

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

USLA Identifier:	TU2015DY002
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Name of Service:	Abbey Tots
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Address of Service:	2 Riverston Gardens, Riverston Abbey, Navan Road, Dublin 7, Co. Dublin
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Eircode:	D07 YH48
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Name of Registered Provider:	Sean Lee, Veronica Lee
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Service type:	Full Day Care
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Date(s) of Inspection:	28/07/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	26	PM	26
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate 180-189 Lakeshore Drive Airside Business Park Swords, Co Dublin
Inspection undertaken by:	M. McDonnell
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

Abbey Tots is one of two privately owned service based in a residential area of Dublin. The service is registered to provide sessional, part-time time and full-day care to children aged 0-6 years old. The service is in a converted two-storey building with four care rooms. The Main Room is located on the ground floor. The Front and Back rooms are located on the first floor and there is a Log Cabin at the rear of the service. There is also a kitchen and sanitary facilities available for children and staff. An outdoor area is located to the rear of the service.

Staffing

The registered providers do not work in the service. The registered providers employ 11 staff members who all work 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. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under Regulation 9 Management & Recruitment, Regulation 11 Staffing Levels, Regulation 19 Health, Welfare & Development of Child, Regulation 23 Safeguarding

Health, Safety and Welfare of Child, Regulation 22 Food and Drink, Regulation 25 First Aid and Regulation 27 Supervision. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulation within this report.

A sampling process was used. As a result, the scope of the inspection included The Main Room, Front Room and Log Cabin.

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 (IAN) was issued on 29 July 2025 in relation to the absence of a Garda Vetting disclosure for one staff member. A response which mitigated the risk was received by the inspector on the 30 July 2025 and accepted.

Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider who attended on the day of inspection, 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)(a)(b) The service had a person in charge and a named deputy. A review of the roster demonstrated that designated person in charge and the deputy person in charge was in the service at all times during operational hours.

(c) On discussion with staff members and the registered provider, there was a clear management structure in place and staff were familiar with it.

(2) On the day of inspection, the recruitment files of eight new staff members were reviewed. The files of the remaining staff were reviewed at the last inspection. In addition, the Garda vetting disclosures for three staff were also reviewed.

(a)(b) Six written and validated references were available for the three new staff members.

(c) A Garda Vetting disclosure was available for 2 of the 3 new staff members.

The service did not adhere to the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years for the staff members. This is outlined in Regulation 23.

(d) An examination of the documentation concerning the staff members' employment history demonstrated that police vetting required for two staff members was available for review. One new staff member did not require police vetting.

(4) Documentary evidence was available to confirm that the three new staff members employed to work directly with children held an appropriate childcare qualification at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications, or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(c) A Garda Vetting disclosure was not available for one staff member. An Immediate Action (IAN) notice was issued on the 29 July 2025.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(c) The registered provider removed the staff member from working with the children in the service and provided written confirmation of these actions. The Garda vetting disclosure was subsequently submitted. As a preventive action the registered provider stated upon recruitment potential employees will be made aware that a delay with their garda vetting may lead to a delay in their start. Offers of Employment and Contracts will have this clause included in them.

Supporting documentation submitted

Garda vetting disclosure

Summary Comment

The actions and evidence submitted by the registered provider, in their corrective and preventive action plan, has addressed the non-compliance identified at inspection.

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 an adequate number of adults was working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.

(2) On the inspector's unannounced arrival, the adult to child ratios were correct in the service and remained so throughout the inspection. The following adult to child ratios were observed when the service was operating at maximum attendance.

- In the Main room there were two adults caring for seven children aged 1 year and 3 months old to 2 years and 1 month old.
- In the Back room there was one adult caring for five children aged 2 years and 5 months old to 2 years and 8 months old.
- In the Front room there was one adult caring for seven children. Two children were aged 2 year to 3 years old and six were aged over 3 years old.
- In the Log Cabin there was one adult caring for seven children aged 3 year and 11 months old to 3 years and 9 months old.

The person in charge and deputy person in charge were also available to provide support for breaks and relief cover as they were working in a supernumerary capacity. One of the registered providers arrived on site for feedback.

(8) On a review of the staff roster and sign in book there were two adults available on the premises at all times.

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

Supporting relationships around children

Throughout the inspection the staff members were engaged in children's play and activities. For example, in the Front room a staff member was colouring with the children and engaging in conversations about their families. In the Main room a staff member encouraged children to pick a book and then they all sat down, and the staff member read the books to the children, or the children looked at their chosen book independently. Staff members discussed the variety of activities that the children enjoyed and how children's choice was incorporated which was shown in the sample of plans reviewed. The inspector observed that there were notes of children's emergent interests and these were reflected in the activities children had taken part in such as individual paintings and drawings of pirates by children in the Front room. Staff members also spoke of engagement with parents and a monthly newsletter that was sent to parents alongside an electronic application which also helped staff members communicate with parents.

Physical and material environment

Appropriate relaxation areas were available in the rooms, with cosy areas available in all rooms. Equipment was available in designated interest areas, on open shelving at a low level for children to access independently which included a range of books and sensory items. The home corners in each of the care rooms, were equipped with a range of material which included food, cutlery, dining items.

The service had a large outdoor area which was divided into three sections with artificial grass and a soft safety surface. One of the areas lead directly from the Main room and the children had access to age-appropriate toys such as a small playhouse, activity centres and a small slide. The main garden area, accessed by the older children, had a climbing structure and ride on toys. A covered area with seating was also available. There were swings available in one small, fenced section of the garden.

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

A member of staff was available to prepare the meals on site. A two-week menu was available and on display in the service. This included a snack of pitta bread and ham, chilli con carne and rice for dinner, pancakes and waffles and then a later snack of fruit. The weekly menu had a selection of fruit and vegetables. The staff members spoken with were aware of dietary requirements and alternatives were provided. Children were observed enjoying the meal on the day of inspection with children being given appropriate cutlery. On discussion with staff, they advised that extra portions were also available if required. The children were able to access their water independently throughout the day.

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 service had a secure entrance to the service with a buzzer system and keypad locks in place. This prevented any unauthorised access to the service and exit from the service by children.
- Individually labelled sunscreen was applied before children went outdoors to play.
- Blind cords were secured and were not accessible to children.
- Cleaning agents and medications were stored out of the reach of children.
- Stairways were fitted with handrails suitable to the children.
- Upper floor windows were appropriately secured with safety latches.

Infection Control:

- The inspector observed a sample of nappy changing which supported effective infection control. The inspector observed that staff members followed the service's procedure which included; a new apron and

gloves for each change and staff members and children's hands were washed. These procedures were completed before the child was returned to the care room.

- Children's soothers were observed to be in individually labelled containers.
- The large windows that lead from the Main care room into the garden had visual markers to reduce the risk of injury.

Safe Sleep:

- Children under 2 years of age were provided with a cot, cellular blanket or sleeping bag for sleep.
- Children over 2 were provided with a mattress for sleep.
- Staff members supervising the children for sleep conducted 10-minute sleep checks on the children and recorded information on a child's breathing, position and colour.
- The preventive actions were in place following the last inspection in relation to children's toys. No children were observed sleeping with toys in their cots.

Non-Compliance Information

Safe Sleep:

1. The temperature of the room whilst children slept was not maintained between 18 to 22°C in line with Tusla's safe sleep guidelines for children over 12 months old. At 12.58 the temperature of the main room whilst six children slept was 22.9°C. After informing a staff member and the person in charge, the window and back door were opened. At 13.20 the temperature had reduced to 22.7°C. The reduction in temperature was not sufficient to bring it in line with the recommend safe sleep temperatures for children over 12 months of between 18 to 22°C.

General Safety

2. The service did not demonstrate compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years for the staff members. Of the eight staff members working at the last inspection, one did not have a renewed Garda Vetting disclosure in place. This was a non-compliance at the last inspection in July 2024 and their preventive action as stated by the registered provider was not sufficient to prevent the non-compliance reoccurring.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Safe Sleep:

1. The registered provider stated that they had purchased a floor standing fan and staff complete temperature checks.

General Safety:

- The registered provider submitted the renewed Garda Vetting disclosure. The registered provider also stated they had updated their electronic application to ensure that renewal of disclosures was tracked.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photograph of Floor standing fan/temperature recording sheet.

Photograph of electronic application reminder for Garda vetting renewal and updated disclosure.

Summary Comment

The actions and evidence submitted by the registered provider, in their corrective and preventive action plan, has addressed the non-compliances identified at 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

(2)(a) The First Aid kit available for the care of the children was in a conspicuous position and easily available to adults in the service.

Non-Compliance Information

- The registered provider did not ensure that a person trained in First Aid Responder (FAR) was available to the children attending the service at all times. On the day of the inspection children were in attendance from 7.30am, however a staff member with FAR did not start until 8.30am. Following the previous inspection in July 2024 the registered provider had obtained First Aid Responder (FAR) training for a current staff member. However, the two staff members with FAR available did not cover the opening hours of the service when the children were in attendance.
- (b) A review of the materials in the First Aid kit did not demonstrate there was a sufficient number of in date products to provide First Aid care for example a number of triangular bandages..

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (1) The registered provider submitted the FAR certificate for another staff member. They stated that a FAR trained staff member will open and close the service and submitted a roster.
- (2) (b) The registered provider submitted photographs of new first aid kit and stated they would be replaced every two years.

Supporting documentation submitted

FAR certification

Roster Showing FAR trained staff onsite

Photograph of new first aid materials

Summary Comment

The actions and evidence submitted by the registered provider, in their corrective and preventive action plan, has addressed the non-compliances identified at inspection.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

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

Compliance Information

The inspector observed staff supervising children primarily by sight throughout the period of inspection. The layout of the rooms supported staff in being able to maintain sight of the children. This was evidenced as staff were able to intervene with minor disagreements between children in various areas of the room whilst they completed activities with other children.

Children on the first floor had to access sanitary facilities outside of the room. Staff were aware of children leaving the room and re-entering and were heard checking on children who had gone to use the sanitary facilities. In the Main room staff members took children on an individual basis to change their nappies in the sanitary facilities outside of their room ensuring appropriate supervision during this time.

Whilst children slept in the Main room two staff members were observed in the room with the children. Staff members were observed providing comfort to settle the children for sleep and when children woke, they provided comfort. The inspector also observed that this allowed children to be brought outside to play whilst their peers continued sleeping.

In the outdoor area there was a large climbing frame. A staff member discussed with the inspector how risky play was supported which included the appropriate supervision of the children during this activity. The staff members were observed watching and engaging with the children whilst they used the climbing frame and providing support when the children asked.