

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

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| <b>TUSLA Identifier:</b> | TU2015LH102 |
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| <b>Name of Service:</b> | Dundalk Tiny Tots Nursery LTD |
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| <b>Address of Service:</b> | Burex Business Park, Old Coes Road, Dundalk, Co. Louth |
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|-----------------|---------|
| <b>Eircode:</b> | A91N273 |
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| <b>Name of Registered Provider:</b> | Sarah Nordon |
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| <b>Service type:</b> | Full Day, Part Time, Sessional |
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| <b>Date(s) of Inspection:</b> | 12/06/2025 |
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| <b>No of pre-school children:</b> | AM | 44 | PM | 40 |
|-----------------------------------|----|----|----|----|

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| <b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b> | Early Years Inspectorate<br>Child Wellbeing Centre<br>Castleblayney<br>Co. Monaghan |
| <b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>                | M. Flood & S. Skinnader   |
| <b>Title:</b>                                   | 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).

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| <b>Conditions if applicable</b> | Not Applicable. |
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### 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 17 staff employed in the service including the service manager, childcare staff and relief staff, 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/ safety/ premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 19. As a result, the scope of the inspection included The Baby and Waddler areas and Preschool Rooms 1 & 3.

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.

(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.

#### Compliance Information

(1)(a) & (b) The service had a designated person in charge and a named deputy person to deputise as required. Both were on the premises when the inspectors arrived unannounced to the service at 09:20.

(c) When questioned staff were familiar with the management structure within the service and the roles and responsibilities of the various staff members.

(2) There were 17 staff files presented for inspection including staff who provide relief cover in the service.

(a) & (b)

- There were 2 written references from a past employer or an alternative source available for all 17 members of staff.
- All written references available were validated as required.

(c) Documentary evidence of a processed Garda vetting disclosure was available for all 17 staff members in the service. The service adhered to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Following a review of the staff files presented on the day of inspection, international police vetting was available for 2 staff members who had resided outside the jurisdiction for a period of greater than 6 months as an adult.

(4) Documentary evidence was available to demonstrate that all 17 members of staff, who work directly with the pre-school children had at least the minimum required Level 5 childcare qualification.

### 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 at ;

- **Baby Area**

There were 5 preschool children aged 1 year to 1 year 6 months with 2 members of staff. A 3<sup>rd</sup> member of staff arrived to the room at approximately 11am.

- **Waddler Area**

There were 12 preschool children aged 2- 3 years with 4 members of staff.

- **Preschool Room 1**

There were 10 preschool children aged 3-4 years with 1 member of staff. A 2<sup>nd</sup> member of staff who is also the person in charge, attended this room and assisted with catering duties.

- **Preschool Room 2**

There were 10 preschool children aged 3-5 years with 1 member of staff. Another childcare member of staff arrived to this care room at 10:00.

- **Preschool Room 3**

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

An additional member of staff who is also a manager arrived on the premises at approximately 9:55am and provided assistance in the care rooms as required and with administrative 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-

(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 &3. A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulation 19 and as such The Baby Area, The Waddler Area and Preschool Rooms 1 &3 are the subject of this report.

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

### BASIC NEEDS:

- 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 'sausage hotpot'. 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 and extra helpings of dinners was given to some of the children in the Baby Room.
- Drinks were available to the children as required. Low level accessible baskets containing bottles and cups were available in the care rooms and the children could access them as needed.
- In the Baby Area, individual child-led sleep needs were facilitated in the service as the staff followed the children's routines. In the Waddler Area, children who required a sleep had their sleep needs met after their dinner when the room converted to a sleep area.
- 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. Discreet supervision was also provided by staff as required. Gentle handwashing reminders were also given to the children after toileting.
- The children had free movement in the care rooms and all children had a change of environment to the separate outdoor areas located on the premises.
- One child whose clothing got wet in the outside area had their trousers changed promptly.

### Supporting Relationships

- Throughout the care rooms, children were observed to be provided with sensitive care and nurturing interactions by all staff. Soft tones, positive and respectful language were observed in interactions between the children in all the rooms e.g. *"I'm going to take a picture of your towers to show mummy and daddy" what a lovely circle..." "what's your magic words...good, good job...well done..."*. The staff were observed down on the floor with the children in the Baby and Waddler Areas and to interact with the children in a warm and supportive manner.
- Transitions in the Baby and Waddler Areas were observed to be calm and were managed swiftly.
- 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.

- Staff used an electronic application (an 'App') to provide information to parents on their child's care and daily routine in the service on a daily basis. Information shared included details of each child's personal care routines such as what they ate, when they slept, nappy changes and play activities. The staff also reported that communication with parents is conducted verbally at collection and drop off and there was a parents notice board with information in the hallway

### Non-Compliance Information

1. The door to the sanitary area off Preschool Room 2 remained propped open, therefore the children having their nappies changed could be seen from the care room. This does not maintain the privacy and dignity of the child during toileting.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective and Preventive Action

1. The steps to prop the door to the sanitary area have been removed and the door remains closed Management have discussed with the staff the importance of privacy and dignity while changing nappies, reminding them to keep the door closed at all times. A sign has been placed on the door to remind staff.

#### 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-compliance together with photographic evidence. Based on the information submitted the non-compliance identified under Regulation 19 has been addressed and will be reviewed 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-

(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)

- A suitable comfortable rest area was available in each of the care rooms, with soft mats, and cushions.
- 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 °C. A supply of bed linen and blankets was available for use on the cots.

(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. The area was hazard free and the safety surface was in good condition. A variety of toys were stored in the shed.

**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, a large play tray, climbing frame, play kitchen with supporting equipment and fence/ wall mounted play equipment e.g. water funnels and small car funnels and black board. 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 for climbing through, a large play tray with water, ride on equipment and a rocker. Picnic tables and seating were also available.

### 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

It was observed that the registered provider has taken the following measures to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of the pre-school children attending the service including:

##### General Safety:

- The front door was appropriately secured when the inspectors arrived unannounced to the premises.
- All emergency exits were clear and unobstructed.
- Cleaning equipment was stored out of reach of the children.
- All highchairs observed were in good condition and were fitted with a safety harness.
- Medications were observed to be stored in a locked fridge.

##### Infection Control:

- There was a constant supply of thermostatically controlled hot water, liquid hand soap and single use paper hand towels available to support effective hand washing in the service.
- Effective hand washing practices were observed during the inspection, after toileting, nappy changing and outdoor play and prior to snack time.
- Good environmental cleaning practices were observed during the inspection, with tables being wiped down prior to lunch, snack times and after activities. Staff when questioned were able to verbalise correct cleaning processes for toys and equipment.
- Pedal operated bins were observed in operation and were properly maintained and emptied regularly.
- There were individual lidded storage boxes for the storage of the children's soothers.
- When questioned, the staff confirmed that any infant formula bottles were sent in from home ready prepared and were appropriately stored in the fridge.

##### Safe Sleep:

- Ten-minute physical safe sleep observations were observed to be carried out in accordance with best practice guidelines. These were completed on both the electronic app and on paper.

## Non-Compliance Information

The registered provider did not ensure that all reasonable measures were taken to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of a preschool child in relation to the following:

### General Safety:

1. Two blind cords were hanging down and were not appropriately restricted in Preschool Room 3.

## Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

### Corrective & Preventive Actions

1. A new hook has been attached to the wall for the blind cord. Management have discussed with staff the importance of risk assessments in the classroom. The daily risk assessment has been updated to include blind cords on the checklist.

### Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence of blind cords restricted on hook.

Copy of updated risk assessment.

## Summary Comment

The registered provider submitted details of the corrective and preventative actions taken in the service to address the non-compliance together with photographic evidence. Based on the information submitted the non-compliance identified under Regulation 23 has been addressed and will be reviewed at the next inspection.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

### Compliance Information

Documentary evidence of an up-to-date insurance certificate was available that demonstrated adequate insurance cover for a full day care service and covered 63 children. The certificate reviewed detailed an expiry date of 27/03/2026