

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DY311
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Name of Service:	Tots and Co Childcare
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Address of Service:	8 Barrow Street, Ringsend, Dublin 4.
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Eircode:	D04 K858
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Name of Registered Provider:	Rima Mackin
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	31/03/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	38	PM	35
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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, D08 X01F
Inspection undertaken by:	JA. McKimm and LA. Webster
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).

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Description of service

Tots and Co Childcare is a privately run full day care service located in Dublin City which operates 8am-6pm Monday to Friday. The service operates from a two-storey building and is comprised of an office, kitchen, two cot rooms and five care rooms. The kitchen, two cot rooms and four care rooms; Baby room, Tweenie room, Toddler room and Montessori 2 room are located on the ground floor of the service. The Montessori 2 room was not in operation on the day of the inspection. The Montessori 1 room and the office are located on the first floor. The service caters for up to 60 children aged 0-6 years and participates in the Early Childhood Care & Education (ECCE) scheme.

Staffing

The registered provider currently employs fifteen staff to work in the service including the designated person in charge, deputy person in charge, eleven early years professionals, a cleaner and a cook. In addition, there was one student on college work placement providing support in a supernumerary capacity in one of the care rooms. Thirteen staff were present on the day 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.

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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, deputy person in charge, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Statutory Notices

Notice	Date Served	Detail
Improvement Notice IN0261	31/03/2026	During nappy changing a child was observed to hold an anti-bacterial spray close to their mouth.
Status	Action was taken by the registered provider immediately following service of the Notice and the provider submitted a written response which detailed corrective and preventive actions which were accepted by the inspectorate.	

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Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that-

- (a) the service has a designated person in charge and a named person who is able to deputise as required,*
- (b) at all times during the period when the pre-school service is being carried on, the designated person in charge or the named person referred to in subparagraph (a) is on the premises, and*
- (c) there is a clear management structure in the service that identifies the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and unpaid worker.*

(2) A registered provider shall ensure that each employee, unpaid worker and contractor is suitable and competent taking into consideration the nature of the needs of children, including by-

- (a) consideration of references from the person's past employers, if any, and in particular the most recent employer, if any,*
- (b) consideration of references from reputable sources in the case of a person who has no past employers,*
- (c) consideration of the vetting disclosure received from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána in accordance with the Act of 2012 in respect of the person, and*
- (d) ensuring, insofar as is practicable, that where a person has lived in a state other than the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months, he or she provides police vetting from the police authorities in that state.*

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that, without prejudice to the generality of paragraph (2) and subject to paragraphs (5) and (6), each employee working directly with children attending the service holds at least a major award in Early childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

Compliance Information

(1)

- (a) A review of the roster showed either the person in charge or the deputy person in charge were rostered to be present during the operational hours of the service.*
- (b) The person in charge was present during the inspection.*
- (c) Staff were clear around their roles and responsibilities and reporting structures within the service.*

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- (2) Discussion with management showed that nine staff had commenced employment since the last inspection. The files of these staff and the file of the student who was present on the day of the inspection were reviewed. A garda vetting disclosure for the registered provider was also reviewed.
- (a) There were sixteen written and validated references available from a past employer.
 - (b) There were four written and validated references available from a reputable source.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for the registered provider and ten adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
 - (d) Police vetting was available for nine adults who had lived in a country other than Ireland for a period of six months or more as an adult.
- (3) Evidence was available to demonstrate that the procedures specified in paragraph (2) were carried out in relation to ten adults before employment commenced.
- (4) Evidence showed that eight adults who worked directly with early years children 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 eligible by the Department of Children, Disability, and Equality.

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.*
- (3) Subject to paragraph (5), a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 2 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) therefore at that reference number is satisfied.*

Compliance Information

- (1) The registered provider ensured that staffing levels were adequate to respond to the individual needs of the children throughout the inspection. There were twelve adults caring for thirty-eight children on the morning of inspection and twelve adults caring for thirty-five children on the afternoon of inspection. The management team reported they are available to provide cover where required.

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- (3) The minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained at all times throughout the inspection. Staff were aware of the required ratios for the age range of children.

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 following activities, interactions, materials and equipment was observed to support children's learning and development.

Basic needs.

- Discussion with staff showed that children are offered breakfast between 8am to 9am. This is followed by a morning snack at 10am. On the morning of inspection a wide variety of fresh fruits were provided by the service; apples, pears, kiwis, grapes and oranges. The service also provided a hot meal for children which was prepared onsite. Different dietary requirements and additional food were observed to be available, for example, an alternative meal consisting of pasta or mash was available for children on the day of inspection.
- Water was available in each care room for the children to drink.
- The transitions throughout the day were smooth and the children appeared familiar with this routine. Staff were observed to give children verbal reminders in advance of moving from one activity to the next activity. Staff also supported transition times with songs, encouraging children to sing with them.
- The children were observed to play outdoors during the inspection. This supported their social, cognitive, gross and fine motor development.

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Supporting Relationships.

- Staff were observed to interact with the children in a warm, engaging manner. They observed children interacting with peers and acknowledged and praised them for positive behaviours for example when they shared toys and showed kindness to each other.
- The children demonstrated a positive sense of well-being and were at ease in their surroundings. They presented as happy and content and showed great enjoyment in their activities.

Physical and Material needs

- The furniture provided in each care room was low level and appropriate for 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.
- Child sized tables and chairs were available to the children, providing a comfortable area to eat snacks and take part in tabletop activities.
- The outdoor play area had a variety of equipment and toys and was well resourced for example there was 2 anchored playhouses, a slide, a small climbing frame, a variety of ride on and push toys along sensory mats, balls and small goals.

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:

- On the unannounced arrival at the service by the inspectors, the entrance door leading into the premises was appropriately secured with buzzer system to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the premises throughout the inspection.
- The kitchen area was inaccessible to children throughout the inspection.
- The outdoor area was fully enclosed and secure.
- All toys and equipment observed was safe for the age group of children using them.
- There were no flexes or cables observed that were accessible to the children.

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Infection Control:

- An ambient temperature of 18-22°C was maintained in the care rooms.
- The soft artificial flooring in the outdoor play area was observed to be in a clean condition.
- Pedal operated bins were provided in both the sanitary areas and the care rooms.

Administration of Medication:

- Care plans were available for children with a specific medical condition.
- Emergency medication was clearly labelled and stored safely.
- No medication was administered on the day of inspection.

Safe Sleep:

- Children under two years of age were provided with a cot for sleeping.
- Children over two years of age were provided with floor mats for sleeping.
- An ambient temperature of 16-20°C was maintained for sleeping children over one years of age.

Fire Safety:

- Staff were aware of evacuation procedures and location of the assembly point. The children's attendance was recorded on a tablet was monitored to ensure staff knew how many children were present in the care room and during outdoor play. This ensured safe evacuation of the children in the event of an emergency.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. See Statutory Notice section in relation to Improvement Notice 0261 served.
2. Safe sleep practices for children under the age of 1 sleeping in cots were not carried out in line with Tusla safe sleep guidance or service policy which posed a risk to children's safety.
 - Between 11.00 am – 11.17am no physical sleep check was conducted. Physical sleep checks are required every ten minutes.
 - An inaccurate record of sleep checks was maintained.

The practice and recording of comprehensive and timely physical sleep checks helps provide for children's safety.

Infection Control:

3. Nappy changing and hand washing was observed to be at variance with the services nappy changing and hand-washing policies and were not in line with best practice. This was evidenced by the following:
 - Staff did not effectively follow safe nappy disposal practices. This was observed by staff physically handling foot operated pedal bins to dispose of waste. This posed a cross-contamination risk.

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- It was observed that ten children from the Tweenie and Toddler rooms did not have their hands washed after nappy changing on the day of inspection. Additionally, it was observed that staff within the Tweenie and Toddler rooms did not effectively wash their hands after changing the children.

This posed a significant cross contamination risk.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

- See Statutory Notice section in relation to Improvement Notice 0261 served.
- Services sleep policy has been reviewed, staff re-training has taken place, greater managerial oversight has been introduced, and regular audit checks are taking place in the service.

Infection Control:

- Formal eLearning certification for all staff on infection control has taken place. One-to one practical training session have commenced with staff. Practice observations by management team have been introduced. Ongoing review and discussions on this matter will be on the agenda for staff meetings.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Documentary evidence submitted.

Infection Control:

Photographic information has been submitted.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the corrective and preventive actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliances identified under regulation 23 have been addressed.

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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) There was documentary evidence to show that two adults held certification in First Aid Response training and that one adult was rostered to on the premises at all times.
- (2) (a)(b) Suitably equipped first aid boxes were available to the adults caring for the children and were safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position in the care rooms.

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) The records available demonstrated that fire drills are held monthly within the service and the service conducted a fire drill on 20 March 2026.
 - (b) Records demonstrated that the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms had been serviced annually, with the last service taking place in July 2025.
- (4) There was a notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire displayed in a conspicuous position in the service.