

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier: TU2015DY346

Name of Service: Wee Tots Creche and Pre School

Address of Service: Fountain Resource Group, 2A Basin Street, Dublin 8,

Eircode: D08 N2E9

Name of Registered Provider: Thomas Brunkard

Service type: Full Day, Part Time, Sessional

Date of Inspection: 14/07/2025

No of pre-school children:	AM	27	PM	24
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate Area 1 2 nd Floor, Unit 4/5 The Nexus Building Blanchardstown Corporate Park Ballycoolin Dublin 15 D15 CF9K
Inspection undertaken by:	T. Nelson
Title:	Early Years Inspector

Authority to Inspect

The Tusla Early Years Inspectorate carries out inspections of Early Years Services under Section 58(J) of the Child Care Act 1991 (as inserted by Section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013).

Conditions if applicable Not applicable

Description of service

Wee Tots Crèche and Pre-school is a community service which is situated in an urban area on the south side of Dublin city. The service provides sessional, part time and full day care and education to children aged from 0 to 6 years to a maximum of 46 children registered to operate from 8.15am to 5.15 pm Monday to Friday. The service has three care rooms on the ground floor of the building, with a further 2 care rooms in a prefabricated building to the rear of the service. The care rooms include the Wobbler Room (1 to 2 years old) and Toddler Room 1 and Toddler Room 2(2 to 3 years old) located in the main building. The Caterpillar Room and the Butterfly Room in the prefabricated building both cater for children from 3 to 6 years old. The service also has a sleep room, office, kitchen, staff room and sanitary facilities. There is an outdoor play area to the front and rear of the premises.

Staffing

There are currently 17 staff employed by the registered provider; the person in charge, a house manager, two kitchen staff and 13 childcare staff who work directly with the children. There are an additional two childcare staff, one employed under TUS, and one employed under the Community Employment (CE) scheme. The registered provider does not work in the service.

There were 16 adults present on the day of the inspection, including the person in charge, the house manager, two kitchen staff, ten childcare staff, and the two staff employed under TUS, and the Community Employment (CE) scheme.

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 and premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under the following:

- Regulation 19 (1)(b)-Health, Welfare and Development of child
- Regulation 23 – Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child

As a result, the scope of the inspection included the Wobbler, Toddler 2 and Butterfly rooms and did not include the Toddler 1 and Caterpillar rooms. Regulation 11 was inspected across all 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 inspector wishes 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 two persons to deputise as required.

(b) The person in charge reported either they or the deputy person in charge were rostered to be present during the operational hours of the service. This was reviewed in the service attendance books.

(c) There was a clear management structure in place, and staff reported being aware of this.

(2) The staff roster was reviewed and discussed with the service manager, where it was established that 19 adults work in the service. The full files of eight adults who were new to the service since the last inspection on the

29 March 2023 were reviewed, along with Garda Vetting disclosures for 11 adults whose files were reviewed on the last inspection.

The registered provider had completed the following checks:

- (a) Nine validated written references were available from recent past employers.
- (b) Four validated written references were available from a source other than a past employer.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all 19 adults. However, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. Please refer to the information outlined under regulation 23 of this report.
- (d) Five adults who had lived in a state other than Ireland for six months or more as an adult had international police vetting from that state available for inspection.

- (4) Of the five new staff who worked directly with children attending the service, one held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications.

Non-Compliance Information

The registered provider did not ensure the following:

(2)(a)(b) The following was not available for two adults who worked with the children:

- There were no written validated references available for one adult.
- There was no documentary evidence available for one adult that one of their two references on file from previous employers had been checked to establish its validity.

Full checks must be completed on all adults to establish they are appropriate to have access to children.

(3) A review of start dates showed the following checks had not been considered prior to two adults having access to children:

- One adult commenced employment in the service prior to appropriate consideration of references. Reference validation checks had been completed on the day of the inspection for an adult who commence in the service in April 2024.
- International police vetting was submitted dated the day of the inspection for an adult who commenced in the service in April 2025.

Full checks must be completed on all adults to establish their suitability prior to them having access to children.

- (4) The registered provider did not provide documentary evidence to establish that four new employees working directly with children attending the service held a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent to at least a major award at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (2)
- (a)(b) The outstanding references were sourced and verified, and the references for the second staff member were verified. A checklist of documents was developed to include in staff files.
- (3) A checklist of documents was developed to include in staff files prior to their commencement.
- (4) Evidence was submitted that the qualifications of the staff members are included on the list of relevant qualifications. The service will consult this list to ensure qualifications are relevant.

Supporting documentation submitted

- (2)(a)(b) Documentation to verify the above was reviewed.
- (3) Documentation to verify the above was reviewed.
- (4) Documentation to verify the above was reviewed.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliances identified under Regulation 9 have been addressed.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels

(1) Subject to this Regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that there is at all times an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.

(2) Subject to paragraphs (4) and (5), a registered provider of a full day care service or a part-time day care service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 1 of Schedule 6 opposite a particular reference number specified in column (1) of that Part in respect of the age range of the children specified in column (2) thereof at that reference number is satisfied.

Compliance Information

(1) On the day of inspection there were an adequate number of adults available to the children attending the service to meet their care needs.

- There were 13 staff available to 27 children present on the morning of the inspection.
- There were 8 staff available to 24 children present on the afternoon of the inspection.

(2) The adult to child ratios were maintained correctly throughout the inspection. For example:

- The manager and deputy managers were available to provide cover for breaks.

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-

(b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.

Compliance Information

Appropriate and suitable care practices were observed, as evidenced by the following:

- Practices such as mealtimes, nappy changing and toileting were observed to be timely and pleasant experiences for the children. Documentary evidence and discussion with staff showed meals provided were regular with a three-week menu plan available.
- The staff interacted with the children in a respectful, warm and sensitive manner. Appropriate verbal and nonverbal communication such as low tones, eye level contact, touch and other strategies were observed. Staff were observed to be familiar with the children and their families.
- The experiences and activities provided to the children in the rooms were suitable to the age and stage of development of the children. Children were observed to lead in their choice of play activity.

- All children were observed to access outdoor play o the day of the inspection. There was a roster available where play was scheduled for at least one occasion in the day.
- Appropriate sleep facilities were available to the children according to their age. Children under the age of two years had access to a cot.
- ‘My day today’ sheets were maintained to share information to parents on the child’s day such as food, drinks, toileting and sleep.

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 service ensured there was adequate and suitable furniture and equipment available, for example:

- The furniture and equipment in the rooms was observed to be adequate for the number of children in the rooms, it was appropriate for the age range and stage of development of the children in the rooms, and was well maintained, durable and easy to clean.
- The toys and equipment were laid out on low level shelving, visible and accessible to the children, and were grouped in themed areas of interest such tabletop activities, books, mark making, construction and role play.
- Each of the rooms had additional resources available in storage and directly accessible.
- The outdoor environment was well resourced with a range of bikes, push along and ride-on toys suitable for the age range of children. Sand and water play with additional props to extend the play was available.

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:

- Blind cords were observed to be secured.
- In the care rooms, cleaning products were stored up high out of reach or in a locked press under the sinks.
- Cables from radios and televisions were secured out of reach of children.

- Toys and equipment were in good condition and safe for the age range of children using them.

Infection Control:

- Liquid soap and single use hand towels or electric hand dryers were available at all wash hand basins used by the children and the staff members.
- Suitable foot pedal waste disposal units were observed in sanitary areas.

Safe Sleep:

- A log was maintained where the temperature of the room and the colour, breathing and position of sleeping children was checked every ten minutes.

Fire Safety:

- Emergency exits were observed to be unobstructed.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. The door to the prefabricated building to the rear of the main building was not consistently secured throughout the inspection. The following was observed:
 - At 10.18am, the door to the prefab was not secured. The handle on the door was accessible to the children, as were the internal door handles.

This posed the potential risk that a child could leave the prefabricated building unaccompanied.
2. The storage shed in the rear outdoor play area was not secured when the inspector arrived at the service at 9.25am. The following potential hazards were identified in the shed should a child gain access:
 - Equipment and furniture was stacked in an unstable manner, posing an injury risk.
 - Paint, paint thinner and detergent were accessible, posing potential poisoning or skin irritation.

It is acknowledged the shed was locked at 11.02am.
3. The anti-slam hinge on the fire door to the sanitary accommodation in the main building was not working effectively, causing the door to slam closed. This posed a finger trap injury risk for children.
4. Garda vetting was available for two staff members. However, these vetting disclosures were not dated within the previous three years in adherence to with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.
5. The temperature of the care rooms exceeded the recommended ambient temperature of 18 to 22°C in a care room as follows:

Room	Time	Temperature in °C	Required Temperature °C
Butterfly Room	9.52am	23.°C	18-22°C
Toddler Room 2	10.38am	23.8°C	
Wobbler Room	11.14am	23.1°C	
Toddler Room 1 (5 children over 2years old sleeping)	1.54pm	25.5°C	
Cot room (4 children over 1 year old sleeping)	1.56pm	23.5°C	

Children find it harder than adults to control their body temperature and can be at increased risk of heat-related illnesses. It is acknowledged that the day of the inspection was a warm day, with temperatures peaking 25°C.

6. The storeroom off Toddler room 2 was open, and an adult handbag was observed on the floor of the store room potentially accessible to the children. This posed a risk of harm to children should the handbag contain items which may be hazardous to children.
7. The legs of the white table in Toddler room 2 were loose and unstable. This posed a risk of injury should a child lean on the table.
8. The water temperature in the round wash hand basin in the sanitary accommodation in the main building exceeded the recommended temperature of 43°C. A temperature of 45°C was recorded by the inspector at 10.52am. This posed a scald risk to the children.

Infection Control:

The following increased the potential risk of infection:

9. Effective, hygienic handwashing was hampered because of the following observed in the sanitary area of the main building:
 - A staff member was observed to use the cold water tap to handwash after a nappy change.
 - Low water pressure in the hot water taps caused the water flow to stop and start.
10. There was a build-up of dirt on the flooring in the sanitary area of the main building. A review of the cleaning records showed cleaning had not been recorded on a regular consistent basis.
11. The following was damaged and worn, leaving an ineffective surface for cleaning:

- The bottom of the radiator in Toddler room 2 was rusted.
- The skirting by the radiator in Toddler room 2 was broken. It is acknowledged that a plumber had been scheduled to attend the service prior to the inspection to address this problem.
- The seal was broken where the flooring meets the wall in the cubicle in the sanitary area of the main building.

12. There was a build-up of dirt and debris on the extractor fan in the sanitary area of the Butterfly room.

Administration of Medication:

13. The administration of sun cream was not in line with safe practice and service practice on administration of suncream. The following was observed:

- Two of the four sun creams in the Butterfly room were not individually labelled. Staff reported that these unlabelled creams are used by the service on children who do not bring in sun cream from home.
- A review of a sample of ten child record forms showed only three parents signed a consent to use a suncream supplied by the service.

This posed a potential risk of skin irritation if used incorrectly.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The service will ensure the door is kept locked at all times. Staff have been instructed to ensure this happens and there are notices in place to remind staff.
2. The service will ensure the shed door is locked when not accessing equipment. A sign is now in place as a reminder to staff.
3. The anti-slam hinge had been tightened.
4. Renewed garda vetting disclosures were submitted for one staff member. The service report that the other staff member will not have duties involving contact with children until this has been submitted. The service report they will complete monthly file reviews to prevent a recurrence.
5. The service report windows will be opened, and a portable air-cooling machine will be used. Following a request for additional information the service report that they will record temperatures on an ongoing basis.
6. Staff were reminded to keep this door locked and a sign was placed on the door as a reminder.

7. The legs on the table are now secured and the service report they will complete regular checks to prevent a recurrence.
8. The thermostat was adjusted to keep water to the required temperature and the service report they will complete regular checks to prevent a recurrence.

Infection Control:

9. Staff were reminded to use warm water when hand washing, and a sign was plated by the sinks as a reminder. The water flow was adjusted.
10. The service reports the floor is mopped regularly and cleaning checklists are maintained.
11. The service has completed the following works: The radiator was treated and repainted, the skirting has been replaced, beading had been fitted to the flooring in the sanitary area. The service report they will complete regular checks to prevent a recurrence.
12. The extractor fan was cleaned and the service report they will complete regular checks to prevent a recurrence.

Administration of Medication:

13. Parents signed agreements for the service to apply the service suncream. The service has reviewed creche application forms to ensure parents have signed the relevant sections in relation to the administration of suncream.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Documentation, photographic and video evidence to verify points 1 to 8 above was reviewed.

Infection Control:

Documentation, photographic and video evidence to verify points 9 to 12 above was reviewed.

Administration of Medication:

Documentation to verify this was reviewed.

Summary Comment

The actions taken by the registered provider address 12 of the 13 non-compliances identified. The findings documented at point 5, remains non-compliant as the registered provider's response did not provide adequate assurance that the non-compliance had been rectified.

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 firefighting 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) The following records were maintained:
- (a) A record of fire drills was available on the premises with the last drill dated as having been carried out on the 4 June 2025.
 - (b) An up-to-date maintenance record was available for the Fire extinguishers which were serviced in March 2025.

Non-Compliance Information

The registered provider did not ensure the following was available, which can impede the safe evacuation of children from the premises in the case of a fire.

- (1) (b) There was no documentary evidence available to show that the smoke alarms had been recently maintained.
- (4) There were no detailed procedures to be followed in the event of a fire displayed in either the Butterfly room or Toddler room 2.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (1) (b) The service submitted evidence that the fire alarm system was maintained on the 24 July 2025. The service will ensure this check is conducted annually.
- (4) Notices are now displayed in the Butterfly and Toddler room 2 and the service report they will complete regular checks to prevent a recurrence.

Supporting documentation submitted

Documentation and photographic evidence to verify the above was reviewed.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 26 has been adequately addressed.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

A registered provider shall ensure that the pre-school service is adequately insured.

Compliance Information

There was documentary evidence available which showed the service was insured for the class of service and number of children it was registered to provide care for, with an expiry date of 30 November 2025.