

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LH038
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Name of Service:	Jellytots Daycare Ltd
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Address of Service:	Unit 5 Drogheda Leisure Park, Rathmullen Road, Finglas, Drogheda, Co. Louth
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Eircode:	A92 NR4C
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Name of Registered Provider:	Lynsey Tighe
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	15/10/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	31	PM	20
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Meath Child & Parent Support Hub, Commons Road, Navan, Co. Meath
Inspection undertaken by:	D.Murray & AM. Cunningham
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	Not Applicable
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Description of service

Jelly Tots Daycare is a full day care service providing care and education to children aged between 2-6 years. A school aged service is also provided. The service operates from 8:00am to 6:30 pm and eligible children can participate in the Early Childhood Care and Education scheme (ECCE). The service operates from a ground floor unit of a commercial centre on the outskirts of Drogheda town and consists of three care rooms as follows:

Junior Playschool room was not in use on the day of the inspection.

Playschool room provides care and education for children from 2 years 8 months to 6 years attending a sessional ECCE service from 09:00am to 12:00am with some children availing of full day care service.

Montessori room provides care and education for children from 2 years 8 months to 6 years attending a sessional ECCE/part time service. The children availing of full day care move to the Playschool room for the afternoon as the Montessori room is used to facilitate school aged children.

The service also has a kitchen, an office, sanitary facilities and an outdoor space.

Staffing

The registered provider employs 2 managers, 10 childcare staff and 1 school aged staff member. Present on the morning of inspection were the registered provider, 1 manager and 8 childcare staff caring for 31 children. An additional childcare staff member commenced work from 12am to 6pm. A school aged staff member commenced work from 1 to 6pm.

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. 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.

Additional Information

The inspection was carried out following receipt of a concern received to the Early Years Inspectorate on the 22/09/2025. A response was received on the 01/10/2025 which was accepted by the Inspectorate.

Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, 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,*
- (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.*

(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.

(6A) Paragraph (4) shall not apply to an employee of a registered provider where - (a) the registered provider receives funding for the employment of the employee pursuant to a scheme funded by the Minister and known as the Access and Inclusion Model, and (b) the employment of the employee is for the purpose of providing support, pursuant to the scheme referred to in subparagraph (a), for a child attending the service to enable the child to participate in the programme known as the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) funding Programme."

(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.*

Compliance Information

- (1) (a) The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.
- (b) A designated person in charge was on the premises when the inspectors arrived unannounced to carry out the inspection.
- (2) Fourteen staff files were reviewed.
- (a)&(b) Twenty eight validated written references were available either from a past employer or from a reputable source.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for 14 staff members. 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) Police vetting's were available for 5 staff members who had resided outside the jurisdiction for a period of more than 6 consecutive months as an adult.
- (4) Twelve staff members had a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 and above on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.
- (6) (a) Four staff members were employed under the scheme known as the Access and Inclusion Model.
- (7) (a) All staff members completed induction training on the services policies and procedures and have frequent staff appraisals and one to one supervision meetings.

Non-Compliance Information

- (2)(d) Police vetting was not available for 1 staff member who had resided outside the jurisdiction for a period of more than 6 consecutive months as an adult.
- (4) One staff member did not have a complete childcare qualification.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (2)(d) Police vetting has been obtained for this staff member. The registered provider will ensure that police vetting where required is obtained for staff members before they commence employment.

(4) This staff member is now working with school aged children until she completes her childcare qualification.

Supporting documentation submitted

Police vetting.

Application to complete childcare qualification.

Summary Comment

The response provided by the registered provider has been reviewed and accepted. The assurances given that the unqualified staff member is no longer working with the pre-school children and is working with school aged children has been accepted and will be reviewed at the next inspection.

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 registered provider ensured that the following written policies specified in Schedule 5 were available and were comprehensive to ensure the welfare and safety of the children attending the service.

- Child Safeguarding Statement.
- Behaviour Management Policy.
- Staff Training/Supervision Policy.
- Complaints Policy.
- Accident/Incident 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) Present on the morning of inspection were the registered provider, 1 manager and 8 childcare staff caring for 31 children.

(2) On the morning of the inspection the following adult to child ratios were observed when the service was operating at capacity:

Playschool room had 4 staff members providing care and education to 15 children from 2 years 8 months to 6 years. One child was attending on a sessional basis, 7 children were attending on a part time basis, and 7 children were attending on a full day care basis.

Montessori room had 4 staff members providing care and education to 16 children from 2 years 8 months to 6 years. Ten children were attending on a sessional basis with 6 children attending on a part time /full day care basis.

(8)(a) The registered provider ensured that there were always two adults on the premises when the service was in operation.

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

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that no practices that are disrespectful, degrading, exploitive, intimidating, emotionally or physically harmful or neglectful are carried out in respect of a pre-school child whilst attending the service.

Compliance Information

(1)(a) The following observations were made on how each child's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the daily life in the service:

Basic needs:

- Mealtimes in the service were observed to be a social and pleasant experience for the children. Staff sat at the table whilst the children ate engaging them in conversation and provided assistance to the children as required. Children had easy access to their drinking cups which were accessible in their care rooms.
- Children's nappies were changed regularly and in a timely manner with warm one-to-one interactions during direct care. Staff members were responsive to the children's cues should they need to use the toilet, with discreet supervision provided and assistance given if required. Parents are responsible for providing a change of clothes for their children in the event that their clothes get soiled or wet.
- Children were observed being allowed to self-direct their own play. The children were afforded the opportunity to choose activities and to follow through on their choices and change activities if they so wish.
- All children were observed enjoying outdoor play with both their peers and staff members.
- The theme in the Playschool room was based on "Fire Safety" and in the Montessori room the themes were "Autumn" and "Halloween", with art work and activities conducted which supported these themes. Each child had their own Activity Book "This is my journey in Jellytots" which was brought home when completed.

Supporting relationships around children:

- The staff members communicated with parents through an electronic device and verbally on a daily basis regarding activities pertaining to their children. Children and parents were greeted at drop off and collection with friendly conversation overheard.
- The service showed a positive regard towards the families of the children and family links were nurtured in the service with family photographs displayed on the wall in the care rooms. This visual representation of children and value of their work supports children to feel a sense of identity and belonging in their care environments.
- The adult's demonstrated knowledge of the individual care needs of the children especially the children with additional needs. Documented individual care plans were available to support these children with the involvement of an outside agency.

(3) In both care rooms children's behaviour was managed in a positive way. The adults were observed to engage respectfully with the children in their care. The children showed confidence around the staff members and an eagerness to engage with them in conversations and play. Children were comforted when they became upset with the staff adopting behavioural management strategies such as speaking to the child softly and promoting turn taking and sharing. Challenging behaviour when presented was dealt with in a calm and caring manner and the children responded well to distraction and re-direction. The children appeared comfortable, happy and relaxed in their environment.

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-

(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,

Compliance Information

(1)(b) Cosy areas consisting of mats, cushions and soft furnishings were available in both care rooms should a child needed to take a break from activities and rest. No children in the service required sleep.

(3)(a) The 2 outdoor spaces were enclosed by fencing and walls with secure side gates. The open area had an artificial grass surface. The partially sheltered area permitted children to play outside sheltered from the weather and had soft tiles and an artificial grass surface.

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 care rooms had areas of interest with supporting equipment which incorporated natural/sensorial materials, art and crafts and a range of suitable toys. In the Playschool room a large tank accommodated 3 turtles, and a fish tank was present in the Montessori room. The children were involved in caring for the turtles and fish which provided an enriched learning experience and an understanding of the natural world.
- The outdoor areas had equipment which supported fine and gross motor development. Play equipment included activity units with slides, water/sand tables, gravel area, tyres, counting stand, ride on toys, wheelbarrows, rockers, building blocks, mud kitchen with play utensils and children’s tables and chairs for outdoor activities.

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.

Compliance Information

The service provides all snacks and meal to the children attending the service. A 1-week menu plan was available with a variety of dishes ranging from meat and poultry provided by a catering company. On the day of inspection, the children had a choice of cereals and toast for breakfast. Morning snack was served at 10am consisting of fruit, crackers and bread sticks. The main meal of the day was served at 12am and consisted of chicken curry and rice. A fruit snack was served again at 2pm with evening tea served at 3:30pm consisting of pasta with vegetables and tomato sauce; evening snacks were available for the children staying until 6pm if required. Water was the drinks of choice with individual cups and water jugs placed in the care rooms.

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 following safety measures were in place on the day of inspection as demonstrated by the following examples:

- The main door to the service was secured by a buzzer system and the outdoor space was enclosed by walls and fencing with secure side gates. These security measures ensured that a child did not exit unsupervised and restricted unauthorised persons from gaining access to the service and the outdoor spaces.
- All cleaning agents were stored out of reach of the children.
- All furniture and display units had a stable base with no risk of toppling identified. All play equipment seen on the day of inspection was suitable for the age, stage and development of the children in each care room.
- Accident and incidents reports were completed on a electronic device and sent to parents for signing before the parents collect their child.

Infection Control:

The following infection control measures were observed in the service as demonstrated by the following examples:

- The service was clean with cleaning schedules maintained on a daily basis.
- All bins for contaminated waste were foot pedal operated.
- Warm water, hand paper towel and liquid soap was available in the children’s sanitary facilities. The hand washing policy was implemented in practice with appropriate hand washing for staff and children at all times.

Fire Safety:

The following Fire Safety practices were observed in the service as demonstrated by the following examples:

- All emergency exit doors were accessible in the event of an evacuation.
- Fire drills were recorded on a monthly basis.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

One staff members garda vetting disclosures was not dated within the previous three years in adherence to with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice ‘EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting’.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

Garda Vetting has been updated. The registered provider will ensure that Garda Vetting is renewed on a 3 yearly basis.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Updated Garda Vetting

Summary Comment

The registered provider has addressed the non-compliances. The response received has been reviewed and accepted.

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

(1) The service provided evidence that a person had up to date First Aid Responders course and was available at all times to the children attending the pre-school service.

(2)(a) and (b) A suitably equipped first aid box was available and safely stored in the premises.

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.

Compliance Information

(1)(a) A written record was available of the fire drills completed in the service. The last recorded fire drill took place on the 22/09/2025.

(b) A record was maintained of the mains powered smoke alarms and fire fighting equipment which were last serviced on the 10/01/2025.

(4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was conspicuously displayed in the premises.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured that the service was adequately insured for 50 children at any one time attending for full day care. The policy showed that the service was insured from 28/03/2025 to the 27/03/2026.

Part VIII - Notifications and Complaints

Regulation 32 – Complaints

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that the complaints policy of the service specifies-

- (a) the procedure to be followed by a person for the purposes of making a complaint in relation to the service,*
- (b) the manner in which such a complaint shall be dealt with, and*
- (c) the procedures for keeping a person who makes such a complaint informed of the manner in which it is being dealt with.*

Compliance Information

(1)(a)(b)&(c) A Complaints Policy and a Complaints Log were available to record any feedback and concerns.