

TUSLA PRE- REGISTRATION REGULATORY INSPECTION REPORT

Inspection Due to a Proposed Change of Circumstances



Tusla I.D: TU2015FL330

Name of Service: Tots & Swots

Address of Service: Unit 4, Balbriggan Retail Park, Balbriggan, Co. Dublin
K32P997

Email Address: totsandswots@gmail.com

Name of Registered Provider: Mary Simons

Type of Proposed Service:	Full Day Care	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Part-Time	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sessional	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Drop-In	<input type="checkbox"/>	Childminding	<input type="checkbox"/>	Temporary	<input type="checkbox"/>

Proposed change: Change in number that can be accommodated from 40 to 54 in total (Existing rooms).

Proposed Number of Children: From 40 to 54

Recommended Change Following Inspection: Increase from 40 to 54 children.

Registered change: Change in number of children to be accommodated from 40 to 54

Date of Inspection:	3	1	1	0	2	0	2	5
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Inspection undertaken by: Y. Kelly

Title: Early Years Inspector

Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Address: 2nd Floor, Unit 4/5, The Nexus Building,
Blanchardstown Corporate Park,
Ballycoolin, Dublin 15 D15CF9K

Rationale for Inspection:
Proposed Change of Circumstance

Note: For Office use only, to be completed by Registration Office

Registration Status:	Registered Full Day Care with 54 Children
Date of Registration	10 th November 2025

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Authority to Inspect

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

Description of Service	<p>Tots & Swots commenced operating as a privately-owned full day care Early Years service in 2012 and caters for children from 2 years 8 months of age until they commence attendance at primary school. The service operates from 7.30am to 6.00pm each weekday and participates in the Early Childhood (ECCE) scheme from 9.30am to 12.30pm daily for 38 weeks each year.</p>
Premises	<p>Tots & Swots Childcare is conducted over two floors within a large corner unit in an industrial estate on the outskirts of Balbriggan. The Early Years service adjoins a spacious soft play centre located in the same corner unit with internal access provided between the two facilities, in addition to separate main entrance doors provided externally to both the Early Years service and the soft play centre. The Early Years service is comprised of Room 1 and Room 3 on the ground floor and Room 2 and a sensory room on the first floor, with sanitary accommodation provided on both levels.</p>
Staffing	<p>The registered provider is present in the service on a daily basis, engaging in administrative duties whilst two Early Years service managers are employed to coordinate the operational management of the Early Years service. The registered provider employs a further 8 staff members in the Early Years service.</p>
Methodology	<p>The inspection was an announced inspection to assess compliance with the Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 and Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) (Amendment) Regulations 2016. The Inspection focused on regulations under the following themes; Governance, Health, Welfare and Development of the child, Safety and Premises.</p> <p>The findings on inspection based on information obtained through examination of documentation, direct observation, and discussion with relevant staff are documented in</p>

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	the inspection report and taken into consideration when making a decision in relation to registering the change in circumstance. 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.
Acknowledgements	The Inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the manager, 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.

Requirement met:

(1)(a) The requirement has been met.

The registered provider is the designated person in charge on a daily basis. There are 2 service managers and 2 named people available to deputise as required.

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.

Requirement met:

The requirement has been met.

(1) The registered provider is aware of the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in Part 2 of Schedule 6 and would ensure that an adequate number of adults would at all times work directly with the children in the service.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 20 - Facilities for Rest and Play

- (1) *Subject to this Regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that—*
- (a) *having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day, and*
 - (b) *there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.*
- (3) *A registered provider of a full day care service, a part-time day care service or a childminding service, other than such a service to which paragraph (2) applies, shall ensure that—*
- (a) *a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the pre-school children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises.*

Requirement met:

The requirement has been met.

(1)(a) The care rooms were resourced with a broad range of play materials and equipment to facilitate children to initiate and sustain meaningful play activities. Interest areas were clearly defined and labelled and included well-resourced home corners and role play areas with dress up materials, tabletop and small world areas, book and cosy corners, construction areas, arts and crafts and mark making areas. There were sensory play materials, open ended, natural and real-life materials throughout the service. The play materials were stored in boxes and baskets at an accessible level to the pre-school children. There is a separate sensory room on the first floor with soft and tactile surfacing and sensory materials including a bubble tube. This is available to the children attending the three care rooms. The Early Years service has access to a designated enclosed area of the soft play centre with play and climbing equipment suitable for use by pre-school children. There is also use of a separate disco room to facilitate dancing and movement for the children. A secure outdoor area is located in a fenced off section of the car park at the entrance to the premises.

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(b) Rest areas were available in the care rooms to enable a child to rest and take a break from activities throughout the day if required. The children sleep in the Panda Room and there were 11 floor beds provided for children for pre-school children aged over 2 years of age who require to sleep in the service.

(3)(a) The service has a fully enclosed outdoor play area in a fenced off section of the car park at the entrance to the premises. This area is surfaced with artificial grass and grassed areas. There was an area covered with a pergola that could be used in adverse weather conditions. There was a climbing frame, slides, tree swing and tyres to provide opportunities to develop fundamental movement skills and to engage in safe risky play for children. There was a mud kitchen with real life pots and pans, playhouse and dolls house for dramatic and pretend play. There were two ground sandpits to provide sensory play opportunities. There were materials brought from the indoor to the outdoor environment for construction play such as plastic building bricks and transportation toys. There was a bug house and herb garden to promote learning experiences about nature.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 22 – Food and Drink

A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.

Requirement met:

The requirement has been met. A two weekly menu is available in the service. The service provides the children’s breakfast, hot dinner and tea on a daily basis with dinners sourced from an external catering company. Hot meals are reheated in the service kitchen by staff. Snack is provided by the parents. Alternate food options are available for the children with additional dietary requirements or preferences. Drinking water is provided in the care rooms, with children’s water bottles accessible to the children during the day. There is a rolling lunch to provide choice to children about when they wish to eat.

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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.

Requirement met:

The requirement has been met.

There are no hazards observed by the inspector that would impact the health, safety or welfare of the children attending the service. Appropriate measures have been undertaken in the service to ensure the safety of the children.

- Access to the service was through use of a fingerprint scanner and push button numerical locks were in place at the entrance to the Early Years service and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the service.
- All furniture and equipment were clean and in good condition and suitable for use by the proposed age groups.
- The windows and the blind cords were secured in the care rooms.
- Cleaning agents were inaccessible to children and stored safely out of the reach of children.
- The heating system for the service was thermostatically controlled to prevent radiators from exceeding the maximum surface temperature of 50°C.
- Thermostatically controlled running water was available at the wash hand basins in the service.
- The fire exits were clearly marked in the service.
- The fire assembly point is clearly marked at the outdoor play area of the service.
- The outdoor play area is based adjacent to the carpark and is securely fenced thus preventing a pre-school child from exiting the area.

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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.

Requirement met:

The requirement has been met.

(1) The registered provider has ensured that a person trained in first aid is available at all times to the children attending the pre-school service. There is evidence available in the service to show that 5 staff members in the service hold in-date First Aid Response (FAR) training.

(2)(a)(b) First aid boxes were suitably equipped and stored in readily accessible and conspicuous positions on the premises and are available at all times for the children if necessary.

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.

Requirement met:

The requirement has been met.

(1)(a) A record was maintained of fire drills which are completed on a monthly basis in the service. Records are kept using a digital software application and there is also written template available to record fire drills. The last fire drill took place on the 01 October 2025.

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- (b) A record was kept of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the service. The fire extinguishers were serviced on 05 April 2025, and the Fire Detection and Smoke Alarm System was serviced on the 06 May 2025.
- (4) Notices of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire are displayed in the care rooms and throughout the service.

Part VI – Safety

Regulation 28 – Insurance

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

Requirement met:

The requirement has been met.

The registered provider ensured that the full day care service had adequate insurance cover for up to 75 children and is valid until 27 March 2026.

Part VII – Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 – Premises

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

- (a) of sound and stable structure,*
- (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.*

Requirement met:

The requirement has been met.

(a) The premises appeared to be in good condition throughout.

(b) The premises appears safe and was found to be appropriately secured to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised

persons from gaining access to the Early Years' service. A fingerprint scanning system and push button numerical locks were in place at the entrance to the Early Years service and high-level magnetic door release buttons requiring activation to facilitate adults exiting the service. The connecting doors between the Early Years service and the soft play centre were secured to prevent unauthorised movement between the two facilities. This was also monitored by staff.

(c)

Lighting:

The premises is adequately lit by means of natural lighting supplemented by artificial lighting.

Heating:

The premises is heated by a gas-fired central heating system.

Ventilation:

Windows allow fresh air to circulate in the three care rooms, the sensory room and the sanitary accommodation adjoining Room 1 and Room 3. There is an air conditioning unit in Room 2. Mechanical ventilation units are provided in the accessible sanitary facility and nappy changing area off the front hall and in the sanitary area located off the corridor leading from the front hall to Room 3. There are trickle vents for air circulation in the play centre.

(d) The premises was in a clean condition and in a good state of repair. A pest control contract was in place in the service.

(e) Adequate and suitable sanitary accommodation including nappy changing facilities are available in the service.

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Sanitary accommodation location	Toilets for staff	Sinks for Staff	Toilets for children	Sinks for children	Nappy changing
Accessible Sanitary facility (Ground Floor)	1	1	0	0	1
Room 1: Bunnies Room (Ground Floor)	0	0	2	2	0
Room 2: Squirrels Room (First Floor)	0	0	2	2	0
Room 3: Panda Room (Ground Floor)	0	0	1	1	0
Staff Sanitary facility (First Floor)	2	2	0	0	0
2nd Staff Sanitary facility	2	2	0	0	0
Total	5	5	5	5	1

Part VII – Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 30 – Minimum Space Requirements

- (1) *Subject to paragraphs (2) to (6), a registered provider shall ensure that adequate clear floor space is available in the premises for the work, play and movement of children attending the pre-school service.*
- (2) *A registered provider of a full day care service or a part-time day care service shall ensure that the minimum amount of clear floor space specified in column (3) of Schedule 7 opposite a particular reference number specified in column (1) of that Schedule in respect of the age range of children specified in column (2) thereof at that reference number is available for each child in that age range attending the service.*

Requirement met:

Following discussion and agreement with the registered provider, there is adequate clear floor space available to accommodate 51 children in the service as per details below.

(2) The clear floor space of Room 1, Bunnies Room on the ground floor measured 31.4m² which is sufficient to accommodate 14 children between the age of 3-5 years on a full day care basis or 17 children availing of the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme who are attending the service on a sessional basis.

The clear floor space of Room 2, Squirrels Room on the first floor measured 45.86m² which is sufficient to accommodate 20 children to be cared for on a full day care basis or 22 children between the age of 3-5 years in this room availing of the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme who are attending the service on a sessional basis.

The clear floor space of Room 3, Panda Room on the ground floor measured 30.72m² which is sufficient for the proposed 12 children between the age of 2-3 years to be cared for in this room on a full day care basis or 15 children who are attending the service on a sessional basis only.