

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 Leitrim
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Eircode:	
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Name of Registered Provider:	Derek Cox
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date of Inspection:	07/05/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	50	PM	28
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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 and S Killeen.
Title:	Early Years Inspector

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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Description of service

Tots Haven Childcare Facility is a privately operated full-day-care service for children aged between 2 and 6 years. The service is registered to open from Monday to Friday from 8:00am to 18:00pm. The service is a full day care and sessional service registered to cater for 95 children. A sessional service is offered from 9:00am to 12:00pm for 38 weeks of the year. The service operates from a purpose built two-storey building located in Dromod, Co Leitrim. There is one care rooms on the ground floor and four care rooms on the first floor. There are sanitary facilities on both floors and one sleep room on the ground floor. An outdoor area is located to the rear of the building

Staffing

On the day of inspection there were fifteen staff employed in the service, eleven adults worked directly with the preschool children. The manager is supernumerary and provides relief cover as required. There was one adult working in the kitchen. There was one adult working in the office. The registered provider while does not work directly with the preschool children was present on the day of 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

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.

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The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 15(i), 16 (k), 19, 23 and 25. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 15 (i) and 16 (k).

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.

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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.*

(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)

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

(1)

The person in charge facilitated the inspection and remained on site throughout the duration of the inspection.

(2) (a) (b).

Following a review of previous inspection information, information available on inspection and discussion with the person in charge it was determined that Six new staff members had been employed since the previous inspection. The six new staff members work directly with the children.

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A total of six files were reviewed. In addition, Garda vetting for four staff members whose disclosures were identified as due for renewal were requested for review.

Eleven written and verified past employer references and one written and verified reference from a source other than a past employer was available in respect of the six new staff members.

(c)

Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for 15 staff.

The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years

(d)

International police vetting had been obtained for the two recently employed adults that had resided outside the state for a period of six months or more as an adult.

(4)

Evidence of completion of a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent was on file for the five staff members and one staff member held a letter of qualification recognition from the Department of Children, Disability and Equality.

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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.

Compliance Information

(1)

There were Nine adults working directly with 50 children on the inspectors' unannounced arrival to the service. A review of a sample of attendance records showed that an adequate number of adults worked directly with the children during service hours of operation.

(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 12 children aged from 2 years of age to 3 years of age.
- 'Preschool 1': 1 adult cared for 9 children aged from 4 years of age to 5 years of age.
- 'Preschool 2': 3 adults cared for 11 children aged from 4 years to 5 years of age.
- 'Preschool 3': 1 adult cared for 8 children aged from 3 years of age to 4 years of age.
- 'Preschool 4': 2 adults cared for 10 children aged from 3 years to 4 years of age.

In the afternoon the following ratios were observed:

- 'Little lambs': 2 adults cared for 11 children aged from 2 years of age to 3 years of age.
- 'Preschool 1': 2 adults cared for 11 children aged from 4 years of age to 5 years of age.
- 'Preschool 2': 1 adult cared for 6 children aged from 4 years to 5 years of age.

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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:

(e) authorisation for the collection of the child;

Compliance Information

(1)(e)

Records for all children in relation to authorisation to collect were available in all care rooms. This information ensured that all staff members were aware of who the designated person is to collect the child. As children are collected from the service, this information is recorded to include the time and the person that collected the child.

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:

(k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.

(2) A registered provider shall ensure that-

(b) a record referred to in subparagraph (h), (j) or (k) of 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, or in the case of a preschool service in a drop-in centre or of a temporary pre-school service, for a period of 2 years from the date on which the child attends the service.

(3) A record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection on the premises, and the documents and records referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall be open to inspection whether on the premises or elsewhere, by an authorised person.

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(4) A record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection on the premises by a parent or guardian of a child but only in respect of information concerning that child.

Compliance Information

(1) (k)

A sample of 20 accident and incident forms were reviewed and contained the necessary information detailing the child's name, date and time, nature of incident, and signatures belonging to staff, management, and parents.

(2)(b)

The registered provider is aware of the statutory requirement to retain these records for the period set out in regulation.

(3)

These records were made available for review on the day of inspection.

(4)

Records were open to inspection by the parent or guardian of the child as evidences by signature.

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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

(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

(1)(a)(b)

Basic Needs:

- The person in charge described how the service provides balanced meals and snacks each day. This was further evidenced by a review of the menu plan displayed, a discussion with the chef and staff members and observation of meals in the rooms on the day.
- Morning snack was observed to include a variety of fresh fruit and bagels served with drinks of water. The main meal of the day was a chicken curry served with rice and drinks of water or milk.
- Nappy changing was observed to be an opportunity for positive engagement and interaction with the children. Children who were being potty trained were supported to do so with regular prompts and support from their staff members. The older children who were toileting independently were prompted to do so and supervised from a distance.
- Children in the little lamb's room availed of a structured sleep time after lunch. Children slept on stackable floor beds, supervised by a staff member who stayed in the sleep room throughout.

Supporting Relationships:

- Staff members were observed to be respectful, gentle, and kind in their interactions towards the children in their care.
- There was evidence of familiarity between the staff and children as conversations were had about important events in children's life's, including new babies arriving into families.

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- The service took measures to support the children's relationships including keeping parents and guardians fully informed of the daily activities. This was completed through the use of books where parents received information at the end of each day in relation to the children's eating, sleeping and nappy changing.
- Pictures of families displayed on the walls in the care rooms ensured children's connection to home was maintained. This service had made effort to get to know the child information 'all about me' was displayed on the walls of care room ensuring all staff members were aware of the children's likes and dislikes.
- The staff members in the service were observed to work well together, communicating with each other effectively so all staff knew how many children they were responsible for. In the outdoor area, staff members were observed to complete head counts and ensure safety transitioning from outdoors to indoors and visa versa.

Programme of Activities:

- Ongoing observations and assessments were documented which helped create a well-rounded picture of each child and their learnings. These observations were recorded in individual scrap books with evidence of artwork and learnings.
- Children's language development was observed to be supported through one to one and group discussions, songs and storytelling.
- On the day of inspection, the children were facilitated to make their own choice in selecting play equipment and activities that they wished to engage with. Turn taking and sharing was promoted, this was evidenced in all rooms on the day.
- On discussion with staff members, outdoor play is a large focus of the day. The inspector was informed that children spend time outside daily. This was observed on the day with children spending a large amount of time outdoors enjoying the various resources provided.
- The outdoor area is used by all rooms and is large enough to facilitate all rooms playing together which gives an opportunity for children to mix with their siblings.

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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 main entrance into the service was found to be secured upon the inspectors unannounced arrival to the service, which prevented persons entering unauthorised and children from leaving the building unsupervised.
- All cleaning products in the care rooms were stored on high level shelving out of the reach of children.
- Materials and resources were maintained in a good state of repair.
- The kitchen was inaccessible to the preschool children.
- Leads and flexes were secure and inaccessible to the preschool children.
- The outdoor perimeter was secure with waste bins stored out of reach of children.
- Staff members were observed to complete head counts while transitioning children from upstairs rooms to downstairs and in and out of the building.

Infection Control:

- Children were observed to wash their hands prior to snack, after messy play and after using the bathroom.
- Warm water liquid soap and paper towels were available for effective hand hygiene.
- Bins throughout the service were the required foot pedal operated bins.
- Tables were observed to be cleaned prior and post mealtimes.
- Staff members serving meals were observed to wear appropriate personal protective clothing.

Administration of Medication:

- On discussion with staff members they were aware of the service policy on medication administration.
- Support plans were in place for children with additional medical needs.

Safe Sleep:

- A designated sleep room adjacent to the little lamb's room was equipped with stackable floor beds for preschool children aged 2 to 3 years.
- Bed linen was observed to be clean, with extras stored in individual baskets.

Fire Safety:

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- Fire evacuation plans were clearly displayed on the walls throughout the service.
- Emergency evacuation routes were clear from obstruction on the day of 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)

The registered provider demonstrated with certification that four adults were trained in first aid for children. A review of the roster demonstrated that there was a person with first aid for children available at all times to the children attending the service.

(2) (a) (b)

First aid boxes sufficiently resources with suitable equipment were stored in a conspicuous position available to children as required.