

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DR056
--------------------------	-------------

Name of Service:	Tiny Tots Playschool & Montessori
-------------------------	-----------------------------------

Address of Service:	5 Sycamore Grove, The Park, Cabinteely, Dublin 18, Co. Dublin
----------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------

Eircode:	D18 RX27
-----------------	----------

Name of Registered Provider:	Avril Ryan
-------------------------------------	------------

Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
----------------------	--------------------------------

Date of Inspection:	29/01/2026
----------------------------	------------

No of pre-school children:	AM	26	PM	N/A
-----------------------------------	----	----	----	-----

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	The Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, St. John's Road West, Dublin 8.
Inspection undertaken by:	R. Duff
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
---------------------------------	----------------

Description of service

Tiny Tots Playschool and Montessori was established by the registered provider in 1996. The service is registered to provide full day, part time and sessional care to children aged between 2-6 years old however on the day of inspection children availed of part time or sessional care. The service is registered for a maximum number of 50 children. A school-aged childcare service also operates from the premises.

The service operates from the ground floor of an adapted domestic dwelling in a residential area of south county Dublin. Three care rooms are available, and children have access to an enclosed outdoor area to the front of the premises which has an artificial grass covering.

Staffing

The service currently employees four staff members including the registered provider to work directly with the preschool children. Two additional staff work in the school age service. On the day of inspection three staff members and two students were present and 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

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 areas of governance, health, welfare and development of child, information and records and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required. The following regulations were reviewed:

Regulation 9 (1)(2)(3)(4) Management and recruitment.

Regulation 11(1)(2) Staffing levels.

Regulation 15 Records of a pre-school child

Regulation 19 (1)(b) Health, welfare and development of child.

Regulation 23 Safeguarding the health, safety, and welfare of child.

Regulation 25 First aid

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*
- (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)
- (a)(b) The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required, both were on the premises throughout the inspection.
- (2)
- The inspection included a review of the required documentation for three adults employed or on placement in the service since the last inspection dated the 05 October 2023. Garda vetting disclosures were assessed for each of the eight adults employed or on placement in the service. The following documentation was available;
- (a)(b) Of the six written and validated references that were required, five were available from a past employer and one from a reputable source.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures from the National Vetting Bureau of An Garda Síochána were available for eight adults employed to work or on placement in the service. Garda vetting disclosures from all adults were assessed to determine compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d) Police vetting was available for three adults employed or on placement in the service since the last inspection dated the 05 October 2023 who had lived outside the State for a period exceeding six months as an adult.
- (3) Documentation reviewed evidence that the procedures specified above under 9(2)(a)(b)(c)(d) had been carried out prior to three adult commencing employment or placement in the service since the last inspection on 05 October 2023.
- (4) Records were available evidencing that one staff member employed in the service since the last inspection dated the 05 October 2023 who was employed to work directly with the children held at least the required award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications. Two adults did not require a qualification as they were employed under a work placement programme.

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)
An adequate number of adults were working directly with the children at all times during the inspection.
- (2)
The minimum ratio of adults to children for sessional and part time services was adhered to at all times during the inspection. There were 26 children attending the service being supervised by 3 staff members.

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.

(2) A registered provider of a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or of 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 particulars specified in subparagraphs (a), (d), (e) and (f) of paragraph (1).

(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-

(c) an authorised person.

Compliance Information

(1) The records of 10 children who were attending the service were reviewed and contained the following particulars:

(a) The name and date of birth of each child.

(b) The date on which each child first attended the service.

(c) There was an area on the registration form where the date when a child would cease to attend the service will be recorded.

(d) The names, addresses and telephone number of parents were recorded and information where parents can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service were also available.

(e) Names and contact details of other adults who were authorised to collect children were available.

(f) The documentation available supported the recording of specific illnesses, allergies, disabilities and dietary preferences for children.

(g) The name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner was available.

(h) Record of immunisations received by the child was detailed.

(i) Written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.

(3)(c) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) was open to inspection on the premises by an authorised person.

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

The inspector observed appropriate care practices in place throughout the inspection. The children moved freely in both rooms – exploring their environment, playing and engaging with each other and the staff. Staff demonstrated warmth and affection in their interactions with the children. They addressed children by name, used gentle tones and interacted with them in a positive manner. Language used by the staff members was observed to be encouraging, supportive and informative.

Children were given advance warnings to support transitions to a new activity and for mealtimes. Children brought snack from home which was closely monitored by staff for choking hazards. The service has a healthy eating policy which is shared with parents/guardians in advance of enrolment.

Drinks were readily available within both care rooms. Mealtimes were social occasions with children and adults sitting together, staff provided children with help when needed. Children were encouraged to clean up after themselves and assisted to clean their faces and hands at appropriate times

Older children used the toilet independently and children wearing nappies had these changed regularly.

Child sized tables and chairs allowed the children to eat and engage in tabletop activities. The room had a mix of Montessori materials, toys and equipment which were laid out on low level shelving units and accessible to children. Both care rooms also had cushions and floor mats to facilitate rest or provide a place for children to take a break from activities. Children spent time a short time outdoors on the day of inspection as inclement weather restricted the amount of time children could spend outdoors so alternative activities were organised indoors to facilitate movement.

Engagement with families and parents is facilitated by the daily sharing of information on the child's day. This is shared through conversations at drop off and collection and supported by electronic means. On the day of inspection transitions from preschool to home were observed to be friendly and informative to parents or guardians collecting children.

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:

- When the inspector arrived at the service, access to the main door was monitored and controlled by staff to restrict unauthorized persons from gaining access to the premises and to prevent children from exiting the service unsupervised. In addition, the outdoor play area was enclosed, restricting unauthorized persons from gaining access to this area and to prevent children from exiting the service unsupervised.
- There were no flexes or cables observed that were accessible to the children.
- Toys and equipment in the indoors environment were maintained in good condition free from hazards.
- The outdoor area was observed to be suitable, safe and secure with domestic bins stored out of children's reach and all outdoor play materials maintained and in good condition free from hazards.

Infection Control:

- The indoor and outdoor environments were maintained in a clean condition.
- The sanitary facilities were equipped with warm water, paper towel, liquid soap, and pedal operated bin.
- The children were supported by staff members to wash their hands at appropriate intervals throughout the inspection

Administration of Medication:

- Staff demonstrated a clear understanding of procedures to safeguard children when administering medicine. This included getting written consent from parents or guardians, having a second staff member present as a witness during administration, and maintaining detailed records shared with parents or guardians upon collection.

Fire Safety:

- The designated fire escape routes were clearly indicated and free from obstruction on the day of inspection.
- Staff adequately detailed the procedure to safely evacuate children from the service in the event of a fire and evacuation procedures were on display throughout the service.

Outing:

- The person in charge stated that children are often taken to the local park and playground. The service had signed consent forms from parents/ guardians in children's files to allow them to attend the outings. A risk assessment and checklist were also available for review.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

- In the preschool room, cleaning products were stored in a low unlocked cupboard, the cupboard was accessible to children. It is acknowledged that a staff member moved the products to a high shelf when the inspector brought it to their attention. This poses a potential risk of harm to children if they accessed them.
- In room one and in the preschool room the restrictors on the windows had been unhooked and were therefore ineffective. The windows were accessible to children and were observed to open widely. This could cause potential harm to a child if they accessed them.

Infection Control:

- Appropriate infection control measures were not taken during nappy changing. The changing mat was not cleaned after each use. This poses a significant risk of cross contamination to children.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

The registered provider has stated that:

- All cleaning products have been placed out of reach of children on a high shelf. A full audit of the cleaning storage across the service has been completed and a safety check list will be completed each morning to ensure cleaning product are safely stored.
- An updated safety checklist has been developed to include the window restrictors. Staff members have received refresher training guidance on using the window restrictors.

Infection Control:

- Staff members were immediately reminded of the importance of cleaning and disinfecting the changing mat following each nappy change. All staff members were reminded of the nappy changing procedure and additional refresher training was delivered.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Supporting documentation has been submitted and reviewed by the early years inspector.

Infection Control:

Supporting documentation has been submitted and reviewed by the early years inspector.

Summary Comment

The actions taken by the registered provider have addressed the non-compliance. This regulation will be assessed on the next inspection.

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) The service provided evidence that an adult trained in First Aid Response was available at all times to the children attending the pre-school.

(2)(a) and (b) Suitably equipped first aid boxes were available and safely stored in easily accessible and conspicuous positions in the service.

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 full day care service was insured. The insurance certificate provided for review showed cover for the 50 children and an expiry date of 27 March 2026.