.
- In the toddler room, sensory trays were laid out with spoons and empty containers to encourage grasping and pouring skills.
- The junior preschool room is operating from a portacabin on the grounds of the service. The room had boxes of open-ended resources such as plastic bricks, magnets, building blocks, available for imaginative play.
- The senior preschool room contained an imaginative area "The Hairdressers" with photographs of popular hairstyles, a price list and child sized items found in a hair salon.
- In each room, educational posters to promote cognitive and language development such as numbers, colours, seasons, and the alphabet were on display.

## 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 main entrance was found to be secured on arrival preventing unauthorised access or exit from the premises.
- Materials and equipment were observed to be in a good state of repair.
- Warm running water was available for hand washing at a temperature below 43°C in each of the sanitary areas.
- The outdoor areas were secured with tall fencing and a bolted gate.
- Radiator surface temperatures were below 50 celcius.
- The air temperatures in each care room were within the required range of 18-22 celcius.
- Children with food allergies were identified in the service and alternatives were offered.

##### Infection Control:

- The materials and resources throughout the service were visually clean.
- Leak proof foot operated pedalled nappy disposal bins were provided in the nappy changing area.
- There was adequate handwashing facilities provided throughout the service with warm water, liquid soap and paper towels.
- Handwashing was supervised by the adults to ensure all hands were cleaned effectively.
- Cleaning schedules were up to date and available to review.
- The sanitary facilities were ventilated by mechanical ventilation.

##### Administration of Medication:

- No medicine was administered on the day of inspection; however, staff advised the inspector of the correct procedure to be followed in the event of a child requiring medicine.
- Records of previously administered medication were available for review, and the correct details were recorded.

##### Safe Sleep:

- Cots were available for all children under the age of two years of age.
- Cot mattresses were fitted with waterproof covers and had the correct safety mark.

- Physical sleep checks were carried out every 10 minutes on sleeping children.
- Sleep records were correctly maintained with the child's name, sleep position, breathing pattern and skin colour recorded.
- The temperature in the sleep room was monitored to ensure it was within the correct range of 16-20° Celsius.

### Non-Compliance Information

#### General Safety:

The following hazards were observed in the sanitary accommodation beside senior preschool:

1. The door to the under-sink press was not secure and two containers of liquid soap were accessible.
2. The splashback and soap dispensers were covered in red paint and in need of cleaning.
3. There was a sharp point exposed on the radiator posing a risk of injury to the preschool child.
4. In the hallway of the service, the utility room door was propped open with recycling bins and laundry bags. This resulted in the utility room being accessible where cleaning products and mops were stored.
5. Garda Vetting was not available for one staff member who had commenced in the service. An immediate action notice was issued to the registered provider on 05 February 2026 in relation to no Garda Vetting available for one staff member. An adequate response was received from the registered provider on 06 February 2026.

#### Infection Control:

6. In the sanitary accommodation, there was an open top bin for the disposal of waste. Pedal operated bins are required for the disposal of waste.

### Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective & Preventive Action

#### General Safety:

1. The soap has been removed and is stored out of reach.
2. These areas have been cleaned.
3. The sharp has been covered.
4. The utility room door is now kept closed at all times.
5. Garda vetting has been obtained

**Infection Control:**

1. The bins in the sanitary accommodation have been replaced with foot operated pedal bins.

**Supporting documentation submitted**

**General Safety:**

1. Photographic evidence submitted.
2. Photographic evidence submitted.
3. Photographic evidence submitted.
4. Photographic evidence submitted.
5. Documentary evidence submitted.

**Infection Control:**

Photographic evidence submitted.

**Summary Comment**

The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider adequately address the non-compliance found on inspection. This regulation is now compliant.

**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)

Five adults were trained First Aid Responders (FAR) and were available to the children at all times during the session.

(2)(a)(b)

There was a suitably equipped first aid box available in the service. The first aid box was stored in an easily accessible position.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 27 – Supervision

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

#### Non-Compliance Information

In the sleep room, children over the age of 2 years were observed to sleep on floor mattresses. Although staff carried out physical sleep checks every 10 minutes, no staff member remained in the room to supervise the children.

#### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

##### Corrective and Preventive Action

Children who sleep on floor mattresses are now supervised by staff at all times while they are asleep. We will review the new sleep guidance as we were not aware of this requirement

##### Supporting documentation submitted

None submitted.

#### Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider adequately address the non-compliance found on inspection. This regulation is now compliant.

## 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 the service is adequately insured for 45 preschool children. The insurance certificate was valid from 28 March 2025 to 27 March 2026.