

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LM037			
Name of Service:	Tots Haven Childcare Facility			
Address of Service:	Shannon Haven, Dromod, Co. Leitrim			
Eircode:	N/a			
Name of Registered Provider:	Derek Cox			
Service type:	Full Day			
Date(s) of Inspection:	17/07/2024			
No of pre-school children:	AM	37	PM	36
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 F Carty			
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

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 6:00pm. 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 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 and three adults worked with school aged children. The deputy manager is supernumerary however provided relief cover on the day. There was one adult working in the kitchen. The registered provider arrived at the service after the inspectors arrival.

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, 22, 23 and 25 however, on inspection an additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 29. 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

(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).

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

(2) (a) (b).

The records of nine adults employed in the service had been reviewed on the last inspection on the 3rd of October 2023 and confirmed on review of inspector's notes.

Three adults had been employed since the last inspection and these files were reviewed.

Six written and verified past employer references were available in respect of the three adults employed in the service since the last inspection.

- (c)
Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all twelve 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 was not required as the three adults employed in the service since the last inspection had not lived outside the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months.
- (4) Two adults had attained major awards in Early childhood care and education at level 5 or above on the national framework of qualifications, or qualifications deemed by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) to meet the regulatory requirement. The third adult did not work directly with preschool children.

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 seven adults working directly with 37 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' playroom: 3 adults cared for 10 children child aged from 2 to 3 years of age.

Sunshine Tots playroom: 1 adult cared for 4 children aged from 1 to 2 years of age.

Preschool 2 playroom: 2 adults cared for 15 children aged 4 to 5 years of age.

Preschool 1 playroom: 3 adults cared for 8 children aged from 4 years to 5 years of age.

At 2.15pm in the afternoon the adult: child ratios were found to be as follows:

Little lambs' playroom: 2 adults cared for 9 children child aged from 2 to 3 years of age.

Sunshine Tots playroom: 1 adult cared for 4 children aged from 1 to 2 years of age.

Preschool 2 playroom: 2 adults cared for 15 children aged 4 to 5 years of age.

Preschool 1 playroom: 3 adults cared for 8 children aged from 4 years to 5 years of age.

(8) The registered provider always ensured that there was a minimum of two adults on the premises when children were present as evidenced in a review of attendance records.

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

Physical and Material Environment:

The four care rooms were laid out to facilitate a variety of experiences for the preschool child. In the sunshine tots room resources and materials were suitable to the age of the one- to two-year-olds attending this room. Soft play area with ball ponds and soft flooring allowed for opportunities of exploration. Equipment was stored on low level shelving to allow for the children to crawl around the room freely choosing what toys to play with. A variety of musical toys allowed for creativity while fine motor skill development was supported using jigsaws, and shape toys. A home corner with a kitchen and resources at the child's height allowed for imaginative play. In the little lamb's room, opportunities for imaginary and role play were provided in the home corner and dress up area as well as construction area and farm animal areas. A library area with soft matting and couches allowed children to choose a book and relax or opt out of an activity. Open low-level shelving equipped with jigsaws, tabletop activities and building blocks allowed for children to direct their own sense of play.

In Preschool 1 and 2 rooms a variety and number of designated interest areas were available to the children including a home corner with props, small world play and arts and crafts materials to encourage imaginary play. Rest areas were available if the children wished to take time out from activities.

The outdoor play area provided an alternative change of environment for the children. One portion of the outdoor area was roofed and had an artificial grass surface to allow for outdoor play in all weathers, resources including tunnels, slides, climbing frames, mud kitchens, playhouses and shops. There was a large wooden tree house with rock wall, swings and slides in one area that allowed children to develop their gross motor skills. Children had access to an enclosed sensory area with sand boxes and water trays. Gross motor skills were developed with access to bikes, trikes and ride on toys. A timetable was in place to ensure all children had access

to the outdoor area. On the day of inspection, the outdoor area was used consistently by all rooms throughout the day.

Supporting Relationships:

Staff members were observed to be respectful, gentle, and kind in their interactions towards the children in their care. During mealtimes the staff members sat at the table and engaged in social conversation with children promoting a relaxed atmosphere. The staff members sat at the children's level when feeding the younger children or when assisting the children to feed themselves. The younger children were held and cuddled as needed throughout the day.

The service took measures to support the children's relationships including keeping parents and guardians fully informed of the daily activities. This was completed in a daily record book which was shared between home and the service ensuring important information was available to the parents. Pictures of families displayed on the walls in the care rooms ensured children's connection to home was maintained. The service had made effort to get to know the children and the little lamb's room had a wall with 'all about me' which included the children's likes and dislikes to ensure the children settled into the room and their choices were adhered to.

Basic Needs:

The service operated a three-week meal plan which provided breakfast dinner and snacks for the children availing of full day care. Independence was promoted and children participated in getting the room ready for dinner time by setting the table in the little lamb's room. The children in the preschool rooms went to the dining room for their meals.

Nappy changing was observed to be a positive experience for the children, where staff took this time for one to one conversation and positive engagement.

Sleep in the sunshine tots' room was directed by the children, where staff responded to cues from the child. Individual plans were in place and children were observed sleeping at various times throughout the day in the younger children's room. In little lambs the sleep time was structured and took place after dinner, some children had grown out of this nap time and a rest time was provided where children watched cartoons for a short period of time. Floor beds were provided in the designated sleep room adjacent to the little lamb's room. A staff member remained in the room for the duration of the sleep time, supporting the children to settle and supervising through sleep time.

Non-Compliance Information

1. In preschool 2, there was no water station available throughout the day. It is acknowledged that drinks were available at snack times. Water or Milk should be available when needed throughout the day.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider in a written response stated the following:

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. There is a fresh jug of water left in Preschool 2 each day with cups. A water station poster has also been put up for children to recognise the area in the room. Everyday staff members will ensure there is fresh drinking water available in the room for all children.

Supporting documentation submitted

1. Photographic evidence submitted.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider adequately addressed the non-compliance found on inspection.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 22 – Food and drink

A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

All food provision in the full day care service is provided by the service. The main hot meal is delivered from a local restaurant which is contracted by the registered provider to provide adequate and suitable meals for the preschool children. The other meals' and snacks are prepared by a cook on site. A three-week menu plan is in place in line with the service healthy eating policy. On the day of inspection morning snack included French toast and fruit, dinner was chicken curry, rice, vegetables and potato, evening snack included scrambled egg and brown bread. Drinks throughout the day included water and milk. Sufficient quantities were provided on the day with extra portions available if required, alternatives were also available if a child did not like the dinner on the day. The registered provider had ensured provisions were in place for children with allergies, food intolerances and cultural preferences.

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.
- There were four highchairs with harness safety straps fitted in good condition.
- Leads and flexes were secure and inaccessible to the preschool children.

Infection Control:

- There were adequate handwashing facilities provided throughout the service with warm water, liquid soap and paper towels.
- Tables were observed to be cleaned prior to mealtimes and after messy play and snack times in all care rooms.
- The materials and resources throughout the service were visually clean, with cleaning schedules displayed and up to date in each care room.
- Foot pedal operated bins were in place throughout the service for the safe disposal of waste.

Administration of Medication:

- The service had a medication administration policy in place and when interviewed staff were aware of their responsibilities for the safe administration of medication.
- A detailed support plan was in place for one child who required emergency medical treatment and staff were aware of their responsibilities regarding same.

Safe Sleep:

- The service had two designated sleep rooms in the service. One designated sleep room had four standard cots, the second sleep room had six floor beds in use and more available as required.

- The sleep room temperature measured 20.0°C on the day of inspection which is line with the required safe sleep temperatures.

Fire Safety:

- Fire doors were unobstructed throughout the service.
- Fire evacuation procedures were clearly displayed in the care rooms.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

1. Children's hands were not observed to be washed after nappy changes in the junior rooms. It was also noted on the day that children in the preschools room did not all wash their hands after outdoor play and before lunch time.
2. Some of the children's clothes were heavily soiled after dinner and these were observed not to have been changed for the duration of the day. Children's hygiene needs should be attended to in a promptly manner.
3. A plastic floor mat in the outdoor area was observed to be torn making it difficult to clean the mat effectively. A couch in the sensory was torn with the internal foam exposed preventing it from being cleaned effectively.
4. The four shared cots in the sleep room in sunshine tots did not have the required waterproof mattress protectors therefore they were unable to be cleaned effectively between uses.

Fire Safety:

5. Record of attendance books in preschool 1 room were not fully completed with children's attendance times. At 11:00am three preschool children were signed in when there were eight children present. This would prevent the safe evacuation of children in the event of a fire.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

In a written response the registered provider stated:

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control:

1. Staff have been reminded to ensure all children are washing hands when coming in from the garden, before meals, after nappy changes and if visibly dirty. After nappy changes staff have been reminded to

use the sink and step in the changing room for children’s handwashing to avoid cross contamination. Posters reminding all staff and children to wash their hands after playing outside, using the toilet and changing nappies are displayed in the relevant areas.

2. Staff have been reminded that children’s clothes must be changed if soiled after all meals. All children in the Little Lambs and Sunshine Tots rooms wear bibs at mealtimes but if their sleeves or other parts of their clothes are soiled, they will be changed in a promptly manner. Staff will change children’s clothes if they are soiled at any stage of the day, especially after mealtimes.
3. The plastic floor mat in the outdoor area has been removed and binned. The couch in the Sensory room has been removed and binned. Management will do more routine checks of equipment and remove any items that are torn or broken.
4. Waterproof mattress protectors are currently being used and in place on all cots. Staff have been reminded to ensure all cot mattresses always have a waterproof mattress protector on them

Fire Safety:

5. Staff have been reminded to ensure roll books are being filled out when each child arrives to and leaves the premises. Each roll book has a reminder on the front cover to highlight to staff to ensure all children are signed in and out each room. Management will check roll books regularly to ensure they are being filled out correctly.

Supporting documentation submitted

Infection Control:

1. Photographic evidence submitted.
2. Photographic evidence submitted.
3. Photographic evidence submitted.
4. Photographic evidence submitted.

Fire Safety:

5. Photographic evidence submitted.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider adequately addressed the non-compliance found on 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 the day of inspection four adults were trained in First Aid Responder and available to the children in the event of an incident requiring first aid.

(2) (a) (b)

The registered provider had ensured that all care rooms had access to a fully stocked first aid box that was in an accessible place and available to the children as required.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-
(c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated

Non-Compliance Information

(c) There was evidence of black mould in the sleep room adjacent to little lambs which posed potential health risks to children in attendance.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

In a written response the registered provider stated:

Corrective and Preventive Action

The mould has been removed and the area made clean. Management and maintenance will carry out regular checks to ensure there is no mould

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence submitted.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider adequately addressed the non-compliance found on inspection