

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LS012
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Name of Service:	Knock Kids Playschool T/A Timahoe Tots
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Address of Service:	Spink, Abbeyleix, Co. Laois.
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Eircode:	R32 DK70
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Name of Registered Provider:	Deborah Quinn
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	12/06/2023
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No of pre-school children:	AM	9	PM	Nil
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla, Child and Family Agency Primary Care Centre, Church Avenue, Tullamore, Co. Offaly
Inspection undertaken by:	D. Molloy
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).

Conditions if applicable	Not applicable
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Description of service

Knock Kids Playschool T/A Timahoe Tots is a community based, early years' service, which provides an Early Childhood Care and Education programme to children aged two years to six years. The service has recently been taken over by a new registered provider.

The service operates on a daily basis Monday to Friday and has been operational since 2004. Ten children are enrolled in the service. The service operates from a converted room in the community hall, which is located on its own site next to the primary school, the townlands of Spink in rural Co. Laois.

The designated preschool room and its sanitary accommodation is used for the sole purpose of operating an early years' service.

Access to the premises is gained through a main door into a shared hallway and the service itself is accessed through its own entrance door. The services external boundaries are defined by a walls and fencing.

The service consists of a lobby and cloakroom area, one long playroom, two toilets, wash hand basins and an additional sanitary accommodation for adult use is also available. Parking and set down is available outside the premises.

Staffing

One staff member in addition to the registered provider is employed in the service. Two staff were working directly with the preschool children on the day of inspection. Staff working in the service had qualifications ranging from level 6 to level 8 on the National Qualifications Framework for Early Years.

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 inspections may also focus on other areas as required.

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 inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, 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, as far 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.

(5) Paragraph (4) shall apply-

- (a) on or after 31 December 2016 in respect of pre-school services registered on or before 30 June 2016, and
- (b) on or after the date of registration in respect of all other pre-school services.

(6) Paragraph (4) shall not apply before 1 September 2021 to a person who-

(a) has signed a declaration on or before 30 June 2016 to the effect that he or she intends to retire from employment in a pre-school service before 1 September 2021, and

(b) is in possession of a letter from the Minister confirming that paragraph (4) shall not apply to him or her before that date.

(6A) is inserted by S.I. No.632 of 2016 CHILD CARE ACT 1991 (EARLY YEARS SERVICES) (AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS 2016 which states; Regulation 9 of the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations (S.I. No. 221 of 2016) is amended - in paragraph (4), by the substitution of “paragraphs (5), (6) and (6A)” for “paragraphs (5) and (6)”, and (b) by the insertion of the following paragraph after paragraph (6): “

(6A) Paragraph (4) shall not apply to an employee of a registered provider where - (a) the registered provider receives funding for the employment of the employee pursuant to a scheme funded by the Minister and known as the Access and Inclusion Model, and (b) the employment of the employee is for the purpose of providing support, pursuant to the scheme referred to in subparagraph (a), for a child attending the service to enable the child to participate in the programme known as the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) funding Programme.”

Compliance Information

(1)

(a) The service has a designated person in charge and a named person who is able to deputise as required.

(b) The registered provider was present during the inspection and facilitated the inspection. The roster showed that at all times the person in charge was present during the opening hours of the service.

(2)

All staff files were reviewed on site on the day of inspection.

(a) (b)Validated references from both staff members’ past employers, in particular the most recent employer was available for review. Validated references from reputable sources were available for review.

(c) A vetting disclosure received from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána in accordance with the Act of 2012 in respect of both staff member was available for review.

(d) Police vetting from other police authorities was not required for staff members.

(3)
Required vetting had been carried out prior to staff member being appointed, assigned, or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(4)
All employees held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 6-8 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

(6)(a)(b)
Not applicable as no employee had signed a declaration on or before 30 June 2016, to the effect that they intended to retire from employment in a pre-school service.

(6A)
One adult was working with children under the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) on the day of inspection.

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.

(3) Subject to paragraph (5), a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 2 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) therefore at that reference number is satisfied.

(8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-

(c) a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that, where the person in charge operates the service single-handedly, a second person familiar with the operation of the service and in a position to provide assistance to the person in charge in operating the service is, at all times, within close distance of the service and available to attend the service to assist the person in charge in the event of an emergency.

Compliance Information

(1)
The ratio of adults to children was maintained during the inspection. The registered provider ensured that there were sufficient adults working directly with the children at all times. Records showed that the adult child ratio was upheld throughout the opening hours of the service.

(3) The registered provider had ensured that the adult child ratio was correctly maintained throughout the inspection and records showed that sufficient adults were rostered to work in the service each day.

(8)

(c) Not applicable as the registered provider does not operate the service single-handedly

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 registered provider had ensured that parents or guardians of a child proposing to attend the service could receive information in relation to the operation of the service in the form of a site-specific parent's information sheet and could visit the service on an arranged visit.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 18 – Copy of Act

A registered provider shall ensure that a copy of Part VIIA (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013)) of the Act and of these Regulations is kept on the premises and the said copies shall be open to inspection on the premises by-

- (a) a parent or guardian of a child attending or proposing to attend the service,*
- (b) an employee, unpaid worker, or contractor, and*
- (c) an authorised person.*

Compliance Information

The registered provider had ensured that a copy of Part VIIA (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013)) of the Act and of these Regulations was available on the premises and could be viewed by

- (a) a parent or guardian of a child attending or proposing to attend the service,
- (b) an employee, unpaid worker, or contractor, and
- (c) an authorised person.

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

Compliance Information

BASIC NEEDS:

Children were supported to become independent and self-caring and were encouraged to take care of their own belongings including hanging up and taking down their coats, opening bags and lunch boxes and tidying up their toys when finished playing.

It was observed that staff promoted self confidence and self-esteem through positive encouragement and recognition of achievements. Children who required additional help and support were offered this. Children who were availing of the AIMS scheme were supported and an individual plan was in place which was focused and reflective of children's needs.

A blend of outdoor and indoor activities was available. Children could avail of fresh air and outdoor play on a daily basis in the outdoor play facility where activities such as climbing, balancing, running and free movement were possible. Children were observed using the ride on toys and tricycles during the inspection. Outdoor art work was possible on the blackboards and children were drawing on these with chalk provided.

SUPPORTING RELATIONSHIPS:

It was observed that the children appeared comfortable in the company of staff and the same staff were in the service each day which created continuity of care and an opportunity for children to form relationships with the staff.

Transitions from preschool to primary school was supported as towards the end of the year the children discussed their plans to move to their new school and become familiar with the idea of moving on. A visit to the primary school next door was planned each year for children progressing into this school.

Parents involvement was encouraged, and parents had opportunity to meet with staff each day at hand over time and could avail of individual meetings to discuss their own children's progress.

Relationships with nature and exploration of the environment were supported and encouraged, it was observed that a group of children were carefully watching a snail creep on the ground and were fascinated by its slow movement and were careful not to impede its progress.

PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

The pre-school room was bright and laid out to meet the needs of the children. A rest area was provided where children could relax and read their books. The room was well stocked with developmentally appropriate toys and equipment. Areas of special interest including a home corner, a library area, art and crafts and table top activity and a construction area.

Artwork completed by children was used to decorate the wall and the high windows with displays children's colourful butterfly's and frogs .

The outdoor play facility which was located behind the service had ride on cars, tractors, bikes, tricks scooters and wheelbarrows. An outdoor kitchen was provided in one of the play houses which provided the space for children to play house and some children were observed dressing up and playing with dolls in this area. Outdoor blackboards with chalk and bright murals were a feature of the back wall. The area was multi surfaces with all weather and soft surfacing and artificial grass.

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:

Access to the service was gained through the main door which opened into the lobby area. Entry was controlled into the playschool room by means of a buzzer system, which was operated from within. This prevented unauthorised entry and exit of a child unsupervised. The outdoor play facility to the side of the setting was securely fenced .

A pest control system was in place to safe guard against pests.

Cleaning products were stored out of reach of children.

Infection Control:

The service was well ventilated with openable windows to facilitate air exchange. Cleaning was carried out on an ongoing basis and staff were aware of their role in maintaining high standards of hygiene. Clear guidance on handwashing was outlined for children and staff in the service. Children were observed washing their hands following toilet use. On enrolment, parents were asked for their child's immunisation record, this information is recorded on the child's record card and updated as required

Fire Safety:

The fire exit was unobstructed. A notice of the fire assembly point was on display to show fire assembly point outside the service.

Outing:

The registered provider stated that no outings were conducted from the service.

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)
Staff had up to date First Aid Responder (FAR) certification and were available to the children attending the pre-school service.
- (2)
(a) The first aid box was safely stored in an easily accessible location on the premises.
(b) The first aid box was readily available in the service at all times.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures

- (1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of-
- (a) any fire drill that takes place in the premises, and
 - (b) the number, type and maintenance record of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.
- (2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-
- (a) a parent or guardian of a pre-school child attending or proposing to attend the pre-school service,
 - (b) an employee, and
 - (c) an authorised person.
- (3) A registered provider shall ensure that a record referred to in paragraph (2) is retained for a period of 5 years after its creation
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire shall be displayed in a conspicuous position in the premises.

Compliance Information

A written record was available of the fire drills carried out in the service. The last fire drill was recorded as being carried out on 10 May 2023 .

(b)

The number, type, and maintenance record of firefighting equipment on the premises was available. The firefighting equipment was checked on 28 September 2022. The fire alarm was certified in 2022.

(2)

The record was available open to parents, guardians, employees, and the authorised person.

(3)

The person in charge stated that records were retained for a period of 5 years after creation.

(4)

A notice of the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed on the premises.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

A copy of up-to-date insurance cover for the number of children attending the service was available in the service. The insurance certificate was valid until March 2024.

Part IX - Inspection and Enforcement

Regulation 33 – Furnishing of information to agency

A registered provider shall furnish the Agency with such information as the Agency may require for the purpose of enforcing and executing these Regulations and the information shall be in such form, if any, as may be specified by the Agency.

Compliance Information

The person in charge facilitated the inspection and provided access to all information as was required for completion of the inspection.