

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DY231
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Name of Service:	Tots & Co. Childcare
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Address of Service:	Beaumont Hospital, Beaumont, Dublin 9, Co. Dublin
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Eircode:	D09 FY94
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Name of Registered Provider:	Rima Macken
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	21/02/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	48	PM	40
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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 D08 X01F
Inspection undertaken by:	E. Griffin and 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

Tots & Co. Childcare is one of a two services operated by the registered provider and has been in operation since 1996. The service provides care for children aged between 0 – 6 years old, on a full day care, part time and sessional basis and participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme. The service is also registered to operate an afterschool service and operates daily from 7:30am to 6.15pm Monday-Friday. The service is located on the Beaumont Hospital campus in Dublin. There is a Baby room for children aged 0 - 1 year old; the Tweenie room for children aged 1-2 years old; the Toddler room for children aged 2-3 years old; the Junior Montessori Room for children aged 3-4 years old and the Senior Montessori room for children aged 3-6 years old. The Front Room which is used by the Junior Montessori room in the afternoons. There is a cot room, dedicated kitchen, and sanitary areas for staff and children. There are two outdoor play areas one for the younger children and one for the older children.

Staffing

The registered provider works in the service in a supernumerary capacity and employs 16 staff. The registered provider was not present on the day of inspection. On the day of inspection there was a person in charge; 13 staff working directly with the children, two students on work experience supporting the staff and children in a supernumerary capacity and two ancillary staff, a cook and a driver.

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

Regulation 9 (1)(2)(4)-Management and Recruitment.

Regulation 11(1)(2)(8)-Staffing Levels.

Regulation 21-Equipment and Materials

Regulation 23-Safeguarding the Health, Safety, and Welfare of child.

Regulation 25- First Aid

Regulation 26- Fire Safety Measures

Regulation 28- Insurance

A Sampling process was used to assess compliance under: Regulation 21 and Regulation 23. As a result, the scope of the inspection included the Toddler Room and the Junior Montessori 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 person in charge, deputy person in charge, staff, students, 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) There was a named person in charge and a named deputy person in charge when the inspectors arrived unannounced to the service.
- (b) A review of the roster showed that a designated person in charge is rostered to be on the premises at all times.
- (c) Staff members were aware of the management structure in the service.
- (2) A Total of eighteen files were reviewed. Sixteen staff and two students.
- (a)(b) Thirty-six written and validated references were available in relation to the eighteen adults.
- (c) Up to date Garda vetting was available for eighteen adults. This demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Police vetting was available in respect of thirteen of the fourteen adults who had lived outside the jurisdiction for longer than six months as an adult.

(4) Documentation was available to show that the fourteen 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 by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(d) An international child protection certificate (ICPC) was not available in relation to one staff member who previously lived outside the jurisdiction for a period of more than 6 months as an adult. It is acknowledged however that standard police check record was held on file.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Action

The employee in question, who requires an International Child Protection Certificate (ICPC), has completed the application form, and applied for the document. The processing of the application can take up to 30 working days before the certificate is sent to the applicant.

Preventive Action

The registered provider has stated that future, potential candidates who have previously worked in the identified jurisdiction, will be required to apply for an International Child Protection Certificate before commencing their job.

Supporting documentation submitted

- A copy of the email sent to the organisation who will issue the certificate.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive action taken will address the non-compliance identified on inspection, however Regulation (9)(2)(d) remains outstanding until the International child protection certificate has been obtained and submitted to the inspectorate.

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) There was an adequate number of adults working directly with the children as follows:

There were 11 adults working with 48 children in the morning and 9 adults working with 40 children in the afternoon.

(2) The correct adult/child ratio was maintained in the service throughout the inspection as follows:

During the morning:

- The Baby Room – there was 1 adult working directly with 3 children aged 6 months to eighteen months.
- The Tweenie Room– there were 2 adults working directly with 8 children aged 1 to 2 years old.
- The Toddler Room– there were 3 adults working directly with 9 children aged 2 to 3 years old.
- Junior Montessori Room – There were 2 adults working directly with 11 children aged 3 to 4 years old.
- Senior Montessori Room – there was 3 adults working directly with 17 children aged 3 to 5 ½ years old.

During the afternoon:

- The Baby Room – there was 1 adult working directly with 3 children aged 6 months to eighteen months.
- The Tweenie Room– there were 2 adults working directly with 8 children aged 1 to 2 years old.
- The Toddler Room– there were 2 adults working directly with 9 children aged 2 to 3 years old.
- Junior Montessori Room – There were 2 adults working directly with 6 children aged 3 to 4 years old.
- Senior Montessori Room – there was 2 adults working directly with 14 children aged 3 to 5 ½ years old.

The person in charge and deputy person in charge were present in a supportive role on the day of inspection.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

- The Care rooms in the service were designed with the age and stage of development having been taken into consideration. Children were observed to take part in free play and group work. The layout of the rooms facilitated these choices as the toys and equipment were laid out on low level shelving and were visible and accessible to the children. There was a sufficient number of low tables and chairs to accommodate children whilst they played and ate in each care room. Cosy areas with rugs, cushions and books for rest and relaxation were present. There was equipment to reflect the children’s interests and their emergent curriculum.
- The presence of Family wall displays, birthday time displays and the children’s artwork, this demonstrated a sense of identity and belonging for the children.
- There was a variety of play materials and equipment available to the children according to their age and stage of development. These were stored in photographic labelled boxes and on low shelves to include; aprons and table covers for art and water play, home areas with play kitchens with supporting equipment and play food, range of construction toys to include jigsaws and wooden puzzles, wooden building blocks, plastic building bricks, stickle bricks, sorting and stacking toys; toys for transporting such as cars and trains; for imaginary play dress up clothes, instruments, dolls clothes, dolls bed and dolls pushchair. Montessori materials supporting the areas of practical life, sensorial, language, maths and culture were also present in the Junior Montessori room.
- There were two outdoor play areas on the premises which had a soft surface and provided opportunities for children to play a range of games and activities to support gross motor development. In one outdoor play area which was used by the younger children from the Wobblers, Tweenies and Toddlers rooms there was a small climbing frame, ride on toys, play house, blackboard, push along toys and a mud kitchen. In the other outdoor play area, which was used by the older children there was a large climbing frame with a bridge, tyres, trikes, bikes, scooters, large playhouse, and a mud kitchen with real life materials such as pots and pans. The children were observed to play in this area during the inspection.

Non-Compliance Information

In the Toddler Room children’s play experience was observed to be limited. Evidenced by the following:

1. There were four battery operated toys not working. Cause and effect toys help promote joint attention, play skills and exploration for children of this age group.
2. There was a shape sorting car play equipment with a wheel broken.
3. There was no mark making equipment directly accessible for the children. For example, the white board had no markers that were observed to be accessible for the children.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Actions

1. Four battery-operated toys have been immediately replaced with new batteries.
2. The car with the broken wheel was removed and recycled appropriately.
3. The staff members responsible for Toddler room have created a box with mark making materials available to children at all times. Markers and magnets are now available for children’s use at all times at their level.

Preventive Action

Staff were reminded about daily risk assessments at the staff meeting and the importance of checking all the toys are in working condition. Staff were reminded about daily risk assessments at the staff meeting and importance to check all of the toys for any damage.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence of the white board with whiteboard markers accessible to children.

Photographic evidence of box of mark making materials.

A copy of the staff meeting agenda.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions taken by the registered provider have addressed the non-compliances identified on inspection.

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 leading into the premises was appropriately secured to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the premises.
- The external outdoor play areas were secure with surrounding walls and securely gated reducing the risk of unauthorised access. Children who were brought out to the outdoor play areas from indoors were observed to be supervised.
- Toys and equipment used by the children were observed to be well maintained and in a good state of repair.
- There were no flexes or cables observed that were accessible to the children.
- Cleaning agents and medication were stored safely out of the reach to the children.

Infection Control:

- The sanitary accommodation was equipped with soap, warm water, and hand drying facilities.
- The children were facilitated to wash their hands before eating, after using the toilet.

Safe Sleep:

During sleep time, the following was observed:

- Children under the age of one that required sleep were facilitated to sleep in cots.
- The sleep needs of children over two years of age were met through the provision of low floor beds.
- Children were provided with cellular blankets for sleep.
- Shoes and clothing were removed from children while they slept.
- The temperature of the cot room was recorded as 19.6°C at 12.26 pm, meeting the acceptable sleep room temperature of 16-20 °C while children under 1 years old sleep. The temperature of the sleep care room was recorded at 19.4 °C at 12.24 pm, meeting the acceptable sleep room temperature of 18-22 °C while children over 1 years old sleep.
- Staff maintained a record of the children that slept, to include their colour, breathing and position every 10 minutes.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Three clearly detailed up to date care plans for children who required specific medication were not available. Medical Care Plans enable staff to identify and accurately administer medication and treatment when required and the absence of such a care plan puts the safety of children at risk. This was evidenced for three children as follows.
 - In one of the care rooms staff were not aware that there was a child in the room with a specific allergy to a food. No individual care plan was available should an allergic reaction occur.
 - From discussion with staff in another room, they were not familiar where the medication for a child with a medical diagnosis was stored or how this medication is administered.
 - A care plan for a child who required a specific medication was not in place.

Infection Control:

On the day of the inspection the following was observed which poses a risk of cross infection.

2. A child's soother was stored on an open shelf.
3. Bed linen was stored on the individual beds which were stacked one on top of the other. There were fifteen low beds stored with bed linen in place at 10.05am.
4. One of the ten cots in the cot sleep room did not have a wipeable mattress.

Administration of Medication:

5. There was no written record of the administration of a prescribed medication, for a child who been receiving medication on a regular basis since 9/01/2024. It is acknowledged that the service has an emergency medication form which included the name of the medication, dosage and parental consent. However, this form had not been completed providing details of the date, time, dosage of medication administered and parental signature on collection. This is at variance to the service policy which states that staff members who administer prescribed medication will complete the above record. Failure to provide parents with this information on collection could result in a child receiving an overdose.

Fire Safety:

6. The emergency door in the sleep cot room was obstructed by two-fold up cots, leading to a risk of safety for children and staff in the event of an emergency evacuation.

General Safety:

Corrective Actions

1. Parents of the three children have been asked to fill out the medical care plans. They have now been provided in the care rooms. Management gave a very broad explanation to the staff during the staff meeting held on February 28th, 2024, regarding the administering of medication for these children.

- Management explained to each employee working in the crèche about the medical care plans and allergies. Everyone was asked to sign to indicate their understanding of the updated allergy list in the crèche.
- It was explained to everyone during the staff meeting where the medication is stored. Each room (where necessary) were provided with an updated emergency medication form directly taken from Tots & Co Policy and Procedures.
- A care plan for a specific child has been placed in the room. The employees working in this room have been informed about the child's care plan.

Preventive Actions

- Management introduced medical care plans forms for parents. Medical care plans will be filled by parents/guardians during enrolment process, they will be emailed if a child has allergies or requires medication. All medical plans will be shared with the staff and placed in the child's room.
- Management is implementing weekly checklists/reminders for staff members to review medication care plans at the beginning of each shift. This helps reinforce the importance of staying updated on each child's needs.
- Management will schedule regular reviews of medication care plans to ensure they remain accurate and up to date.
- Management and staff are going to encourage open communication with parents or guardians regarding their child's medication needs. Keep parents informed about any changes in medication policy and seek their input when necessary.

Supporting documentation submitted

- A copy of the staff meeting agenda.
- A copy of the memo.
- Updated allergy list.
- Care plan template.

Infection Control:

Corrective Actions

2. The soother that was attached to a toy was placed in zip lock bag with child's name clearly marked.
3. New storage of the toddler bed sheets has been put in place. All sheets and blankets are now to be taken of the bed and placed in Ziplock bags clearly marked with the child's name and stored in the designated drawers in the cot room.
4. The wipeable mattress cover was placed on the cot bed immediately, as it was in the wash previous day.

Preventive Actions

2. All Staff have been retrained to return soothers to their designated storage space when not in use. Management will implement a system for regular checks and reminders to ensure that staff consistently follow proper soother storage procedures. This could include periodic inspections of storage areas and gentle reminders during staff meetings or training sessions. Signs have been placed as visual reminders in the Toddler and Cot room to remind staff to return soothers to their designated storage space after use. This can help reinforce the importance of proper storage practices and serve as a visual cue for staff members.
3. Management provided clear guidelines and instructions to staff members on proper linen storage practices. It emphasised the importance of not stacking beds with linen and blankets still on them and reinforced the need to store them in zip lock bags when not in use.
4. Management will ensure that all cots in the creche are equipped with wipeable mattress covers to facilitate easy cleaning and disinfection between uses. Staff will conduct a daily cot room checklist to ensure that all cots have a wipeable cover on them before putting new sheets on the bed.

Supporting documentation submitted

- A copy of the staff meeting agenda.
- Picture of soother in zip lock bag with child's name clearly marked.
- Picture of sheets and blankets placed in zip lock bags marked with children's names.
- Picture of the mattress cover.

Administration of Medication:

Corrective Actions

- The parents of the child have been promptly informed about the updated emergency medication form and the dosage for their child. The emergency medication form has been acknowledged by the child's parents.

Preventive Actions

- Management will ensure that all staff members are familiar with the Tots & Co medication policy and procedure and will follow them diligently. The Manager or designated person will only be allowed to administer medication and fill in the medication form.

Supporting documentation submitted

- A copy of the updated emergency medication form for a child.

Fire Safety:

Corrective Actions

- Items stored obstructing fire exit doors in the cot room have been removed.

Preventive Actions

- Management will ensure a daily risk assessment is in place to prevent an obstacle obstructing the fire exit doors in the creche.

Supporting documentation submitted

- Photographic evidence of the fire exit door clear of obstruction.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive action taken by the registered provider has addressed the non-compliances identified on inspection 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 service provided evidence that three adults were 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 were safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous positions in the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of-

(a) any fire drill that takes place in the premises, and

(b) the number, type and maintenance record of fire fighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.

(4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire shall be displayed in a conspicuous position in the premises.

Compliance Information

(1)(a) Documentation was available to demonstrate that fire drills were practiced monthly. The last fire drills took place on 12 January 2024.

(b) The number, type and maintenance record of the firefighting equipment was up to date. Fire extinguishers were last serviced in February 2023 and the smoke detection system in January 2024.

(4) A procedure to be followed in the event of a fire was on display in prominent positions at the premises.

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 service was insured. The insurance certificate provided for review showed cover for the service and a renewal date of 1 January 2025.