

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier: TU2015DY221

Name of Service: The Toddler Inn

Address of Service: 13 Baggot Road, Navan Road, Dublin 7.

Eircode: D07 R858

Name of Registered Provider: Shane Sylvester

Service type: Full Day, Part Time, Sessional

Date of Inspection: 08/09/2025

No of pre-school children:	AM	49	PM	31
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate 2nd Floor, Unit 4/5 The Nexus Building Blanchardstown Corporate Park Ballycoolin Dublin 15 D15 CF9K
Inspection undertaken by:	C Kerrigan & T Nelson.
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

The Toddler Inn is a privately owned early years' service located in a residential area of Dublin 7. The service provides full day care, part-time and sessional daycare for children aged between 1-6 years of age. The service is registered to operate between the hours of 7:30am to 6:30pm Monday to Friday. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme which runs daily from 9am to 12pm, 38 weeks of the year. The service operates from a converted commercial premises. On the ground floor there are two care rooms, namely the Wobbler room which caters for children aged 1-3 years of age, the Toddle room which caters for children aged between 2-3 years of age. A cot room and sanitary areas are also located on this floor. On the first floor there are two further care rooms, namely the Pre-school room which caters for children aged 3-5 years of age and the Sessional/ After school room which caters for children aged 3-5 years of age. The kitchen and two sanitary areas are located on this floor. An office, staff room and staff toilet are located on a 3rd floor. An enclosed outdoor area is located to the rear of the premises.

Staffing

The registered provider employs fifteen adults to work in the service, to include a service manager, a deputy manager, ten early years practitioners who work directly with the children, a cook and an auxiliary staff member. The service also employs an adult to work in the school aged room. All adults were present on the day of inspection. The registered provider does not work in the service.

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.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulation 16 Record in relation to Pre-school service. The scope of the inspection included all care rooms.

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, deputy person in charge, the 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
- (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) The registered provider ensured that there was a designated person in charge and a name person to deputise as required.
 - (b) The registered provider ensured that the person in charge was present at all times during the inspection.
- (2) The files of all fifteen adults working within the service were reviewed in full on the day of inspection.
- (a) The registered provider ensured that twenty-two written and validated references were available from a previous employer for the adults working within the service.
 - (b) The registered provider ensured that eight written and validated references were available from a person other than a previous employer for the adults working within the service.

- (c) The registered provider ensured that Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for the fifteen adults working directly with the children. The service also demonstrated adherence to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
 - (d) The registered provider ensured that police vetting was available for four adults who had resided in a state other than the state of Ireland for a period longer than six consecutive months.
- (3) The registered provider ensured that all references and garda vetting procedures were completed prior to the fifteen adults being allowed access or contact with the child attending the preschool service.
- (4) A review of all twelve staff qualifications indicated that eleven adults who work directly with children held a major award at Level 5 or higher in early Childhood Care and Education on the National Qualification Framework or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

Non-Compliance Information

- (4) The registered provider was unable to demonstrate that one adult who worked directly with the children held at least a major award in Early childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualification Framework or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent. It is acknowledged that there was documentation on file however it could not be established that this was an approved qualification.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider has stated that the staff member completed the steps to obtain recognition for Level 5 from DCEDIY. Qualified students cannot be employed without recognition from DCEDI prior to starting.

Supporting documentation submitted

Evidence of qualification recognition received.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventative actions submitted by the registered provider have been sufficient to address the non-compliance under Regulation 9(4).

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) The registered provider ensured that an adequate number of adults were working with the children in the service at all times throughout the day of inspection. twelve early years practitioners were available in the building to meet the care needs of forty-nine children who were present on the day of inspection.
- (2) The registered provider ensured that the adult to child ratios were maintained within the service on the day of inspection. This was further evidenced in the staff roster.
- (8) (a) A review of the staff roster and conversation with adults present on the day indicated that the registered provider ensured that there were two adults present during the operational hours of the service.

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:

(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)
- (j) A sample of ten medication administration records were reviewed, nine were found to be fully completed with all necessary information included.
- (k) A sample of fifteen accident and incident records were reviewed, seven were found to be fully completed with all necessary information included.
- (3) The registered provider ensured that a record in writing was available for the inspection on the premises by the Inspector.

Non-Compliance Information

- (1)
- (j) The registered provider did not ensure that one medication record was completed in full, the following details were omitted.
- There was no medication named on the form. This posed a potential risk to unknown medication being administered or clarity around what was given.
 - There was no second staff member documented as checking the medication. This poses a potential risk of a medication error.
- (k) The registered provider did not ensure that eight of the accident and incident forms were completed in full. the following was observed.

- One parent signature was missing from one child's record; this poses a risk of parents not being aware of the incident.
- The date a parent signed the record was missing from seven of the fifteen forms sampled. Failing to demonstrate that parents were made aware of an incident on the date it occurred.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)

(j) Staff have been informed of the importance of naming the medicine on the form and a second person signing the form. The administration policy has been updated.

(k) The registered provider has stated that all staff have been informed to check forms when parents sign them to ensure that they are dated, they have also been advised to make sure that the form is signed on the day of the accident/incident. The policy on Accident and Incidents has been updated.

Supporting documentation submitted

(j) Evidence has been submitted.

(k) Evidence has been submitted.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventative actions submitted by the registered provider have been sufficient to address the non-compliance under Regulation 16 (j) and (k).

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

(1)(a) The registered provider ensured that the children's learning, development and wellbeing was facilitated within the service in the following ways:

Basic Needs

- Throughout the children's time in the service, they were provided with regular snacks and two hot meals which were freshly prepared onsite, sessional classes brought food prepared at home into the service. On the day of inspection, children in the Sessional room were observed to have a selection of sandwiches, pasta, yogurts, fruit and vegetables prepared at home. The hot lunch observed consisted of tomatoes, pasta and cheese. Alternative dietary options were provided, and additional portions of food were given when requested. Children drank from individual water bottles or individually labelled cups. Mealtimes were observed to be a social and pleasurable experience for the children at a pace that suited their individual needs.
- There was a rest area in each care room if the children wished to engage in more restful activities.
- Children who were toilet trained were observed to have unrestricted access to the toilet, with staff praising a child's efforts and supporting them when they needed it.
- Staff were observed to use positive behaviour strategies to engage the children in tasks and manage transitions, the following was observed:
- Staff were observed to use applause with and associated song ranging in pitch, pace and volume to gain the children's attention, the tone, pace and volume reducing as the children became more engaged.

Supporting Relationships

- The adults in the service were observed to interact with the children in a responsive, warm and respectful manner. Adults sat with children during play and mealtimes, involving themselves in the children's play and meal experiences when invited. This provided opportunities to support children's learning and development.

- The adults within the service were observed to speak to each other in a professional and warm manner, working as a team to meet the changing needs of the children.
- Adults in the service reported that the service operates an open-door policy, parents were observed to communicate with adults within the service at drop off and collection times, the service also completed a daily log for each child which outlined sleep, nappies and food intake.

Physical and Material Environment

- The furniture in the room was low level and appropriate for the children attending. With toys, equipment and play materials easily accessible and visible to the children on low level units which nurtured independence and facilitated choice.
- Images of children and their families and artwork was displayed throughout the room which promoted a sense of identity and belonging.
- The children had access to the outdoor play environment throughout the day. This is scheduled but also available to children if and when they needed. This area had absorbent artificial flooring, a mud kitchen, sensory wall, a climbing frame, a stage, footballs, scooters, construction materials, stepping blocks giving an array of options to develop gross motor and problem-solving skills.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) (a)

1. The registered provider did not ensure that a child who was settling into the service after a period of absence was facilitated with a resettling in period, this was at variance from the service Settling-In Policy, which states a settling in period has no time limit and may need to be repeated. The following was observed.
 - Between 10:04am and 11:26am a child in the Wobbler room was observed to be upset, crying and sobbing, there was no plan or contact made with parents to inform them of this child's difficulty with readjusting back into the service. It is acknowledged that staff provided physical comfort, warmth and distraction to the child throughout this time.
2. The books in the Toddler room were in poor condition with pages missing and torn edges. This can potentially limit a child's enjoyment and engagement in the early literacy development period.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)(a)

1. The registered provider has stated that staff have been made aware of the updated settling in policy after a child has a break from the service. The policy has been updated to include a resettling in period after a holiday break.
2. The registered provider has stated that the books have been replaced. Staff have been reminded that there is an abundance of books in the store cupboard to replace the books that are in poor condition.

Supporting documentation submitted

1. Evidence has been submitted.
2. Evidence has been submitted.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventative actions submitted by the registered provider have been sufficient to address the non-compliances 1 under Regulation 19(1)(a).

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 to the service was secure upon the inspectors unannounced arrival at the service, access was granted via a doorbell system in which a staff member answered, therefore preventing access to the children from unauthorised persons, this also prevented children from exiting the service unsupervised.
- Internal doors were secured with handles placed at a height, additionally safety gates were also observed to be in use, this prevented children from exiting the care rooms without supervision.
- The outdoor area was fully secured with high fencing and walls.
- Hazardous materials such as cleaning agents were stored out of reach of children.

- High risk foods such as grapes were appropriately cut to reduce the risk of choking.
- There were no trailing flexes in either are rooms or outdoor area.

Infection Control:

- The service was clean and well maintained throughout, with up-to-date cleaning records on display.
- Toilet roll was hygienically stored and in easy reach of the children, preventing cross contamination.
- Thermostatically controlled water, liquid soap and single use paper towels were in use throughout the service for hand drying purposes, ensuring good handwashing practices.
- Perishable food items prepared at home and brought into the service were refrigerated until needed, preventing harmful bacterial growth.

Administration of Medication:

- Medications were not routinely given within the service however staff demonstrated knowledge on the procedure for medication administration if required. Temperature reducing medications were safely stored within the service and available for use if required.

Safe Sleep:

- There were enough cots and floor beds available for children who required sleep.
- The registered provider ensured that 10-minute sleep checks were undertaken by adults and recorded position, colour and breath.

Fire Safety:

- Adults were able to outline fire drills and evacuation procedures.
- Fire route lighting was in place and in working order throughout the service.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

1. A nappy changing mat was observed to be stored on the floor of the sanitary area nearest the entranceway. This posed a risk to the exposure of harmful bacteria.
2. A floor mat in the Pre-School room which the children used to sit was torn and frayed, preventing effective cleaning.
3. One pedal bin in the Pre-school room was broken preventing children from discarding of rubbish safely.

Fire Safety:

4. A fire escape route was partially restricted from opening due to the presence of a plastic fence. The fence was removed on the day of inspection. A restricted fire exit can pose a potential risk to children's safe evacuation in the event of a fire.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control:

1. The registered provider has stated that the mat has been replaced and is now stored on the changing table.
2. The registered provider has stated that the floor mat has been replaced, and staff have been emailed about updated daily risk assessments. The room risk assessment has been amended to include checking mats for tears.
3. The registered provider has stated that the pedal bin has been removed and replaced and that daily risk assessment updated to include checking the pedal bins.

Fire Safety:

4. The registered provider has stated that the staff have been advised to ensure the exit is clear inside and outside, a sign has been placed on the door and staff have been emailed about the daily risk assessment. The daily room risk assessment has been updated to include checking outside the door.

Supporting documentation submitted

Infection Control:

1. Evidence has been submitted.
2. Evidence has been submitted.
3. Evidence has been submitted.

Fire Safety:

4. Evidence has been submitted.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventative actions submitted by the registered provider have been sufficient to address the non-compliances under Regulation 23.

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 registered provider ensured that persons trained in first aid to include First Aid Responder (FAR) were available to the children during the operational hours of the service.
- (2)
- (a) A first aid box was safely stored and easily accessible in a conspicuous room within the premises.
 - (b) The first aid box was readily available to the adults caring for the children in the preschool service.