

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DY311			
Name of Service:	Tots and Co Childcare			
Address of Service:	8 Barrow Street, Ringsend, Dublin 4, Co. Dublin			
Eircode:	D04 K858			
Name of Registered Provider:	Rima Mackin			
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional			
Date(s) of Inspection:	15/05/2024			
No of pre-school children:	AM	42	PM	38
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.

Description of service

Tots and Co Childcare is a private 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 catering for children aged 6 months-1.5 years, Tweenie room catering to children 1.5-2 years, Pre- toddler room catering for children aged 2-3 years and the Toddler room catering to children aged 2.5-3.5 years are located on the ground floor of the service. The Pre- toddler room was not in operation on the day of the inspection. The Montessori room catering for children aged 3-6 years 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 employs fifteen staff to work in the service; twelve of whom work directly with the children in the service. Thirteen staff were present on the day of inspection including the person in charge, deputy person in charge, a staff mentor and a cook from another service operated by the registered provider. The registered provider does not work directly with the children 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 and safety. The inspections may also focus on other areas as required. The following regulations were reviewed on the day of inspection:

Regulation 9 (1)(2)(3)(4)-Management and Recruitment.

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

Regulation 19 (a) -Health, Welfare and Development of Child.

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

Regulation 29- Premises

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulation 19; Health, Welfare and Development of child, Regulation 23; Safeguarding the Health, Safety and Welfare of child. As a result, the scope of the inspection included the Baby room, the Tweenie room and the Toddler room.

Inspection findings are documented in the inspection report which is first issued in draft format to the service with an opportunity to respond to any findings. Where statutory requirements are identified as not being met, the registered provider must demonstrate how they have rectified the non-compliance and will prevent any non-compliance from re occurring. The Corrective Action and Preventive Action plan (CAPA) will be used to inform decisions about compliance with regulatory requirements. Where the registered provider fails to meet the statutory requirements an escalation process may be commenced.

The inspectorate reserves the right to edit responses received for reasons including clarity, completeness and compliance with administrative and legal processes.

The contents of the report are compiled by the inspectorate body.

Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the 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.

(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 service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as needed.

- (b) Both designated persons in charge were present when the inspectors arrived unannounced to the service.
- (c) The service had a clear management structure and staff were aware of their own role and responsibility.

(2) A review of the roster and discussion with management and staff established that eight staff including the cook have been employed to work in the service since the last inspection in July 2023. The files of the eight new staff were reviewed. Garda vetting disclosures were also reviewed in relation to all fifteen staff members.

- (a) Fifteen written and verified references were available from recent past employers.
 - (b) One written and verified reference was available from a reputable source other than a past employer.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for all fifteen staff members. 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 seven of the eight staff members who had lived outside of Ireland for a period of more than 6 months as an adult.
- (4) Documentation was available to show that twelve adults who worked 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 eligible by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth Affairs.

Non-Compliance Information

- (2)(d) Evidence of international Police Vetting disclosure was not available for one staff member who previously lived outside the jurisdiction for a period of more than 6 months as an adult.
- (3) Evidence showed that the procedures specified in paragraph (2) was not carried out in respect of one adult being allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service. A Garda Vetting Disclosure had not been obtained and reviewed prior to the start date of the one staff member.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Action

- (2)(d) The service is waiting for the police clearance from the country of origin of that staff member, evidence was provided on the date of inspection to the inspectors. Staff member does not work directly with children. Staff member is kitchen relief.
- (3) The staff member started her induction week in the kitchen with the chef to take the handover prior to the chefs' holidays. During the training period/induction the staff member had no access to children or the rooms.

Preventive Action

- (2)(d) Tots & Co have a policy in place on this matter and take all precautions that any person working with children is garda vetted and has police clearance. Obtaining the police record for this particular staff member is proving difficult because her country has changed since birth, making it hard for her to obtain.
- (3) The service always ensure that all new staff members have been Garda vetted before their starting date.

Supporting documentation submitted

- No supporting documentation submitted.

Summary Comment

Regulation 9(2)(d) remains outstanding for one staff member.

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) The registered provider ensured an adequate number of adults were working with the children in the service at all times throughout the day. Twelve staff were available in the building to meet the care needs of 42 children who were present.

(2) The registered provider ensured that ratios were maintained at all times throughout the day for example;

During the morning:

- Two staff were caring for six children in aged 6 months-1.5 years old in the Baby room.
- Two staff were caring for seven children aged 1.5-2 years old in the Tweenie room.
- Two staff were caring for eleven children aged 2.5-3 years old in the Toddler room.
- Three staff were caring for eighteen children aged 3-6 years old In the Montessori room.

During the afternoon:

- Two staff were caring for six children aged 6 months-1.5 years old in the Baby room.
- Two staff were caring for seven children aged 1.5-2 years old in the Tweenie room.
- Two staff were caring for eleven children aged 2.5-3 years old in the Toddler room.
- Two staff were caring for fourteen children aged 3-6 years old In the Montessori room.

The person in charge, deputy person in charge and the staff mentor were present in a supportive role and were available to provide assistance to the care rooms where required on the day of the inspection.

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) Basic Needs:

- The service provided meals and snacks at regular intervals one of which was a hot meal for the children. All food was prepared in the kitchen of the service. Different dietary requirements were catered for if required and additional food was observed to be available, for example, dinnertime was served at 11.30am, an alternative option of Chickpea Curry was available for the children. Water was available in each care room for the children to drink.
- Mealtimes observed were relaxed and sociable events, with children given time to sit at low tables appropriate to their ages. Children were encouraged to self-feed, but staff were on hand to help as required, supporting independence and wellbeing.
- Nappy changing and toilet visits were completed at set times and as needed to ensure each child's comfort.
- The transitions between activities such as nappy changes, sleep time and mealtimes were observed to be calm and relaxed with additional staff available to care for the individual needs of the children.
- Children were observed to enjoy outdoor play during the inspection. All children had access and children were observed enjoying outdoor play during the inspection. Sunhats and suncream were applied to the children before going outdoors.

Supporting relationships with Children:

- Staff were observed to be engaged with the children and their play. They were responsive to the children and were observed to give them choices regarding their play activities.
- Staff were observed to comfort children when they were upset sitting close by to the children offering reassurance.
- The presence of Family wall displays, birthday time displays and the children's artwork on display throughout the service demonstrated a sense of identity and belonging for the children.

- The service used an electronic application to communicate with parents daily and update them on their child's meals, sleeps, nappy changes and activities. Staff discussed how they share in advance the weekly plan for the following week with parents, so they are kept informed of what activities their child is scheduled to participate in. The inspectors observed staff greeting parents at collection time and updating parents verbally on their child's day in the service.

Physical and Materials Environment:

- There were appropriate chairs for feeding in the care rooms to facilitate the children to eat comfortably and independently.
- The furniture provided in the rooms was low level and suitable to the needs of the children. Equipment was visible and accessible enabling the children to independently access their choice of activity. The care rooms were laid out with a range of materials and toys that were suitable to the age and stage of development of the children. For example, in the baby room there was adequate space for the babies to explore their environment. Materials and equipment included a sensory multi activity box, lots of building blocks, connecting equipment, push along toys, and cause and effect toys, for example, musical battery-operated toys. Cause and effect toys help promote joint attention, play skills and exploration. In the Toddler room toys were grouped in themed interest areas which promotes children's engagement with activities.
- In the baby room there was an adult armchair to support the comforting of children, and this was observed in use during the inspection by an adult sitting down to bottle feed a baby.
- There were cosy areas observed in each care room for the children to relax in as required. The cosy corner in the baby room was equipped with soft books, large soft mat and a mirror with a pull up bar for the babies to use. In addition, there was a rest area with cushions present for relaxation in the outdoor play area.
- Equipment was accessible and displayed to enable the children to explore and develop their play opportunities. For example: home areas with play kitchen with supporting equipment and play food, range of construction toys to include wooden puzzles, jigsaws, plastic bricks, building blocks, magnetics; toys for transporting such as cars and trucks; small world play toys of dolls, dolls clothes, animals and dinosaurs; sensory play table with cereal ; for gross motor play a wooden climbing frame that included steps and a ramp was positioned beside soft matting; for imaginary play , dress up clothes and for arts and

crafts – mark making materials directly accessible to the children; Montessori learning approach materials supporting the areas of practical life, sensorial, language, maths and culture were also present.

- An outdoor play area was available for the children with a soft artificial surface. Equipment included a slide structure, five rockers, three ride on toys and wooden blocks. There was also a range of materials in a shed available for use. Children were observed to fill pots and pans which had been taken from the shed with water from an outside tap. Outdoor play supports their social, cognitive, gross, and fine motor development.

Programme of Activities:

- There were visual daily routines on display in the Baby room and Toddler room. These timetables had pictures of each of the planned activities during the day. Staff explained how using timetables helps children to become familiar with the daily routine.
- The children were observed to be partners in the programme of activities, staff were observed asking the children to choose what activity they would like to participate in during activity work time. Children were observed to have freedom to move around the room.
- In the Baby room the inspector observed an up-to-date weekly curriculum plan which focused on all aspects of child development and included promoting a sense of identity and belonging. For example, the weekly plan had International Family Day scheduled for May 15th on the inspection team arrival at the service staff were carrying out an activity in relation to this scheduled event.

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:

- A weekly roster reflected the staff present in the service.
- There was an up-to-date daily risk assessment displayed in the care rooms.
- Toys and equipment used by the children were observed to be well maintained and in a good state of repair.
- The nappy changing units were safe and sturdy and children's nappy changing items were stored within easy reach.
- The Radiators were observed to have protective covers.
- Medication was stored safely out of the reach of children.
- The kitchen area was inaccessible to the children.

Infection Control:

- The sanitary accommodation was equipped with liquid soap, warm water, and hand drying facilities. The children were facilitated to wash their hands before eating, after using the toilet and playing outdoors.
- Aprons and gloves were provided and used to ensure good hygiene practices during food handling and nappy changing.
- Foot pedal operated bins were available in sanitary areas to allow hygienic disposal of contaminated materials.
- Individual bed linen was used for the sleeping children. Cots and soft floor mats were positioned 50 centimetres apart, as per best practice guidelines to reduce the potential risk of cross infection.
- Soothers were stored safely, and staff in the baby room were knowledgeable on how to wash and sterilise soothers between use.

Administration of Medication:

- The service had individual care plans on display to identify the medication requirements and procedure in the event of an emergency for children who had an identified allergy and/or diagnosed medical condition. In discussion, staff were aware of the procedure to follow as per the care plan.

- Emergency medication was located and safely stored in the care-room in the original box and was clearly labelled with the child's name.

Safe Sleep:

During sleep time, the following was observed:

- Children were provided with cellular blankets for sleep.
- Shoes and outer clothing were removed from children while they slept.
- The temperature of cot room 1 was recorded at 18.7°C at 10.40am while children under 1 years old were sleeping meeting the acceptable temperature of 16-20°C.
- The temperature of cot room 2 was recorded at 20°C at 12.57pm while children over 1 years old were sleeping meeting the acceptable temperature of 18-22°C.
- Children were provided with an individually labelled cot at sleep time. Sleep check observations documenting the child's breathing, position and colour were carried out at 10 minutes intervals.

Fire Safety:

- On the day of inspection, it was observed that all emergency exit doors were clear from obstruction. This helped ensure the safe effective evacuation of children and staff in the event of an emergency evacuation.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. A trailing flex from a radio was observed in the cot sleep room just behind a cot at 10.40am. This posed a risk of injury to the children. It is acknowledged that the trailing flex was removed straight away during inspection when the inspector let the person in charge know of the risk identified.
2. Cleaning agents were not stored safely out of the reach to the children, cleaning agents were observed to be stored in an unlocked press in the hallway which was accessible to children. This posed a risk of injury. It is acknowledged that there was a lock put on the press at 1pm during the inspection.

Infection Control:

3. The following was observed which prevented adequate cleaning and presented a risk of choking should the children ingest the foam:
 - In the Toddler room, a blue foam cube was torn at the corners which exposed the foam inside.
 - In the outdoor play area, there were green cushioned shapes torn and the foam inside exposed.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The radio was removed straight away during inspection. Management informed the staff that they removed the radio from the cot room for safety reasons on the day of the inspection. Additionally, we discussed this matter during our monthly staff meeting on May 30th.
2. The lock from the cleaning press was in place in the hall on the day of the inspection. On the day of the inspection, we reminded all the staff about the importance of locking the press as cleaning products need to be stored safely out of the reach of children. Additionally, we discussed this matter during our monthly staff meeting on May 30th.

Infection Control:

3. The foam cube and the cushioned shapes torn were removed from their respective places and they are going to be repair or replaced. During our staff meeting on May 30th, we discussed about the importance of risk assessment and informing management about any risks concerning children to take the appropriate measures as quickly as possible.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

- Copy of the staff meeting agenda.
- List of staff who attended the meeting.

Infection Control:

- Copy of the staff meeting agenda.
- List of staff who attended the meeting.

Summary Comment

The registered provider through the corrective and preventive actions taken has addressed the non-compliances identified under Regulation 23 Safeguarding the Health, Safety, and Welfare of child.

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 a person trained in First Aid Responder training was available at all times to the children attending the pre-school as evidenced by the staff roster. On the day of the inspection there were two adults present who held an up-to-date certificate in First Aid Responder Training.

(2)(a)(b) The first aid boxes within the service were suitably equipped, stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position on the premises and were available to the adults caring for the children at all times.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-

(b) safe and secure,

(c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated

(d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and

(e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.

Compliance Information

(b) The premises was observed to be safe and secure on the day of inspection. Evidenced by the following:

- The service entrance was securely locked on arrival of the inspectors to the building and remained locked throughout the day which prevented unknown persons entering the premises and prevented children leaving the service unsupervised.

- The external outdoor play area was secure with surrounding walls and securely gated reducing the risk of unauthorised access.

(c) Natural light was provided in all care rooms. This was subsidised by artificial light as needed. Windows were opened throughout the service for ventilation and an ambient temperature of 18-22°C was maintained in the four care rooms.

(d) Corrective and Preventive actions taken following the previous inspection held in July 2023 were sustained:

- The water flow from the taps in the Pre-toddler and Toddler room had been fixed.
- The hole observed in the walls of the Toddler room had been repaired.
- The tap in the sanitary area on the ground floor has been repaired and no longer leaking.
- The ceiling in the Tweenie cot room had been repaired and was no longer stained.

(e) The service had adequate nappy changing facilities for the number of children present who required nappy changing. There were two nappy changing units available for 17 children who required nappy changing.

Non-Compliance Information

(d) The following non compliances which had been observed in the previous inspection in July 2023 remained outstanding:

- The flooring in the hallway near the kitchen was damaged and unsealed which prevented adequate cleaning.
- Paint in the hallway was observed peeling which prevented adequate cleaning of the area.

It is acknowledged the inspection team were shown evidence that the registered provider is in the process of confirming dates of work due to be completed to address the above non compliances.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(29)(d) The paint in the hallway, railings and flooring has been completed and we informed the inspector by email on May 24th and June 6th, including pictures of the work done. We at Tots and Co service are always improving to uphold our commitment to quality for our staff and children in the premises.

Supporting documentation submitted

- Photographic evidence of the work completed sent by email on May 24th and June 6th.

Summary Comment

The registered provider through the corrective action taken has addressed the non-compliance identified under Regulation 29 Premises.