

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015DY404
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Little Tots Creche & Montessori
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Lansdowne Valley, Drimnagh Road, Dublin 12, Co. Dublin
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<b>Eircode:</b>	D12 WT7K
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Louise Cleary, Lorraine Dunne
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<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	22/07/2025
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	15	PM	15
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	1st floor Trinity Building, IDA Business Park, Southern Cross Road, Bray, Co. Wicklow.
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	S. Quigley and E. Mulhern
<b>Title:</b>	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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not applicable
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### Description of service

Little Tots Creche and Montessori is a privately owned service located in an urban area of Drimnagh, Dublin 12. Full day, part-time and sessional care are provided to children aged six months to six years and an Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme is offered. The service opens from 07:30 to 18:00 each weekday and operates from a single storey, purposely adapted premises on the ground floor of a residential housing complex. Care and education are provided across three rooms and a designated sleep room is available. An outdoor play area is located adjacent to the property with a blend of artificial and natural grass surfacing. On the day of inspection, the Toddler room and the Montessori were in operation.

### Staffing

The service currently employs nine staff members including the two registered providers. On the day of inspection both of the registered providers were present and five staff members including a cook.

### 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/ premises and facilities/ information and records. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 15.

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.

## Additional Information

An immediate action notice was issued to the registered provider on the 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2025 during the inspection in respect of Regulation 23, general safety and first aid. A response was received from the service on the 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2025 which sufficiently mitigated the risk identified.

## Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered providers, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

### Part III – Management and Staff

#### Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

*(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

(2) Documentation was reviewed in respect of four adults who had commenced working in the service since Regulation 9 was last inspected on the 29<sup>th</sup> May 2023. Regulation 9 (2)(c) was assessed for each of the nine adults working in the service.

The following records were available for the adults:

(a) (b) The registered provider demonstrated that they had verified the references obtained from 2 sources for three of the four adults

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for the nine adults employed. The service adhered to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda Vetting every three years.

(d) Not applicable, international police vetting was not required for the adults.

(4) There was evidence that two of the staff members had attained at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and education at level 5 on the National Framework for Qualifications, or a qualification deemed to be equivalent.

Two of the adults who worked in an auxiliary role did not require a qualification.

#### Non-Compliance Information

- (2)
- (a) (b) The registered providers had not sourced a reference from one staff member's most recent employer. Another past employer reference was available, however it was not evident that this had been verified.
- (3) A review of documentation evidenced the registered provider had not taken the required steps as outlined in Regulation 9(2)(a)(b) to ensure that new recruits were suitable and competent before allowing them access to children, as detailed above.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider submitted the following response:

#### Corrective and Preventive Action

(2) (a) (b) (3)

The service has yet to receive a written reference from the most recent employer of staff member despite contact being made, however the service did complete a reference check therefore two reference checks have been completed for this employee. Conditions have been made that no new staff members will be given a start date until all relevant information is provided to the service and checks carried out on the information received.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

Supporting documentation was submitted and reviewed by the early years inspector.

### Summary Comment

The regulatory requirement has been met.

## 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) An adequate number of adults were working directly with the pre-school children attending the service during the inspection.

- (2) The registered provider ensured that the minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained in the service on the day of inspection. There were fifteen children present in the service being supervised by three adults during the inspection.

### Part IV – Information and Records

#### Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

*(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:*

- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;*
- (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;*
- (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;*
- (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;*
- (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;*
- (f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;*
- (g) the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner;*
- (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;*
- (i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.*

#### Compliance Information

- (1)  
A sample of twelve children's records were reviewed as part of the inspection. The twelve records contained the required information detailed above under points (a), (c) to (g), and (i).

#### Non-Compliance Information

- (1)
- (b) Two of the records reviewed did not detail the date on which the child had first attended the service.
  - (h) Two of the records did not detail a record of immunisations received by the child. The records available for four other children of immunisations received were incomplete.

The corrective and preventive actions submitted following the last inspection of the service on the 29<sup>th</sup> May 2023 did not prevent the re-occurrence of the non-compliance.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered providers submitted the following response:

#### **Corrective and Preventive Action**

All records mentioned were returned to the parents for correction. A check list has been added to the children's record forms for parents to help make sure all correct information is added onto their child's form.

#### **Supporting documentation submitted**

Supporting documentation was submitted and reviewed by the early years inspector.

### Summary Comment

The regulatory requirement has been met.

## 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 inspectors observed that the children's learning, development and well-being was supported. The indoor areas were laid out to support the children's independence. There were some interest areas including construction areas, dress up, and home corners. Play materials were visible and accessible to the children on open shelves. Inspectors observed children engaging in various activities including sensory and imaginative play. An outdoor play area was available, and the children all accessed it on the day of inspection. The area was adequately resourced with equipment and materials to promote gross motor skills and various types of play.

The children were supported to be independent. Older children used the toilet as needed with staff reminding them to wash their hands afterwards. Younger children had their nappies changed at regular intervals and as required. Staff encouraged the children to handwash at regular intervals. Children assisted in preparing for meals handing out cups and place mats and were encouraged to assist in cleaning up after meal times and play.

All meals and snacks were prepared on site and staff reported two meals and snacks, including a hot dinner, were provided by the service daily. Adults sat with the children when they were eating and engaged in conversation.

Drinks of water were available. The inspectors observed the staff interacting warmly with the children and engaging with them positively throughout the inspection.

Children's identity and belonging was promoted through art displays, birthday and family photograph walls. Staff told inspectors they use an interactive messaging application to communicate information on diet, toileting, meals, and activities with the children's parents, in addition to engaging with them at drop-off/collection.

### Non-Compliance Information

- A suitable rest area was not in place in the care rooms during the inspection to provide comfort for children to rest or take a break from activities if required.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered providers submitted the following response:

#### **Corrective and Preventive Action**

A suitable rest area was not evident on the day of inspection. A suitable rest area is provided now at all times for children to rest or take a break at any time throughout their day. Signs are in place at the rest areas to always have them be made available.

#### **Supporting documentation submitted**

Supporting documentation was submitted and reviewed by the early years inspector.

### Summary Comment

The regulatory requirement has been met.

## 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

The inspectors found by observation of practice, review of documentation, discussion with staff and inspection of the premises that the registered provider had taken the following steps to safeguard children attending:

#### **General Safety:**

The toys and play equipment observed in use by the children on the day of inspection were safe and in good working order. Cleaning products and hazardous materials were stored securely out of reach of the children.

### Infection Control:

An infection control policy was in place to inform practice. Schedules were in place and maintained to ensure the service, equipment and materials are regularly cleaned. Staff and children were observed to carry out consistent hand washing as appropriate. Staff stated appropriate exclusion periods for adults and children with infectious illnesses were implemented in the service as per the policy. Pedal operated bins were in place throughout the service for the disposal of waste.

### Administration of Medication:

There was written evidence of prior parental consent for the administration of both temperature reducing and prescribed medications, and there were procedures in place to safely administer and document such medication if required, including in the case of an emergency. Staff adequately detailed the procedures for administering medication when required during discussions with the inspectors and had appropriate documentation available to record such administration if required.

### Safe Sleep:

Staff were familiar with safe sleep guidance and detailed the safe sleep procedures in place in the service during discussions with the inspectors. Sleep logs were maintained in the Baby room where children all slept at a designated time, and individual children's observations recorded room temperature, breathing, colour, and position every ten minutes. The temperature of the room was maintained between the required range for the children aged one and two years sleeping of 19-22°Celsius.

### Fire Safety:

The designated fire escape routes were clearly indicated. Staff members adequately outlined the evacuation procedures in place in the event of a fire and stated that fire drills are completed monthly in the service.

### Non-Compliance Information

#### General Safety:

1. The door in the Montessori room which led to the hallway entrance of the service was open when the inspectors arrived at the service and was unlocked during the morning of inspection and could be opened by a child. The door in the hallway to exit the service leading to a main road had a push release button on the wall to open it which was situated at a height which could be accessed by a child, posing a risk of a child exiting the service unsupervised.

It is noted that children were supervised at all times in the Montessori room and following a request from the inspector on the day of inspection corrective actions were taken by the person in charge and the Montessori door was secured.

2. The wooden decking in place in part of the outdoor play area had worn away and eroded in parts exposing sharp splintered edges and rusted nails posing risk of injury to a child.
3. An electrical wire from an extension cord was hanging from a shelf to a low level socket in reach of the children in the Montessori room posing a risk of harm to a child.

### **Infection Control:**

4. A fabric cloth was in use on the day of inspection to clean down the shared nappy changing mat between changes posing a risk of cross contamination.
5. The bin in use in the outdoor play area for disposal of used nasal tissues was not pedal operated. Staff members were observed handling the bin lid holding soiled tissues during the inspection posing a risk of cross contamination.
6. There were no waterproof coverings on the five cot mattresses in use in the service posing a risk of cross contamination.

### **Action submitted by the Registered Provider**

The registered providers submitted the following response:

### **Corrective & Preventive Action**

#### **General Safety:**

1. Works are to be carried out to move the push button higher out of children's reach. Children are supervised at all times in Montessori and no child is allowed into the hallway alone. The door to the hallway will be immediately secured when person enters or exits the building. The placing of the release button higher will prevent the risk of children opening the door by themselves.
2. Wooden decking has been replaced with new decking.
3. The electrical wire has been covered by furniture and is no longer in reach of children. A more thorough daily risk assessment will be at the forefront to identify any issues going forward.

#### **Infection Control:**

4. Paper towels are now used to clean the changing mat after use. A Sign is now in place in the bathroom area to address this issue.
5. A pedal bin is now provided in the outdoor area.
6. The service has ordered the waterproof coverings, and they are due for delivery.

### Supporting documentation submitted

Supporting documentation was submitted and reviewed by the early years inspector.

### Summary Comment

The regulatory requirement has been met. The actions outlined as stated by the registered provider will address the non-compliances, these actions will be reviewed on the next inspection of the service.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

*(1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.*

*(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-*

*(a) no person other than-*

*(i) pre-school child attending the service,*

*(ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,*

*(iii) an employee, or*

*(iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and*

*(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.*

*(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (3)(b) is retained for a period of one year from the date to which it relates.*

### Compliance Information

(1) Documentation reviewed evidenced that a record was maintained in the service which detailed the children's arrival and departure times each day.

(3)

(a) A system was in place to ensure that visitors to the service could not gain entry without the approval of an employee. The entrance door to the service was secure, and a bell was in place for visitors to request entry.

### Non-Compliance Information

(b) Although a sheet of paper was available in the service which had documented the entry of some visitors, the record was not appropriately used to record the entry of external persons as follows:

- The person in charge did not request the inspectors sign the record sheet on arrival to the service.
- The sheet in place to record the entry of visitors had no records after January of 2025. The persons in charge confirmed that visitors had entered the service since January 2025, no records were maintained of these entries.

(4) Documentation reviewed evidenced the record detailed above in paragraph (3) was not maintained as detailed above under (3)(b).

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered providers submitted the following response:

#### **Corrective and Preventive Action**

The service has purchased a visitor book which will make it easier to obtain and record previous and present visitors. No person is allowed no gain entry to the service without signing in on arrival. The purchase of the book will make it easier to record and keep evidence of visitors to the service. A sign is in place to show visitors this and to remind staff to be aware that this procedure must be followed.

#### **Supporting documentation submitted**

Supporting documentation was submitted and reviewed by the early years inspector.

### Summary Comment

The regulatory requirement has been met.

## 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

- (2)
- (a)(b)
- A suitably equipped first aid box was observed to be immediately accessible to the children within the service and was stored in a conspicuous location on the day of inspection.

### Non-Compliance Information

- (1)
- An adult trained in First Aid Responder (FAR) training was not available in the service as no staff member employed held the required qualification, or any first aid qualification. An immediate action notice was issued to the service on the day of inspection.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered providers submitted the following response:

#### **Corrective and Preventive Action**

Contact was made to the tutor following the inspection and proof of First Aid Responder training was provided to the inspector following the immediate action notice. The service have been told this there is still a delay on certs being issued. The service will ask for written evidence of any training events undertaken.

#### **Supporting documentation submitted**

Supporting documentation was submitted and reviewed by the early years inspector.

### Summary Comment

The regulatory requirement has been met.

## Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

### Regulation 29 - Premises

*A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-*  
*(d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*

#### Compliance Information

(d)  
 The assessment of regulation 29(d) was limited to an assessment of the corrective action submitted by the providers following the last inspection of the service on the 29<sup>th</sup> May 2025 to address non-compliance identified in the children’s sanitary area. The area and flooring were observed to be clean, maintained and repaired as required.