

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015KY122
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Name of Service:	Tiny Tots Playschool/Nursery
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Address of Service:	1 Castlewood Park, Killerisk, Tralee, Co. Kerry
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Eircode:	V92 A0HA
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Name of Registered Provider:	Amanda Clail
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date of Inspection:	22/11/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	20	PM	15
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	134 Bank Place, Mallow, Cork, P51 EC59
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Inspection undertaken by:	M Riordan
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Title:	Early Years Inspector
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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

Tiny Tots Playschool and Nursery is a private early year's care and education facility located in Killerisk, near Tralee, County Kerry. Operating since 1994, it serves children aged 0 to 6 years with full-time, part-time, and sessional options. The facility offers services from 8 am to 3:30 pm, with ECCE Scheme sessions from 8:45 am to 11:45 am and 12 pm to 3 pm. The services occupies the ground floor of a converted home, featuring a double preschool room, a wobbler/toddler room, kitchen, sanitary facilities, and a dedicated sleep room. It also has a well-resourced outdoor play area at the rear of the premises.

Staffing

The registered provider is the owner and the manager of the facility. There are an additional 5 staff employed to work at the service. Each staff member has the required qualifications in Early Childhood Care and Education. Staff engage in ongoing professional training and development.

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. The inspection 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.

Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, 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*

(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.

(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 registered provider was the designated person in charge to manage the service daily. A named person to deputise was available if required.

(b) The registered provider or their deputy were rostered on duty each day.

(2)(a) There were 2 written and validated references from past employers available in respect of all adults working at the service.

(b) Where past employer references were not available, references from an alternative source such as previous schools and colleges were provided.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all staff. All vetting disclosures were dated within the last 3 years.

(d) Police vetting was not required for any staff member working at the service.

(4) All staff held an appropriate qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels

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

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

Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider ensured that there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children at all times.

(2) The correct adult child ratios were maintained throughout the day of the inspection. There were 4 adults caring for the 20 preschool throughout the morning. There were 4 adults caring for 15 preschool children for the afternoon.

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

Basic Needs:

The service opens at 8:00 am, and children who arrive early are served breakfast in the Wobbler room. Preschool-age children begin their sessional service at 8:45 am. Meals follow the service's healthy eating policy, with parents supplying the food. Snacks include fruit, sandwiches, yogurt, cheese, and crackers, while main meals consisting of beef stew, chicken stir-fry, and rice dishes were served on the day of the inspection. Perishable foods are stored in a fridge, and children's drinks are kept accessible throughout the day.

Children can independently access toilets, with staff assistance available. Nappy changing facilities are close to each room, with hygienic provisions like liquid soap, paper towels, and foot-operated bins for disposal accessible. All toilet areas are ventilated with openable windows.

Rest areas have mats, cushions, and books, while a separate sleep room with 2 cots is provided for children who need rest. Low level beds are available if required. The service offers a dynamic environment, with children moving between indoor playrooms and a well-equipped outdoor space.

Physical and Material Environment:

Each care room in the service is thoughtfully organised with distinct interest areas to support children's learning and development. These areas include fine motor development tools like peg boards and threading, cognitive development resources such as puzzles and construction materials, and language development activities like storytelling and social conversation are included in the activities. Children use age-appropriate wooden tables and

chairs during snack time and activities. Materials are stored in accessible baskets on low-level shelving, allowing children to easily reach and interact with resources.

The walls are brightly decorated with themed artwork and educational posters displayed at children's eye level. The date of each child's birthday was displayed on coloured balloons.

The outdoor play area at the rear of the premises is well-resourced and maintained, featuring a variety of play materials. The area is covered with synthetic grass to minimize injury risks. Children can engage in imaginative play with mud kitchens, pots, and pans, while ride-on toys, bikes, trikes, balance bikes, tractors, and scooters are available for active play. Low-level slides and climbing frames support the development of gross motor skills. Outdoor seating allows children to work and dine outside during favourable weather. An outdoor shed serves as a pop-up shop, and a timber train structure offers further entertainment. The area is also decorated with engaging wall art. Plans are underway to create a sheltered space, improving accessibility in all weather conditions.

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:

General safety measures at the facility include a secured front door, with entry granted only through ringing a bell answered by staff, preventing unauthorised access. Low-level windows are decorated with artwork to avoid children banging into them, and window locks are positioned out of children's reach to prevent accidental exits or falls. Highchairs in the Wobbler/Toddler room are fitted with five-point harnesses for safety. Heavy equipment is securely anchored, and all electrical cords and cables are out of children's reach and in good condition. Outside waste is stored in a designated, secure area, away from play spaces. Cleaning agents are kept on high shelves in baskets, inaccessible to children. The kitchen is inaccessible to children. The outdoor area is securely enclosed with wooden panels, a concrete block wall, and bolted gates to ensure safety.

Infection Control:

Infection control measures include the provision of thermostatically controlled hot water, soap dispensers, paper roll dispensers, and pedal-operated bins in the Wobbler/Toddler toilets. All cleaning rotas are completed and up-to-date. Both sets of toilets are naturally ventilated with openable windows.

Disposable aprons and gloves are readily available in the changing areas. Tissues and hand sanitizers are provided in the hallway and care rooms for both staff and children. Additionally, tables are cleaned after each meal and snack time to maintain hygiene.

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.

Compliance Information

(1)(a) Fire drills take place on a monthly basis. The most recent fire drill took place on the 11th of October 2024.
(b) All fire extinguishers and smoke alarms were serviced on an annual basis. The most recent check was carried out on the 28th of April 2024.

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

The supervision of children at the service was mainly through visual observation. On the day of the inspection, there were enough qualified staff present to ensure adequate supervision. Children who could use the toilet independently did so while staff remained nearby to offer support if needed. Closer supervision was provided during activities with higher risks, such as outdoor play. The room layouts allowed for easy visual monitoring, while also offering children the option for quiet time or personal space when necessary.

Part VI -Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider had a current insurance certificate which outlined that adequate insurance was available for up to 29 preschool children to attend the service. The insurance cover commenced on the 28th of March 2024 and is due to expire on the 27th of March 2025.

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.*

Compliance Information

- (a) The building appeared to be of sound and stable structure both internally and externally and no obvious defects were noted on inspection.
- (b) The premises appeared safe and secured. The front door was locked and all who entered the building were checked in by a member of staff. The outdoor area was well secured preventing any unauthorised access to or exit from this area of the service.
- (c) All areas were well lit by natural light and by artificial light when needed. There was no evidence of mould, mildew, stale smells, stuffiness or condensation.
- (d) The areas outside were all well maintained and routine cleaning schedules were in place for all internal and external areas. A high standard of operational hygiene was noted in the premises.
- (e) There were an adequate number of toilets, wash hand basins and nappy changing areas available in the service.