

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LH112
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Name of Service:	Woddlers & Toddlers
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Address of Service:	Knocknagoran, Omeath, Co. Louth
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Eircode:	A91 FK03
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Name of Registered Provider:	Irene Moley
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	12/02/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	32	PM	22
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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
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Description of service

Woddlers & Toddlers has been operating as a privately owned childcare service in this setting since 2002. The early years' service is registered to cater for a maximum of 50 children. It provides full day care, part-time and sessional care and education to children aged 0 to 6 years and operates from 07.30am to 6.00pm each weekday. The service operates from a purpose-built premises on the grounds of the registered provider's home in Omeath, Co. Louth. There are currently 3 care rooms in operation on the premises namely; The Baby Room and The Woddler Room which are located on the first floor and the Pre-school Room which is located on the ground floor. Ancillary accommodation consists of a separate sleep room, sanitary areas, a kitchen, an office, and storage areas. The children also have access to a developed outdoor play area to the rear and side of the premises.

Staffing

There were 19 staff employed in the service which included the following:

- The registered provider who works directly with the preschool children.
- Seventeen childcare staff who work directly with the preschool children and this includes the deputy person in charge.
- One staff member who works with children attending the school aged service.

One student was also present in the service during the inspection.

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

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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 16.

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 registered provider, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

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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 who is also the registered provider and a named deputy person to deputise as required. Both were on the premises when the inspectors arrived unannounced to the service at 10.40am.

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

(2) Following a discussion with the registered provider and a review of the staff rosters, 4 new members of staff have been employed since the last inspection on 27/06/2025. One student also attends the service.

These 5 files were presented for inspection and reviewed:

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(a) & (b)

- There were 2 written and validated references from a past employer or an alternative source available for 4 new members of staff and 1 student who attends the service.

(c) A processed Garda Vetting Disclosure was available for the 4 new members of staff and 1 student.

Garda vetting disclosures were also reviewed for the registered provider, and 14 other staff members who were employed in the service. The registered provider 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 new staff files and the file for the student, international police vetting was not required at this time.

(4) Documentary evidence was available to confirm that the 4 new members of staff who are reported to work directly with the 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) On the day of inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly at all times with the children attending the early years' service.

(2) The adult to child ratios were correct in the service when the inspectors arrived unannounced to the service at 10.40am and throughout the inspection.

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The following adult to child ratios were observed:

- In the **Preschool Room**: there were 17 children (aged between 3-5 years) being cared for by 3 staff members.
- In the **Baby Room**: there were 6 children aged 9 months -1 year and 5 months being cared for by 2 staff members.
- In the **Toddler Room**: there were 9 children aged 1 years and 9 months - 2 years and 7 months being cared for by 2 staff members. One student was also present in the care room.

One other adult arrived at the service at 11.30am and was present as a 'floater' between the care rooms.

(8)(a) The registered provider ensured that 2 adults were present on the premises at all times. This was verified by staff rosters and staff attendance records maintained at the service

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:

- (a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;
- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;
- (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) A curriculum vitae detailing qualifications and experience was available for each of new staff files reviewed including the file for the student present in the service.
- (h) Documentary evidence was available of the daily attendance of each child in the service and included the arrival and departure times of each child. This information was recorded on the individual roll books for each care room.

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(i) Up to date daily/ weekly staff rosters were available in the service and were reflective of the staff present in the service. The information included the arrival and departure times of each staff member and their allocated break times.

(j) A sample of 10 children's registration forms were reviewed. The required information detailing parental consent and the services procedure for the administration of temperature reducing medication were included. While no medication was observed to be administered during the inspection, documented parental consent was also available for 1 child that may require medication to be administered in the event of an emergency.

(k) A sample of 6 accident and incident forms were reviewed. The required information was recorded and included; For example: the incident details, the time and date of the incident, parent signature, the staff signature and managers signature indicating that they had reviewed the information.

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 3 rooms in operation on the day of the inspection namely The Preschool Room, The Baby Room and Toddler Room.

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

- All children had a change of environment on several occasions to the outdoor area or side-pod. The sidepod was also used as sensory area with a physical activities circuit set up for children to promote physical, gross motor and sensory development
- Handwashing was encouraged after being outside and before snacks and lunchtime. Attention was given to personal care in all rooms such as wiping noses and the use of bibs in the Baby Room.
- Healthy eating was promoted in the service as was evidenced by the dinner and snacks observed. All children brought in their own snacks from home and perishable items were stored in the fridge. All hot

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meals are provided by an external catering company and reheated by the service. On the day of inspection, the lunch time dinners provided were observed to consist of: fish cakes, mashed potato and gravy. An alternative option of sausages and chicken bites was also available if a child did not like the dinner on offer. An information leaflet was on display in the front hall providing details about cultural and dietary restrictions. Drinking water was available for the children. It was reported by staff that any infant formula bottles were brought in already made up and stored appropriately in the fridge.

- Nappies were checked and changed on a regular basis with pleasant interactions between staff and children observed.
- All children who were toilet trained were encouraged to be independent with toileting and step ups were provided. Discreet supervision was also provided by staff as required and gentle handwashing reminders were given to the children after toileting.
- In the Baby Room child-led sleep needs were facilitated. The staff followed the children's routines and were also alert to signs of tiredness displayed by the children. Children were observed sleeping at various intervals in the sleep room. The children aged over 2 years who required a sleep were facilitated to sleep at the allocated sleep time in the Preschool room downstairs. In the Preschool Room the children were also observed to spontaneously access the loft area to take a rest and read a book.

Supporting relationship around children

- The staff were observed to interact with the children in a warm and supportive manner. Soft tones, positive and respectful language were observed in interactions between the children and staff members and the children were observed to actively seek out the staff for example; *"what are you making..? I'm making a heart for Valentine's day...look I did it!Well doneit's really well done. Well done for following the book. what else can you make from that book..?"* and *"now who would like to wash their hands?"*
- A key worker system was in place throughout the service. The staff when questioned were familiar with their allocated key children. This promoted the development and sustainment of relationships between the children, their parents, and the staff in the service.
- Transitions between activities were smooth and minor behavioural issues were dealt with swiftly and did not escalate. The staff were observed to use a variety of strategies such as timers, redirection, positive and supportive language e.g. *"...when ...is finished you can have it..we all take our turn..will we make this now..what do you think will we?"*, *"kind hands boys"* and *"now listening ears let's turn them on"*.

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- Communication between the parents and staff was informal at drop off and pick-up. A parents information board is also on display in the hallway. In the Baby Room a written daily record is provided to parents if they request one, about the children's daily care needs for example; information about sleep, diet, toileting, nappies and activities. A newsletter provides monthly information about the curriculum detailing information about themes, songs, shapes and colours.
- The staff reported regular meetings to plan and discuss care practices and activities in the services. Documented 'minutes' of the staff meetings are also maintained to record items that are discussed. A small messaging service to support communication within the staff group is also frequently used.

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

Infection Control:

- There was a constant supply of thermostatic controlled hot water, liquid soap and single use paper towels in use in the service.
- There was a supply of aprons and disposable gloves for use in nappy changing.
- Hands were observed to be washed after toileting, nappy changing, outdoor play and before lunch.
- There were individual lidded containers for the storage of soothers in the Baby and Toddler Rooms and there was an electric steriliser available to clean them if required.
- Mouthed toys were removed to a basket after use washed and returned to the rooms for use.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

The staff did not always take appropriate steps to prevent the spread of infection in the service.

For example;

1. One staff member returned to a care room without removing the disposable apron used for changing a child's nappy, returned the child and subsequently took the next child for nappy changing. In addition, the same apron was kept on for all further nappy changes at that time.

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2. There was no separate lidded, lined pedal operated bin observed in use for the disposal of soiled nappies in the sanitary accommodation used for nappy changing off the Preschool Room. The bin in use was considered unsuitable.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Actions

1. The nappy changing policy has been communicated to all staff members. All staff will continue to be trained in the implementation of all the policies and procedures to ensure they are being carried out appropriately.
2. A separate lidded, lined pedal bin has been put into the toilet for disposal of soiled nappies. All staff have been made aware of the new bin for all nappies in the preschool room.

Supporting documentation submitted

Documentary and photographic evidence

Summary Comment

The registered provider submitted details of the corrective and preventative actions taken in the service to address the non-compliances together with documentary and photographic evidence. Based on the information submitted the non-compliances identified under Regulation 23 have been adequately addressed.

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 registered provider ensured that there was a person trained as a First Aid Responder (FAR) at all times in the service as was evidenced by the up to date FAR certificates available in the service.
- (2)(a) and (b) There were several adequately stocked first aid boxes in the service available at all times and stored out of the reach of the children.