

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LH102			
Name of Service:	Dundalk Tiny Tots Nursery LTD			
Address of Service:	Burex Business Park, Old Coes Road, Dundalk, Co. Louth			
Eircode:	A91N273			
Name of Registered Provider:	Sarah Nordon			
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional			
Date(s) of Inspection:	07/06/2024			
No of pre-school children:	AM	44	PM	32

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate Child Wellbeing Centre Castleblayney Co. Monaghan
Inspection undertaken by:	M. Flood & S. Skinnader
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

Description of service

Dundalk Tiny Tots Nursery Ltd is a privately owned service in operation since May 2006. The service provides Sessional, Part-time and Full Day Care services to pre-school children from 0-6 years of age. The service is registered to operate from 08:00hrs to 17:30hrs Monday – Friday and caters for a maximum of 63 pre-school children.

The service is located in Dundalk Co. Louth and operates from a self-contained building in Burex Business Park. The service comprises of 4 rooms namely, Pre-school Rooms 1, 2 & 3 and a large room which is divided into 2 separate areas namely the Baby Room and Waddler Room. Ancillary accommodation in the service consists of sanitary areas, a kitchen on the ground floor and a separate sleep room that is located off the Baby Room. There is a separate staff area which is located on the first floor. Three separate enclosed outdoor areas are located to the rear and side of the premises

Staffing

There were 15 staff employed in the service including the service manager to work directly with the preschool children.

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 and safety*. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11,19, 20 and 25; however, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 21 and 23. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under the regulations. As a result, the scope of the inspection included The Baby area, The Waddler area and Preschool Room 1.

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 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.

(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) & (b) The service had a designated person in charge and named deputy person to deputise as required. Both persons were on the premises when the inspectors arrived in the premises at 10:43am and were present for the duration of the inspection.

(2) Fifteen staff files were presented for inspection and reviewed:

- (a)& (b) There were 2 written and validated references from a past employer or alternative source available for the 15 staff employed in the service.
- (c) Documentary evidence of a processed Garda vetting disclosure was available for each of the 15 staff members.

The service was also in adherence to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) International police vetting was available for 2 staff members who had resided outside the Irish jurisdiction.

(4) Documentary evidence was available to confirm that each member of staff who works directly with the preschool children held at least the minimum required level 5 childcare qualification on the National Framework of Childcare Qualifications or a qualification deemed equivalent.

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) During the inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the preschool children attending the service.

(2) On the day of inspection there were 5 preschool rooms in operation namely the baby area, The Waddler Area, and Preschool Rooms 1, 2 and 3

The following adult to child ratios were observed when the Inspectors arrived unannounced to the service;

- **Baby Area**

There were 8 preschool children aged 11 months to 1 year 8 months with 3 members of staff.

- **Waddler Area**

There were 10 preschool children aged 2- 3 years with 4 members of staff.

- **Preschool Room 1**

There were 11 preschool children aged 3-4 years with 1 member of staff. A 2nd member of staff arrived in the service at 11:40am and was then present in Preschool Room 1.

- **Preschool Room 2**

There were 7 preschool children aged 3-5 years with 1 member of staff.

- **Preschool Room 3**

There were 8 preschool children aged 3-5 years with 1 member of staff.

The person in charge was also present in the service and provided relief in the care rooms as required and was also engaged in administrative duties. The deputy person also provided assistance with catering duties.

(8)(a) Following a review of the available documentation e.g., staff rotas and children's attendance records the information demonstrated that the registered provider ensured that there were always at least 2 adults on the premises.

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

(b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.

Compliance Information

There were 5 rooms in operation on the day of the inspection: namely the Baby Area, Waddler Area and Preschool Rooms 1, 2 and 3. A sampling process was used and as such the Baby Area, Waddler Area and Preschool Room 1 are the subject of this inspection.

(1)(a) (1)(a) The following examples demonstrate how the registered provider ensured that children's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the service:

Basic Care Needs

- Basic care needs were attended to regularly throughout the inspection. Hands and faces were washed and noses were wiped. Children who were upset were comforted and held.
- Nappies were changed regularly and in a timely manner with pleasant interactions observed between children and staff. The children who were toilet trained were encouraged to be independent with toileting. Supervision was also provided by staff as required. Gentle handwashing reminders were also given to the children after toileting.
- All children had a change of environment to the outdoor area to the side and rear of the building.
- Food and snacks were provided at regular intervals throughout the day. The dinners were provided by an external catering company and reheated by the staff. The dinner observed during the inspection consisted of chicken goujons, mashed potatoes and mixed vegetables. Some of the children bring in their own dinner from home and this is also reheated. Young children were encouraged to feed themselves and assistance was also provided if required. In the Baby Area the dinners were of a suitable consistency for the age and development of the children. Potable drinking water was provided in the service and baby's preprepared formula bottles were provided from home and appropriately stored in the fridge in the kitchen.

- Individual care plans were available for children who required additional support in the service and staff were familiar with the interventions and strategies required to support the children’s health and development.

Programme Of Activities

- A variety of the children’s artwork was on display and included; free art pictures and “I love you this much” handprints, butterflies sticking and gluing pictures.
- Evidence of long-, medium- and short-term planning were on display in the care rooms. The children’s emerging interests were displayed, and the staff were familiar with and discussed how these were used to plan the curriculum.
- Individual scrapbooks were available for each child and the staff reported that these are sent home so that parents can see some of the activities that the children engage in during their day at preschool.
- Large group activity books were also available for each room. These provided documentary and photographic evidence of activities throughout the year.
- Transition periods in the service were swift and smooth e.g. In the Waddler Area staff supported children with hand washing and getting ready for dinner, while other staff sang songs with the children.

Non-Compliance Information

The Inspectorate is not assured that each child’s learning, development, and well-being is being facilitated within the daily life of the service in relation to the following:

1. In the Baby area, one child who was displaying obvious sign of tiredness was not put down to sleep in a timely manner. This was further confirmed by one of the staff members present who at 11:45am was heard saying “Are you getting tired ...? Its all-right dinner is coming”. This child was eventually put down to bed at 1:10pm.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. A staff meeting was held to ensure that going forward the staff will go by each individual child’s sleep cues for nap times in addition to the sleep plan provided by the parents. A meeting was also held with the parents to inform them we will have to go by the child’s sleep cues going forward for their sleep in creche. This will be reviewed and checked by management throughout the year and will also be discussed periodically with parents for any adjustments or amendments needed to sleep plan while in creche.

Summary Comment

The registered provider submitted details of the corrective and preventative actions taken in the service to address the non-compliance. Based on this information the non-compliance under Regulation 19 has been addressed. Implementation and sustainment of the corrective and preventive actions will be assessed at the next inspection.

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 19 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, or

(b) Where no such space is provided, the pre-school children attending the service have access on a daily basis to a suitable outdoor space.

Compliance Information

(1)(b)

- A suitable comfortable rest area was available in each of the care rooms, with soft mats, child sized and adult sofa and cushions.
- A few individual day beds suitable for children aged over 2 years were available and set up in the Waddler area at the allocated sleep time.
- A separate sleep room off the Baby area was available and contained 4 standard cots. The room temperature was maintained at the recommended sleep room temperature of 16-20^oC.

(3)(a) Outdoor area

The enclosed outdoor play area extends from the side to the rear of the premises and was divided into 3 separate areas:

Area 1: was located to the side and rear of the building and was accessed by the children attending Preschool Rooms 2 & 3. This area was gated and fenced and had safety mat surface. The area had 2 picnic benches, a sand table, a balance bike a mud kitchen unit, a bike and a basketball hoop. There was also a shed which contained toys for the outdoor area.

Area 2 was located off the Baby and Waddler Areas and was accessed by the pre-school children attending these rooms. The area had a safety mat surface and is enclosed and secured by gates. A section of the area was also partially covered for use in 'all weathers' A number of pieces of age-appropriate play equipment were available including a playhouse, rockers and ride on equipment, a large play tray with peat moss, a sand tray, a fire truck and a blackboard area. A wooden shed was also available for the storage of toys.

Area 3 was located off Preschool Room 1 and accessed by the children attending this room. This area had a safety surfaced area with a section which was partially covered for use in 'all weathers'. There was also an area of artificial grass with tyres for planting, and tree stumps. Some toys and equipment were available including toy kitchens, a work bench, tyres, seating, picnic table and a rocker.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(b)

1. There were an insufficient number of cots available for the number and age of children in attendance in the Baby area. Eight children aged 11 months – 20months were attending the Baby area and 5 cots were required, however only 4 were available. This was furthered evidenced as one child who was displaying signs of tiredness and required a 2nd sleep in the afternoon, a cot was not available for this child.
2. Brown stains were observed on both sides of one mattress in the sleep room. While a documented risk assessment was available, there was no documentary evidence of a risk assessment have been carried out of the mattresses. This is a recurring non-compliance from the last inspection. It is also at variance to the corrective and preventative actions that were previously submitted in response to the non-compliance which stated that " Mattress has since been disposed of and replaced with a new one. Staff have been briefed and made aware of the need to check mattresses between sleeps and to inform management if replacements are needed. Risk assessments are to be carried out in cot room daily and signed by staff".

3. During the time 1:05 -1:26pm the sleep environment in the Waddler Area was not conducive to facilitate the sleep needs of the children attending, due to noise from the Baby Area and the children who did not wish to sleep in the Waddler Area.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Actions

1. There are now two floor beds available for children who are developmentally ready from 15 months to use. A risk assessment will be carried out and permission will be sought from parents if these are required. Floor beds can be used in the Waddler room if a cot is unavailable and if the child is 15months, developmentally ready and permission is given by their parents.
2. Mattress was disposed of, and a new mattress was purchased and put into the cot. Staff have been informed to check the condition on the mattress on a daily basis and report any issues to the manager in charge. The manager will spot check the mattress more often going forward. The risk assessments will continue to be carried out daily and signed by staff members.
3. The covered outdoor area for the Waddler room has now been extended and the outdoor classroom will be used at nap times for the non-sleepers to ensure the sleeping space is quiet and calm for sleep. The service manager has engaged with an external quality development to develop an outdoor classroom for the non-sleepers and to develop a curriculum plan to help support the outdoor classroom to meet the children's physical and developmental needs.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence.

Confirmation by phone call from the service manager that an initial meeting is planned with an external quality development agency for 07/08/2024.

Summary Comment

The registered provider submitted details of the corrective and preventative actions taken in the service to address the non-compliances. Following a review of this information, further evidence was requested and a revised corrective and preventative action plan. Based on this information submitted the non-compliances under Regulation 20 have been addressed. Implementation and sustainment of the corrective and preventive actions will be assessed at the next inspection

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.

Non-Compliance Information

1. In the Baby area, the tables and chairs observed in use were not the correct size for the age and stage of development of the children attending the room. As a result, the children were observed sitting on chairs where their feet did not touch the ground when they were seated. This does not promote comfort or good posture and is a safety risk.
2. A second highchair was not available for a child who required it during dinner time. This was confirmed by a staff member who was then observed to pull over an interactive toy chair so that a child aged 11 months who was crying could sit to have their dinner.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. The tables and chairs were removed from the room. New smaller chairs and table have been purchased.
2. A second highchair was placed back into the room. New chairs have been bought that are age and stage appropriate for the baby room.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence.

Summary Comment

The registered provider submitted details of the corrective and preventative actions taken in the service to address the non-compliances. Based on this information the non-compliances under Regulation 21 have been addressed. Implementation and sustainment of the corrective and preventive actions will be assessed at the next inspection.

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.

Non-Compliance Information

The Inspectorate is not assured that adequate steps have been taken to ensure the health, safety and welfare of the pre-school children attending the service based on the following observations made during the inspection:

General Safety:

1. A blind cord was not restricted and was observed hanging freely beside a cot in the sleep room.
2. The surface temperature of the radiator in the Baby area at 11:50am was recorded at 53.5 °C. This exceeds the recommended safe surface temperature of 50 °C and is a potential burns risk. This went unnoticed by the staff present until it was brought to their attention by the inspector. It is acknowledged that a maintenance person was contacted and attended the service to carry out repairs during the inspection.
3. In the outdoor area the following potential safety hazards were identified:
 - The safety surface tiles in the outdoor area were separating and gaps were evident which is a potential trip hazard.
 - Sharp corners and edges were exposed on low level window cills and are a potential injury risk.
 - The green steps on the slide in the Baby outdoor area was cracked and had a sharp edge exposed. This is a potential pinch injury risk.
 - A large plastic bag/ covering was present in the tyres and is a potential safety hazard.

Infection Control:

4. There was not a constant supply of thermostatically controlled hot water available in the service. When the inspectors checked the hot water at 11:25am it was cold. As such the children and staff were observed carrying out hand washing with cold water after nappy changing and toileting.
5. The nappy changing unit in the sanitary area was visibly dirty with thick ingrained dirt around the blue safety strap and dirt and hairs on the tiles beside it.
6. All blankets and sheets observed in use were stored on top of each other in a shelving unit which is a cross infection risk. The staff also confirmed that this is the storage method for sleep linen after use.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Actions

1. A blind cord wind up has been bought and placed on the blind cord.
2. The thermostat on the radiator was fixed on the day of inspection. A cover is being made for the radiator to prevent potential burn risks.
3. The outdoor rubber tiles have been fixed.
The windowsills have been covered with a soft edging which is added to the outdoor risk assessment.
The slide has been disposed of.
The plastic covering for plants has been removed.
This has now been added to the outdoor risk assessment and checked daily.

Infection Control

4. The supply of hot water has now been fixed. Will be checked daily and has been added to the risk assessment. We have received training with regards to the new boilers. The boilers can be put into summer mode which is a constant supply of hot running water. This has now been implemented.
5. The changing units have been scrubbed with hot soapy water. The tiles have been scrubbed and the cleaners have been informed. At the end of each day the changing unit is cleaned with hot soapy water, to take of residue from anti bac spray after each change.
6. Each individual child now has a pillowcase with their name on it for their blankets and sheets to be stored. They are now laundered daily as opposed to every second day or when required after sickness and infection control.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence.

Water temperature records.

Daily risk assessment templates.

Summary Comment

The registered provider submitted details of the corrective and preventative actions taken in the service to address the non-compliances. Based on this information the non-compliances under Regulation 23 have been addressed. Implementation and sustainment of the corrective and preventive actions will be assessed at the next inspection.

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) On review of the staff files, First Aid Responder (FAR) certificates were available for 4 staff. This ensured that, there was a person trained with FAR available to the children at all times.
- (2) (a &b) There were first aid boxes available in the service which were adequately stocked, and available to the children at all times.