

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LS030
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Name of Service:	Tiddlywinks
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Address of Service:	Cappanafeacle, Ballyadams, Athy, Co. Laois
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Eircode:	R14 DT99
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Name of Registered Provider:	Joan O'Connor-Quinn
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	21/06/2023
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No of pre-school children:	AM	21	PM	N/A
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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

Tiddlywinks is operated from in a single storey, purpose-built building, next to the registered providers domestic dwelling located in the towns land of Cappanafeacle in rural Co. Laois.

The setting offers an entrance hallway with lobby, three playrooms, two toilets and wash hand basins which meets the requirements for up to twenty-two children to attend the service at one time. There is also a toilet and wash hand basin for staff use. There is an outdoor play area to the back of the premises which is accessed via a designated route to the rear of the registered providers domestic dwelling. The premises is used for the sole purpose of operating an early years' service.

Set down and parking facilities are available on site and also on the public road. Tiddlywinks was established in 2003 and is a privately owned and operated. It is registered to offer sessional care to children aged 2-6 years of age.

Tiddlywinks is operated by the registered provider.

The service operates from 09:30am – 12:30pm on a Monday to Friday basis.

Staffing

Two adults are employed in the service in addition to the registered provider who works directly with children and facilitated the inspection.

Staff held qualifications from level 5-8 on the National Framework of Qualifications in Early Years in Early Childhood Care and Education.

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.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulation 19 - Health, Welfare and Development of Child. As a result, the scope of the inspection included Playroom Room 1 and 3, sanitary accommodation and the outdoor play facility.

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, 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.

(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 is the designated person in charge was present during the inspection. The registered provider facilitated the inspection and 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 staff members’ past employers, in particular the most recent employer were 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 all-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 5-8 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 employee was working with children under the Access and Inclusion Model(.AIM)

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 minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained during the inspection. The registered provider ensured that there were sufficient adults working directly with the children. Records showed that the adult child ratio was upheld in 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 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,

Compliance Information

(19)(1)(a)

BASIC NEEDS:

Children availed of fresh air and outdoor play during the inspection and on a daily basis.

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

Children could move freely around the playrooms and made their own selection from the toys available.

Healthy eating was promoted, and children brought in their own lunches from home in line with the healthy eating policy. Lunches included a selection rolls, wraps, sandwiches, brown bread, yogurts, and fresh fruit.

Children were not rushed eating their lunch but were given time to eat at their own pace and enjoy their food.

The children were all developmentally advanced enough so as to eat their lunch unaided and did not require bibs or protective clothing. Movement from indoors to outdoors was supervised by staff who were alert to children's wishes and needs. Outdoor weather wear was available for each child for use in wet weather .

SUPPORTING RELATIONSHIPS:

Staff were kind and patient with the children and offered encouragement and praise. A relaxed atmosphere was noted, and children appeared relaxed and comfortable in the company of the staff. 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. A concert was held at the annual graduation ceremony for parents to see their children’s achievements within the preschool setting.

Transitions from one activity to another was child centred and child led and was supported by discussion, timely notice and interactions and examples by staff.

Children’s progress is shared with parents. The children’s artwork is sent home to the parents on a regular basis and parents are encouraged to link with the service through phone calls, social media, texts, and can arrange a face-to-face meeting if required. Staff met regularly to discuss and plan activities and were engaging a national support organisation.

The registered provider arranged an open day each year for new children and their parents to visit the service and get a taste of what was offered in the setting. Children were actively encouraged to be kind to one another and include each other in play. Staff remained constant in the service with little change and the children could expect the same adults to care for them each day, and this can help children form secure relationships at this early stage.

PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

The layout of the playroom had been rearranged and enhanced since the last inspection. It was observed in Play room 1, that toys were fully accessible to the children and were stored at their level on low level shelving. The room was bright and airy, and children had plenty of space to move around in the free space available to them. Play room 3 was also well stocked with equipment including arts and crafts and imaginary play items, like dressing up and all toys and equipment were presented in an organised way and were fully accessible to the children. This room was used annually for the children’s graduation ceremony and end of term concert.

The large outdoor play area to the back of the service was well stocked and well maintained. The children had freedom of movement in this large space.

The large, grassed area offered opportunity to run, play and use the outdoor equipment and to dig in the large construction area and in the potting area.

The large outdoor play area located to the back of the service was well stocked and well maintained. The children had freedom of movement in this large space. This area offered opportunity for play and balance and gross motor movements. This area was securely fenced.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

(1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages, and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child to play indoors and, , outdoors, during the day, and

(b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.

Compliance Information

(a) An outdoor play area was available for pre-school children with a large, grassed area which was freshly mowed was located at the far end of the site .

(b) A rest area was available in each room for the children to rest should they wish .

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured that the furniture was clean and properly maintained and that stained or grubby furnishings were cleaned or removed and that only furniture that is easily washable was retained in the setting. Toys were suitable and were maintained, in a proper state of repair and were checked for breakages and pinch points each day.

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 outdoor boiler house was inaccessible to the children and had been fitted with a new door which was securely closed.

Access was now restricted to refuse bins and bins were not overfilled or wedged open.

Unsuitable items had been removed from the play facility following the last inspection. Access to the BBQ area which is located to the side of the premises is restricted and this area is reserved for sole use of the register provider.

The floor covering throughout maintained in a proper state of repair.

The registered provider maintained documentary evidence that an indoor and outdoor of environmental risk assessments carried out in the service daily.

Infection Control:

Prevention of spread of infection was supported by provision of disposable paper towels for single use in both of the sanitary accommodations, and foot operated pedal bins were also provided. The service was clean, and it was observed that staff members were engaged in cleaning during the session and at the end of the session. Staff were familiar with the infection control policy of the service. Children were observed washing their hands regularly and adults were observed offering assistance if necessary. The service was well ventilated with openable windows.

Administration of Medication:

A site-specific medication management policy was available in the service.

Staff were familiar with policy and practice in relation to safe administration of medication.

No medication was administered on the day of inspection.

Fire Safety:

The fire exits were unobstructed.

A notice of the fire assembly point was on display to show fire assembly point to the back of the service.

Outing:

The registered provider stated no outing were undertaken 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 was 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.
- (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

- (1)
(a) A written record for the completed monthly fire drills was available on the premises. The last fire drill was recorded as taking place on June 9 2023.
(b) A record was available demonstrating the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises.
The firefighting equipment was serviced on June 6, 2023. The smoke alarms were serviced on June 6, 2023.
- (4)
A written notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was on display.

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 VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-
(d) cleaned, maintained, and repaired, as required, and

Compliance Information

(d)
The service was observed to be clean and well-maintained. A cleaning roster was in place which included surface cleaning, dusting and deep cleaning of the premises, including walls, hallway, playrooms, sanitary accommodations, and nappy changing area. Cleaning and maintenance of fixtures and fitting was carried out .

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 reasonably 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 registered provider facilitated the inspection and provided access to all information as was required for completion of the inspection.