

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015KY040				
Name of Service:	Dromtacker Creche Limited				
Address of Service:	Munster Technological University, North Campus, Tralee, Co. Kerry				
Eircode:	V92 NN53				
Name of Registered Provider:	Katie Sheehy				
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional				
Date(s) of Inspection:	18/07/2025				
No of pre-school children:	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>AM</td> <td>41</td> <td>PM</td> <td>38</td> </tr> </table>	AM	41	PM	38
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Aras an Phobail, Deans Lane, Tralee, Co. Kerry.				
Inspection undertaken by:	N. Reidy, N. O ' Donoghue				
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	N/A
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Description of service

This community-based purpose-built early years service is registered to provide sessional, part-time and full day care to children aged between 0 and 6 years. The service is open between the hours of 8:00 am and 6:15pm Monday to Thursday and between the hours of 8:00 am and 5:15 pm on Friday.

There are 4 care rooms in operation, a sleep room in the baby and wobbler/toddler rooms and sanitary accommodation located in each of the care rooms. The children attending have access to designated areas to each of the care rooms located to the rear and to the side of the building.

Staffing

There are currently 29 adults attached to the early years service, 28 of whom are involved in the direct care of the children. The registered provider is not service based and does not work directly with the children who attend the setting.

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. The inspections may also focus on other areas as required.

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

The inspection was triggered by information received by the inspectorate.

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.

(7) A registered provider shall ensure that all employees, unpaid workers and contractors are appropriately supervised and provided with appropriate information, and where necessary training, including in relation to the following:

(a) the policies, procedures and statements of the service specified in Schedule 5;

(b) Part VIIA (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013)) of the Act, and

(c) these Regulations.

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) The service had a designated person in charge and deputy person in charge on the premises on the day of inspection. In the event the person or deputy person in charge were not on the premises, a named person able to deputise was available.
- (b) A person in charge or named deputy person in charge were on the premises at all times during the operation of the service.
- (c) There was a clearly identified management structure in the service. This included person in charge, deputy persons in charge, childcare practitioners and relief workers.
- (2) There were 4 new staff identified since the previous inspection. These 4 files were open to inspection.
- (a) Of the 8 references required, 4 validated references were available from past employers.
- (b) Of the 8 references required, 4 validated references were available from a reputable source other than a past employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures has been obtained for all 4 staff. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Year Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda Vetting every three years.

(d) Police vetting was not deemed to be required for any adults working in the service.

(3) The person in charge ensured all validations of references, garda vetting and qualifications were carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(4) 3 staff working directly with children held relevant qualifications in Early Childhood Care and Education at least 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.

(7) The person in charge ensured that employees were supported through induction training, supervision and regular team meetings with updates on policies, procedures and these regulations.

Non-Compliance Information

(9) (4)

It was identified on inspection that one staff member did not hold a relevant qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education at least 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. The person in charge stated this staff member has been relieved of their duties until a qualification is deemed relevant. Not having a staff member qualified poses a risk to the care of the children in the service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The employee was removed from the roster and relieved from their duties. The adult no longer works in the service. The service will ensure that letters are obtained for the Department of Children, Disability and Equality (DCDE) in advance of the employee starting as applicable.

Supporting documentation submitted

The statement is accepted as evidence.

Summary Comment

The requirement of this regulation has been met.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.

Compliance Information

The following policies, procedures and statements were reviewed and contained all necessary information.

- Statement of purpose and function
- Accident and incidents policy
- Outdoor play policy
- Staff training policy

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.

(8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-

(a) a registered provider of a pre-school service other than a child-minding service or a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that there are at least 2 adults on the premises at all times,.

Compliance Information

(1) There was an adequate number of adults responsible for the direct care and supervision of the children in attendance on the day of inspection.

(2) The adult child ratio was observed in all care rooms as follows:

Morning:

Room Name and Age range of children	Number of Children present	Number of Adults present
Baby (11 months to 2years)	6	3

Wobbler/Toddler (2 years to 3 years)	12	13
Junior Pre-school (2 years to 4 years)	13	4
Senior Pre-school (4 years to 10 years)	10 (4 school aged, 8 early years)	2

Afternoon:

Room Name and Age range of children	Number of Children present	Number of Adults present
Baby (11 months to 2years)	6	3
Wobbler/Toddler (23 months to 3 years)	10	2
Junior Pre-school (2 years to 3 years)	14	3

8 (a) At least two adults were present at all times throughout the inspection period and on the premise at all times as evidenced by the staff roster.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:

- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.

Compliance Information

(1) The person in charge ensured a record in writing was kept on the following information.

(h) Child attendance records from 30/06/2025 to 18/07/2025 were reviewed and contained all relevant information.

(k) 14 accident and incident forms were reviewed from 02/07/2025 to 17/07/2025. All forms were fully completed and signed by staff and parents.

Non-Compliance Information

- (i) Staff rosters from 30/06/2025 to 18/07/2025 were reviewed. It was identified that no person in charge was identified on the roster from 5pm to 6pm on various dates.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The person in charge is now marked in a different colour on the roster so that is easy to view and clear for everybody who is in charge. This will continue going forward so it is clear to everybody.

Supporting documentation submitted

Updated staff roster demonstrating the person in charge.

Summary Comment

The requirement for this regulation 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)

BASIC NEEDS:

- An outside catering company supplied the main hot meal offered to the children attending the service.
- Breakfast was offered to the children and the parents provided some of the snacks for the mid-morning snacks.
- There was a designated person employed in the kitchen to prepare and plate the food served to the children and deliver it to each of the individual care rooms.
- On the day of the inspection flapjacks and fruit smoothies were made in the kitchen, the smoothies were served for morning snack to the older children.
- The main meal served on the day consisted of chicken goujons, peas, pasta with tomato sauce.
- The food observed at snack times consisted of yogurts, a variety of fruit, crackers and cheese.
- The inspector observed the main meal for the children in the baby room was pureed, it was suitable for their age and stage of development.

- For mealtimes, the younger children had the use of feeding chairs and the older children sat at the low-level tables on the low-level chairs.
- The mealtimes observed on inspection were unhurried, the staff were on hand supervising and assisting the children throughout.
- The younger children were assisted with feeding and the older children fed themselves with assistance provided by the staff as was needed.
- Children's individual needs were met in relation to sleep as observed for example in the Wobbler/Toddler room. A child who was waiting for lunch to be served was tired; the staff attended to changing the child's nappy and out into a standard cot in the sleep room in the care room to sleep.
- Lunch was served to the child after sleep time.
- Additional food was available to the children as was evidenced on inspection in the baby room where a child had an additional portion of the main meal.
- The children's drinks bottles were available and accessible to them during the session.
- The toilets were easily accessible in each of the care rooms with the staff on hand to provide assistance as was needed.
- The inspector observed the children were promptly returned from the outdoor play area as they needed to use the toilet, the staff communicating between themselves and when handing over the children to the staff working indoors.
- Nappy changing facilities were provided, a new wall mounted foldable unit was installed in the sanitary accommodation serving the Junior pre-school room since the last inspection took place.
- Children had a spare change of clothes available for children on the premise. Children's clothes were changed promptly as observed on inspection when a child's jumper got wet whilst playing in the outdoor area.
- The inspector observed that children played in the indoor and outdoor play areas on inspection. They were offered the choice of moving between the indoor and outdoor areas and were facilitated to do so during the day.
- In the Senior pre-school for example, some children played with dinosaurs in the designated rest area with the soft cushioning and the wall mounted bubble wall unit, later went colouring on the low-level tables under the supervision of the staff member.

- Wall mounted white boards were provided in each of the care rooms used for example for the staff to record the number of children present and the sleep requirements for children for that day. The inspector observed the number of children was updated accordingly during the session.

SUPPORTING RELATIONSHIPS:

- The staff shared information with parents electronically and verbally at drop off and at collection times.
- The staff were observed on inspection to be kind, caring, nurturing and comforting to children in their care.
- The staff were observed to be actively involved in children's play.
- In the Wobbler/Toddler room working with playdough that was made that morning in the service, doing handprints in the County Kerry flag colours in preparation for the upcoming All- Ireland Football final and during story time where the children were actively encouraged to participate in identifying the pictures of the great whale.
- The children in the baby room had access to a sand tray on the floor all day where the staff played with them on the floor.

PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

- The care rooms were spacious, bright and aired by means of the openable windows and doors leading onto the outdoor play areas.
- A range of low-level open shelving units equipped with a display of age-appropriate toys and play materials were stored.
- Tuff trays were observed in use for sand and rice play activities in the Baby, Junior and Senior pre-school rooms.
- The outdoor play areas were available and accessible to children attending each of the care rooms. The areas were enclosed with a mix of soft matting, kerbing, concrete footpaths, artificial and real grass. The children had playhouses, slides, a large timber boat, rocking horses, large play blocks, obstacle courses made by the children and the staff on the day and a variety of ride on toys.

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:

- The outdoor play area was fenced, the gates were secured to prevent children gaining unsupervised access to the roadway and the wooded grassed areas to the rear of the area and to prevent unauthorised access to the play area.
- There were no hazards observed in the outdoor space on inspection.
- The internal doors were appropriately secured to prevent children accessing unsafe areas.
- The external doors were appropriately secured to prevent children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised access.

Infection Control:

- Lidded pedal operated bins were provided in the service for the hygienic disposal of waste.
- The staff were observed to wear single use disposable gloves, disposable aprons and washed their hands before and after each nappy change. The children's hands were washed after nappy changing.

Safe Sleep:

- The inspector observed the sleep room serving the Wobbler/Toddler room had the windows open prior to use to ventilate the room, the cots and low-level beds had clean linen ready for use as the children needed them. The inspector was informed that on the day the low-level beds were used for children aged over 2 years.
- The inspector observed an adult remained with a child in the sleep room serving the Baby room until the child settled to sleep.
- The physical sleep checks were recorded electronically every 8 minutes; staff had set an alarm on the electronic device to alert them every 8 minutes.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

1. The children were observed to not wash their hands prior to the morning snack served in the Junior pre-school room posing a risk of cross infection.
2. The cooked peas served at lunch time to the children in the Wobbler/Toddler room were served directly on the table alongside the individual lunch bowls increasing the risk of risk of cross infection.

3. Not all the drinks bottles in the Junior pre-school room were individually labelled with the children's names posing a risk of cross infection.
4. Children's perishable food items were not stored in the fridge in the Junior pre-school room posing a risk of food spoilage. This was observed non-compliant on the last inspection 15.04.2025, the service responded stating that all the perishable food would be placed in the fridge on a daily basis, the pre-school staff were informed of this. This was unfounded on inspection.
5. There were no paper hands provided at the wash hand basins in the sanitary accommodation and at the sinks in the Junior pre-school room posing a risk of cross infection.
6. The nappy changing mat provided for the wall mounted foldable changing unit in the Junior pre-school room was stored directly on the floor near the toilet posing a risk of cross contamination.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control:

1. All staff in the Junior pre-school room have been spoken to and reminded of the handwashing policy in place in the room. Handwashing posters have been placed in the room as a reminder.
2. All the staff members have been reminded of the HACCAP training and that no food can be served directly on the table. More plates and bowls have been purchased to ensure there are enough in the event the vegetables are required to be served separately to the dinner.
3. All the drinks bottles in the have been re-labelled. The staff will ensure that labels are replaced after they fall off.
4. The service will ensure that all perishable items are placed in the fridge. All the staff have been reminded of the importance of this. The room leader has appointed a staff member in charge of ensuring this is carried out each day
5. The hand towel dispensers were re-filled. The staff will be more vigilant ensuring the hand towels are in the dispensers. A staff member has been appointed to check the dispensers during the day.
6. The nappy changing mat has been allocated a space on the shelf. The mat will be stored on the shelf going forward. .

Supporting documentation submitted

Infection Control:

1. The statement is accepted as evidence. A photograph of the handwashing signs in place.
2. The statement is accepted as evidence.

3. A photograph of labelled drink's bottles.
- 4 & 5. The statements have been accepted as evidence.
6. A photograph of the nappy changing mat stored off the ground on a shelf in the bathroom.

Summary Comment

The requirement for this regulation has been met.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.

Compliance Information

- Children were observed to be supervised primarily by sight both indoors and outdoors at all times with enough staff on site to effectively monitor the children.
- Children who independently use the toilet did so with the staff nearby to provided care if needed.
- Children's headcounts were conducted throughout the day at regular intervals for example when children were returning from playing in the outdoor areas, when children went home from the care rooms. The children's daily electronic attendance record and the number of children recorded on the white boards in each care room were updated accordingly.
- The inspector observed the staff members checking the areas of the outdoor play when children were returning inside to ensure all children were accounted for, in line with the Headcount Policy of the service and with the practice the staff had informed the inspector of when asked.