

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DR122
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Name of Service:	Star Tots Creche
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Address of Service:	81 Lower Kilmacud Road, Stillorgan, Co. Dublin
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Eircode:	A94 W6W8
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Name of Registered Provider:	Nathalie Roberts
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	11/06/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	81	PM	53
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Floor 7 Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, St. John's Road West, Kilmainham, Dublin 8
Inspection undertaken by:	H Sutherland and R Duff
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

Star Tots Creche is a privately owned service and offers sessional, part-time and full day care service to children aged between 0 and 6 years of age. Opening hours are 8am to 5.30pm Monday to Friday. The service operates from a two-storey, purposely adapted building beside a retail centre in Stillorgan, County Dublin and comprises of eight care rooms, a sleep room and an outdoor area to the rear of the building.

Staffing

There are currently twenty-two staff employed to work with the pre-school children, including the registered provider and person in charge. Twenty staff were working directly with the children on the day of inspection. The registered provider arrived shortly after the inspectors arrived and remained on the premises for the duration of the inspection.

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.

This inspection focused on an examination of compliance under the following regulations:

Regulation 9(2)(3)(4) - Management and recruitment

Regulation 11(1)(2) - Staffing levels

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

Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulation 19 Health, Welfare and Development of child. As a result, the scope of the inspection included the Baby room, Tweenie room, Wobbler room and the Toddler room.

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, 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

(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

Following discussion with the person in charge it was confirmed that eleven of the twenty adults working with the children had commenced employment in the service since Regulation 9 was last inspected on the 14th May 2024.

Documentation required under regulation 9(2)(3)(4) was reviewed in respect of these adults as detailed below.

- (2)
- (a) (b) There were two references available for each of the eleven adults which had been appropriately verified.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for eleven adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda Vetting every three years for all adults employed in the service.
 - (d) All new staff required Police vetting; the required documentation was available for eight adults.
- (4) Documentation was available to show that the eleven adults who work directly with children attending the service held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National

Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed appropriate by the Department of Children, Disability and Equality (DCDE).

Non-Compliance Information

- (2)
- (d) Police vetting was not available in relation to three adults who previously lived outside of the state for a period of more than 6 months as an adult.
- (3) Documentation reviewed evidence that the procedures specified above under 9(2)(d) had not been carried out prior to the three adults commencing employment in the service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

2 (d) Police vetting has been obtained for one staff member and applications have been submitted for the remaining two staff members. A comprehensive checklist has been developed outlining all required documents ensuring consistency and clarity for both management and new hires.

Supporting documentation submitted

Evidence of police vetting for one staff member submitted.

Summary Comment

The non-compliance under Regulation 9(2)(d) remains outstanding until police vetting disclosures are obtained for two staff members.

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) On the day of inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children to meet their care needs. There were twenty adults available to eighty-one children. The registered provider and the person in charge were available to provide support as needed.
- (2) The minimum adult to child ratio requirement was maintained for the duration of the inspection in accordance with the ages and type of service delivered.

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-
- (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

Appropriate and suitable care practices were observed to be in place in the service. Staff demonstrated a warm and nurturing approach in their interactions with the children consistently using gentle tones and respective language. Mealtimes were observed to be relaxed and supportive and bibs and aprons were provided to protect children's clothing. Additional food was available and provided to children requesting extra. Staff reported that the service provides children with their main meal and parents provide snacks from home. Menus are shared with parents weekly and were available for review on the parents notice board. Self-feeding was actively encouraged, supporting children's confidence and independence. Staff were observed to gently clean children's faces following mealtimes. Drinking water was available and accessible to children throughout the inspection. Staff signalled to the children that a change in activity was approaching, ensuring a relaxed pace and supporting children to transition smoothly to the next activity. Family walls and visual daily routines were displayed on the walls in the care rooms promoting children's sense of identity and belonging.

Staff called children by their name and were observed to approached them gently and with consideration prior to nappy changing. Nappy changing was carried out in a calm unhurried manner with staff using the opportunity for

warm one to one interactions singing songs and speaking in playful tones with the children. Children were encouraged to be independent when using the toilet and staff remained close by to provide support if needed. Babies and young children were provided with the opportunity to sleep during the day and areas with rugs and cushions were available for older children to rest if required. The sleep room was calm with soft music playing in the background which created a space that was conducive to sleep and children's shoes and outer clothing was removed to ensure comfort. Staff were observed to comfort and reassure children during sleep time and remained present until each child was settled.

Children were given the freedom to make choices and were observed to move freely around the care rooms following their own interests and engaging in positive interactions with their peers. The inspectors found through discussion with staff that children spent time outdoors daily and outdoor play was promoted. Children were observed to spend time outside during the inspection in line with the garden roster which was on display. Staff reported that a digital platform is used to share information with parents in relation to their child's eating and drinking, nappy changes, activities and sleep during the day to provide for continuity of care.

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 doors into the service were adequately secured to prevent unauthorised persons accessing the service or children exiting unsupervised.
- The outdoor area was secured and safe from hazards.
- Staff were aware of children's food allergies and adequately described how allergies are managed in the service.
- Suitable handrails were provided on staircases.
- Toys and play equipment used by the children were observed to be safe for the age group, maintained and in good condition.
- Cleaning agents and medication were stored safely out of reach of children.

Infection Control:

- Care rooms were visibly clean and well maintained. Cleaning schedules were available for review outlining cleaning tasks.
- Pedal operated bins were in use in the sanitary areas to support effective hygiene practices.
- Liquid soap, warm water and single use paper towels were available at wash hand basins.
- Children were supported to wash their hands after toileting, before mealtimes and following activities.

Administration of Medication:

- Staff adequately detailed the services procedure for administering medication when required during discussions with the inspectors and documentation was available for review.
- Individual care plans were in place for children who required emergency medication and displayed in a prominent position in the care room.

Safe Sleep:

- Staff were observed to carry out physical checks on sleeping children every ten minutes.
- Standard cots and low-level beds were available for sleep and were used in accordance with children's developmental needs.
- The temperature of the rooms where children slept were maintained at the required temperature range.
- A sleep log was available for review, detailing the temperature, breathing pattern, colour and position of the child.

Fire Safety:

- Emergency exits were observed to be unobstructed for the duration of the inspection.
- Staff adequately detailed the procedure to safely evacuate children from the service in the event of a fire and advised that evacuation drills are carried out on a monthly basis.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. During the inspection, it was observed that babies bottles were not stored in the fridge, which was at variance with the services healthy eating policy and poses a risk of bacterial growth potentially leading to illness in a baby. The inspectors observed that bottles were stored on a shelf in the baby room and conversation with staff confirmed that this is part of their daily practice.

Infection Control:

- Two cots with side bars situated in the sleep room were positioned directly beside each other posing a risk of cross contamination.

Some of the nappy changing practices observed posed a risk of cross contamination and were at variance with the services nappy changing policy:

- A staff member was observed cleaning the soiled changing mat after washing their hands following nappy changing.
- It was observed that gloves worn during nappy changes were not removed before placing clean nappies on the babies.
- Babies hands were not washed effectively following nappy changing. While it was observed that wipes were used, this method is not considered effective in the removal of germs.

Safe Sleep:

- Practice observed in the Baby room did not align with safe sleep guidance. During the inspection it was observed that an infant was sleeping in a rocker in the care room. This practice poses a risk to the infants safety.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

- Babies bottles are now stored in the fridge and removed prior to feeding.

Infection Control:

- A smaller cot has been purchased to allow for more distance between the two cots.
 - All staff have been retrained in the nappy changing procedure.

Safe Sleep:

- Staff have been informed that going forward if a child falls asleep, they must be transferred to a cot.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

No evidence submitted

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Infection Control:

No evidence submitted

Safe Sleep:

No evidence submitted.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 23 has been adequately addressed and will be subject to review on the next inspection.