

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DL135
--------------------------	-------------

Name of Service:	T.T. Childcare Ltd.
-------------------------	---------------------

Address of Service:	Finn Community Childcare Centre, Railway Road, Stranorlar, Donegal.
----------------------------	---

Eircode:	F93 NW29
-----------------	----------

Name of Registered Provider:	Anne Marie Sweeney
-------------------------------------	--------------------

Service type:	Full day care, sessional
----------------------	--------------------------

Date of Inspection:	31/07/2025
----------------------------	------------

No of pre-school children:	AM	27	PM	25
-----------------------------------	----	----	----	----

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Donegal Early Years Inspectorate, St. Conal's Campus, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal. F95 XK94
Inspection undertaken by:	K. Folan & L. Costello
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
---------------------------------	----------------

Description of service

T.T. Childcare Ltd is a not-for-profit childcare service in the town of Stranorlar, Co. Donegal. The service provides full time and sessional care for children aged 0-6 years and is open from 07:30-18:00, from Monday to Friday. The service operates from a purpose built two storey building consisting of five care rooms. On the day of the inspection, four care rooms were in use, the baby room, wobbler room, toddler room and preschool full day care. The ground floor space contains an office, storerooms, disabled access toilet, sensory room, dining area and a kitchen. Children's sanitary accommodation and nappy changing facilities are adjacent to each playroom. Dedicated sleep rooms are also adjacent to both the baby and toddler rooms. A school age service is also provided on the premises. A large outdoor play area is located to the front and rear of the building which can be accessed from the ground floor care rooms and is surrounded by a boundary fence.

Staffing

A total of 32 adults worked in the service, 13 of whom were present on the day of inspection. 11 of these adults were employed to work directly with the preschool children. The manager who was available to provide relief cover for childcare staff at times such as during scheduled breaks. The service has two ancillary staff whose role did not involve working directly with the preschool children; this included a cook who was present on the day of inspection and an administrator. Five adults were on employment activation schemes. Two adults were employed to work with school age children. The services registered provider is not service based.

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 an examination of compliance under regulations 9,11,16,19,23,25 and 28.

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.

Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the 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.

(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 a named adult 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 the service that identifies the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee.

(2)

On the day of inspection, 13 adults were present, the person in charge, 11 adults who were employed to work directly with the children, one adult in a supernumerary role in the kitchen.

33 Staff files including the registered provider, were reviewed and the following information was available:

(a) 43 written and verified references from past employers.

(b) 23 written and verified references from a reputable source.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Police vetting from the police authorities in another state was available for five adults who had lived outside the state for a period of six consecutive months or more.

(4)

25 of the adult files reviewed, evidenced they held a major award or letter of eligibility to practice 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.

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)

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

(2)

The minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained at all times throughout the inspection.

On the morning of the inspection, 11 adults cared for 27 children aged 1-5 years old.

- In the baby room, two adults cared for two children aged one year.
- In the wobbler room, three adults cared for five children aged one to two years.
- In the toddler room, three adults cared for four children aged two years and four months to two years and six months.
- In the preschool room, three adults cared for 16 children aged two years and eight months to five years.

In the afternoon 7 adults cared for 25 children aged 1-5 years old.

- In the baby room, two adults cared for two children aged one year.
- In the wobbler room, one adult cared for five children aged one to two years.
- In the toddler room, one adult cared for five children aged two years and four months to two years and six months.
- In the preschool room, three adults cared for 13 children aged two years and eight months to five years.

(8)

The registered provider ensured that there were always at least two adults on the premises when children were present in the service as evidenced in a sample review of attendance records.

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.*

(3) A record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection on the premises, and the documents and records referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall be open to inspection whether on the premises or elsewhere, by an authorised person.

Compliance Information

1 (a)-(k)

On the day of the inspection, it was found that the service kept a record of the required information (a) to (k) as outlined below.

- (a) The name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and employees were available.
- (b) The class of service and age profile of the children for which the service is registered for was 0-6 years.
- (c) Details of the adult to child ratios were available on the daily attendance records.
- (d) The type of care programme provided.

- (e) The facilities available were full day care and a sessional service which offers the Early childhood care and education programme (ECCE).
 - (f) The opening hours and fees were displayed in the hallway of the service.
 - (g) The policy book was reviewed, and the service was found to keep a record of the policies, procedures and statements required under Regulation 10.
 - (h) Daily attendance records containing the time of the children’s arrival to and departure from the service were observed in a sample of records reviewed on the attendance register.
 - (i) The staff roster detailed staff attendance.
 - (j) There were medicine administration records on file in each care room.
 - (k) Records of accident or incident forms were kept on file in each care room.
- (3) The person in charge made the records available to the inspector on request in 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
 - (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

Basic need

- There is a healthy eating policy in place in the service. On the day of the inspection the menu was displayed in the dining area. Breakfast was cereal, mid-morning snack was fruit and toast, dinner was gammon, mashed potatoes, cauliflower with gravy, afternoon snack was banana bread and yogurt. A hot alternative was available to any child who refused their main meal, and the service kept a record of the child’s preferences to plan for mealtimes.
- Nappy changing was carried out regularly and promptly throughout the day. Nappy changing time was used as an opportunity for warm one to one interaction between adults and children.

- Aprons were provided for messy play and also for mealtimes in the younger rooms. Spare clothes were available for children who required a change of clothes throughout the day.
- The individual sleep needs of younger children were met, and this was observed on the day by children in the baby room sleeping at various intervals according to their needs. In the wobbler and toddler room, children's sleep time was scheduled after dinner. For older children who did not require sleep, rest facilities were available in each care room.
- On the day of inspection, children in each care room accessed the outdoor environment.

Supporting relationships

- The service has a key worker system in place, with each child assigned responsibility for designated children.
- Adults informed the inspector that relationships with parents are developed through settling in time when the child starts in the service. During the child's time in the service, events in the service are celebrated and shared with parents through messaging applications throughout the day. For example, on the day of the inspection a number of children were supported in the process of moving rooms within the service. Pictures of each child in their new environment were shared with the parents during the day. Parents are welcome in the service with drop off and pick up times used to share information about the children's day.
- The adults demonstrated warmth in their interactions with children and were observed speaking kindly to the children.
- In the baby room, the adults sat with the child and engaged in activities such as painting and storytelling.

Physical and material environment

- Each of the care rooms was bright and spacious with clearly defined areas of interest. Each room contained an "Our Community" wall which has photographs of shops and landmarks within the local community such as banks, schools, shops and churches.
- In the wobbler room, items to aid crawling such as rolling cushions and mats were available. There was a cosy tent area with books for the children, and treasure baskets containing items of interest for the children to explore. The furniture in the room was suitable for the age and stage of each child attending.
- In the baby room, adult chairs were available to facilitate adults holding and feeding the babies. A mirror with a pull to stand bar was available to support the babies gross motor development.

- In the Full day care room, interest areas were set up to stimulate imagination and creativity. Home corners equipped with kitchen and sitting rooms, shops and dress up area's facilities role play and creativity. Numerous baskets stored on low level accessible shelving equipped with tabletop activities, puzzles and jigsaws allowed for choice and development of fine motor skills.
- The Toddler room was a bright open space laid out in various interest areas to allow for free movement throughout. The room was resourced with home corners, dress up areas, indoor climbing frames and slides. A rest area with an extensive library allowed for children to rest and look through books, promoting language development.
- An outdoor area to the front of the building allowed for children to develop gross motor skills. Tyres, climbing frames, playhouses and wooden boats allowed children to develop balance and promote movement. An area was sectioned off to create an all-weather pitch for football and ball sports. A covered area with sensory trays, sand pits and mud kitchens ensured children could play outdoors in all weathers.
- A covered outdoor area was available directly outside the baby and wobbler room to allow access outdoors in all weather conditions. This area had a large sand pit that the children could sit comfortably in while playing in the sand. A mark making and chalk area was available. The outdoor area was decorated with windmills, flower pots and mobiles to develop the children's visual senses.
- Items for children's imaginative play were available outdoors such as a playhouse, musical equipment, and a kitchen 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 secure upon the inspector's arrival to the service and remained secure throughout the inspection.
- All toys and equipment were observed to be in good condition, free from sharp edges and pinch points.
- The service was in a clean and hygienic condition on the day of inspection. Cleaning records evidenced that a cleaning schedule was in place and cleaning was carried out daily.
- Cleaning materials were stored out of children's reach on high shelving.

- Child safety locks were in place on cupboard doors.
- Emergency exit doors were unobstructed.
- The outdoor area was secured with high fencing and gates to prevent a preschool child leaving the service unsupervised.
- The outdoor area was fitted with a soft fall surface to minimise a risk to children from trips and falls.

Infection Control:

- The inspector observed surfaces being wiped down and cleaned frequently throughout the day.
- Warm water, soap and paper towels were available for effective handwashing for children and adults.
- Adults supported the children to wash their hands after returning from outdoors, before eating and after toileting and nappy changing.
- Pedal operated bins were available for the disposal of waste.

Administration of Medication:

- No medication was administered on the day of the inspection however medicine records from previously administered medication demonstrated that adults were aware of the correct procedure to be carried out to ensure the safe administration of medicine.
- Temperature reducing medication was stored safely out of children's reach.

Safe Sleep:

- Wooden cots were available in the service for children under 15 months. Four children aged over 20 months slept on approved floor beds. Risk assessments and parents' consent were in place for each of the children.
- All cot mattresses were fitted with a waterproof cover.
- Sleep checks were carried out every 10 minutes and were documented including the date, child's name, sleeping position, colour and breathing pattern of each child.
- The sleep room temperatures were thermostatically controlled and monitored to ensure the correct safe sleep temperature. The temperature of the wobbler sleep room on the day of inspection was 20°Celsius.

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)

Twenty adults were trained in first aid for children. At least one trained member of staff was available to the children at all times.

(2)(a)(b) There were suitably equipped first aid boxes available in the service. Each first aid box was stored in an easily accessible position.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service had adequate insurance in place for 100 children up to 27 March 2026.