

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LM037
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Name of Service:	Tots Haven Childcare Facility
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Address of Service:	Shannon Haven, Dromod, Co. Leitrim
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Eircode:	n/a
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Name of Registered Provider:	Derek Cox
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date(s) of Inspection:	23/01/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	48	PM	37
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, TUSLA Child & Family Agency, Markievicz House, Barrack St, Sligo, F91 XC84
Inspection undertaken by:	L. Costello, K Folan, S Killeen
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

Tots Haven Childcare Facility is a privately operated full-day-care service for children aged between 0 and 6 years. The service is registered to open from Monday to Friday from 7.30am to 6:30pm. The service is a full day care and sessional service registered to cater for 95 children. A sessional service is offered from 9:15am to 12:15pm for 38 weeks of the year. The service operates from a purpose built two-storey building located in Dromod, Co Leitrim. There are two care rooms on the ground floor and four care rooms on the first floor. There are sanitary facilities on both floors and two sleep rooms on the ground floor. An outdoor area is located to the rear of the building

Staffing

On the day of inspection there were twelve staff employed in the service, seven adults worked directly with the preschool children. The deputy manager is supernumerary however provided relief cover on the day. There was one adult working in the kitchen. The two Registered Providers do not 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/ safety and facilities*. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 15, 1723, 24, 27 and 28. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

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, 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.*

Compliance Information

(1) (a) (b)

There was a person in charge and a person available to deputise as required.

(1) (c)

There was a clear line of governance within the service with lead childcare workers and childcare assistants all aware of their roles and responsibilities.

(2) (a) (b) (d)

16 adults' files were reviewed on the most recent inspection and found to have the required vetting procedures in place. It was confirmed with the registered provider that no further adults have been employed since the last inspection.

(2) (c)

Garda vetting disclosures for all sixteen adults had been obtained. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years

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) There were nine adults working directly with 48 children on the inspectors' unannounced arrival to the service.

(2) The minimum adult to child ratios were provided on the morning of the unannounced inspection in accordance with the required ratios considering the ages of the children and the length of time each child spent in the service as outlined below:

- Little Lambs: 2 adults cared for 10 children aged from 2 to 3 years of age.
- Sunshine Tots: 1 adult cared for 4 children aged from 1 to 2 years of age.
- Preschool 1: 2 adults cared for 10 children aged from 3 to 4 years of age.
- Preschool 2: 2 adults cared for 8 children aged from 4 to 5 years of age.
- Preschool 3: 1 adult cared for 8 children aged 3 to 4 years of age.
- Preschool 4: 1 adult cared for 8 children aged 4 – 5 years of age.

In the afternoon at approximately 13:30 the following ratios were observed:

- Little Lambs: 2 adults cared for 10 children aged from 2 to 3 years of age.
- Sunshine Tots: 1 adult cared for 4 children aged from 1 to 2 years of age.
- Preschool 1: 2 adults cared for 9 children aged from 3 to 4 years of age.
- Preschool 2: 2 adults cared for 6 children aged from 4 to 5 years of age.
- Preschool 3: 1 adult cared for 8 children aged 3 to 5 years of age.

- Preschool 4: Not applicable in the afternoon.

(8) (a)

The registered provider ensured that a minimum number of two staff members on the premises at all times.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:

- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;*
- (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;*
- (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;*
- (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;*
- (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;*
- (f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;*
- (g) the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner;*
- (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;*
- (i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.*

(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-

- (c) an authorised person.*

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) is retained for a period of 2 years from the date on which the child to whom it relates ceases to attend the service.

Compliance Information

(1) (a-d) (f-i)

A random twelve sample records of the 48 children attending the service were reviewed. The required information including the name and address of the emergency contact, date started, details of any illness or allergy and record of immunisations were completed for each child.

(3) (a)

The records in writing were available for inspection by the early year's inspectors.

(4)

The person in charge confirmed that the records are retained for the required period as set out in the regulations

Non-Compliance Information

(1) (e)

Five of the children's records reviewed did not have the required information on who was authorised to collect the child, which could pose a safety risk.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

In a written response the registered provider stated:

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1) (e)

The required information on who is authorised to collect the child has been obtained from parents and the five files have been updated accordingly. All forms will be fully completed and checked before commencing in the service.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence of documents submitted.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider adequately address the non-compliance found on inspection. This regulation is now compliant.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 17 – Information for parents

A registered provider shall ensure that a parent or guardian of a child proposing to attend the service is provided with the information referred to in subparagraphs (a) to (g) of Regulation 16(1).

Compliance Information

The service demonstrated compliance in ensuring that parents were informed of information outlined in subparagraphs (a) to (g) of regulation 16 (1) with the provision of a parent handbook.

The service ensured that information is provided to parents on a continuous basis with notice boards provided at the entrance to the building outlining the curriculum planning, menu plans and daily activities. The younger children also had a communication book, where information was exchanged daily regarding food intake, sleep times and nappies.

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:

- All external doors were appropriately secured to prevent children from exiting unsupervised.
- Internal doors were appropriately secure where necessary to prevent children accessing unsafe areas this included the Kitchen and storerooms.
- Windows were risk assessed with restrictors in place to prevent children exiting or falling.
- All blind cords were secure.
- TV flexes were secured to the wall.
- Suitable handrails were provided on staircases at the child's height level.
- Four standard highchairs were provided in good condition and fitted with the required safety harness.

Infection Control:

- Warm water, liquid soap and paper towels were provided for hygienic hand washing.
- Children were observed to wash hands prior to mealtimes, after messy play and after using the toilet.

- The younger children’s rooms of ‘Little Lambs’ and ‘Sunshine tots’ had a box in place where all mouthed toys were placed and washed prior to introducing them back into the room.
- Waste bins provided in the service were foot pedal operated reducing the risk of cross infection.

Administration of Medication:

- No medication was administered on the day of inspection, however on interview with staff members they were knowledgeable about the service medication policy and the safe steps they would take prior to any administration of medication.

Safe Sleep:

- Four standard cots with waterproof covers were available in the ‘sunshine tots’ sleep room.
- Stackable floor beds were available for children over two years of age.

Fire Safety:

- Fire doors remained unobstructed on the day of inspection.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

1. On an observed nappy change, an apron was not changed between nappy changes posing a risk of cross contamination.

Safe Sleep:

2. A child under two years of age was placed to sleep on a stackable floor bed. The floor bed used did not have the required 6mm mattress depth to support the child aged under two years of age.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control:

1. Staff were re-trained on the Nappy Changing Procedure and are fully aware of all the steps involved. Staff will be re-trained on the Nappy Changing Procedure on a six-month basis to keep refreshed on the procedure.

Safe Sleep:

2. The stackable floor bed in the room has not been used since and the child it relates to has settled well in the cot. We find that we no longer need the floor bed for this child and it has been removed from the

room. If a stackable floor bed in the 1-2 room is required in the future, the required 6mm mattress depth to support the child aged under 2 years of age will be purchased and used.

Supporting documentation submitted

Infection Control:

1. Documentary evidence submitted.

Safe Sleep:

2. Documentary evidence submitted.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider adequately address the non-compliance found on inspection. This regulation is now compliant.

Part VI – Safety

Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) no person other than-

(i) pre-school child attending the service,

(ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,

(iii) an employee, or

(iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and

(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (3)(b) is retained for a period of one year from the date to which it relates.

Compliance Information

(1) The service ensured that all children in the service were checked in and out with times of entry and departure recorded in each care rooms attendance book.

(3) (a) (b)

The service ensured that no person had access to the service without authorisation. A visitor book was in place that demonstrated all unpaid workers to the service were recorded and access had to be approved.

(4) The registered provider is aware as per the regulation to retain all records of visitors to the service for a period of one year.

Part VI – Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.

Compliance Information

On the day of inspection there were sufficient staff members to ensure that children could be supervised at all times. Staff members working alone positioned themselves to ensure they had full view of the care room. In rooms where there was more than one staff member, good communication was observed between staff members ensuring each staff member was aware of how many children they were supervising. Staff members provided direct care in the outdoors area ensuring children were supervised at all times.

Mealtimes were observed to be positive experiences for the children where staff members sat alongside the children, supervising them as they enjoyed their meals and ensuring they were safe...

Sleep was observed to be monitored with a staff member remaining in the sleep room of the 'little lambs' and physical ten-minute checks in 'sunshine tots'. The written sleep checks in both rooms contained the necessary information including the room temperature, position of the child and breathing pattern.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service demonstrated adequate insurance for a full day care service to cover 80 preschool children up until the 4th of November 2025.