

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015MH201
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Name of Service:	Ashbourne Tiny Tots Care Creche & Montessori Ltd
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Address of Service:	Killegland, Ashbourne, Co. Meath
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Eircode:	A84 N8P5
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Name of Registered Provider:	Barbara Woods, Jeannie Kyle
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	01/04/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	51	PM	42
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate 180-189 Lakeshore Drive, Airside Business Park, Swords, Co Dublin.
Inspection undertaken by:	N McEndoo and E Saini
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).

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Description of service

Ashbourne Tiny Tots Care, Creche & Montessori Ltd is privately owned and is 1 of 2 services operated by the registered providers. The service provides full day care, part time, sessional and school aged childcare to children from 0 to 6 years. The service operates from 07:15 am to 6:15pm Monday to Friday. The service is located over 2 floors and consists of eight care rooms, a kitchen, and sanitary facilities. There is a large outdoor all-weather area to the rear of the premises which is divided by age groups.

Staffing

The service is run and operated by two registered providers. The service employs a person in charge, a deputy person in charge, an inclusion co-ordinator, two chefs and 25 childcare staff. Three students on work placement also attend the service but were not present on the day of inspection. On the day of inspection there was the person in charge, deputy person in charge, chef, and 12 childcare staff present.

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 9,11,16,19,23, and 28; however, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 25. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulation 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.

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Statutory Notices		
Notice	Date Served	Detail
Immediate Action Notice IAN1043	07/04/2026	The registered provider did not ensure that a record of International Police Vetting was available for two adults who had access to children and who were present on the day of inspection.
Status	The registered provider submitted corrective and preventative actions which addressed the Notice and therefore were accepted.	
Improvement Notice IN1063	07/04/2026	The registered provider did not ensure that a record of International Police Vetting was available for two adults who had access to children, but who were not present on the day of inspection.
Status	The registered provider submitted corrective and preventative actions which addressed the Notice and therefore were accepted.	
Improvement Notice IN1062	07/04/2026	The registered provider did not ensure that a person trained in first aid response (FAR) for children, was immediately available at all times to the children attending the service. There was no staff member, who was trained in FAR available to children between 17:45 and 18:15, on the day of inspection.
Status	The registered provider submitted corrective and preventative actions which addressed the Notice and therefore were accepted.	

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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.

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Compliance Information

(1)

The registered provider ensured that.

- (a) There was a designated person in charge and a named adult to deputise in their absence.
- (b) The designated person in charge was available on the premises throughout the period of inspection.
- (c) There was 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.

(2)

On the day of inspection, 15 adults were present, the person in charge, deputy person in charge, a chef and 12 adults who were employed to work directly with the children. One of the registered providers arrived to attend the closing meeting at the end of the inspection.

The following vetting information was available for 35 adults:

- (a) 46 written validated references from past employers for 29 of the adults.
- (b) 24 written validated references from reputable sources for 17 of the adults.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for 35 number staff. However, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. Please refer to the information outlined under regulation 23 of this report.
- (d) Police vetting from the police authorities in another state was available for sixteen adults who had lived outside the state for a period of six consecutive months or more.

Non-Compliance Information

- (d) *See Statutory Notice section in relation to Immediate Action Notice 1043 served and Improvement Notice 1063 served.*

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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.

(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) An adequate number of adults were working directly with the pre-school children attending the service during the inspection.
- (2) The registered provider ensured that the minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained in the service on the day of inspection. There were 51 preschool children present in the service being supervised by 12 adults during the inspection
- (8)(a) The registered provider ensured that there were always at least two adults on the premises when children were present in the service.

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

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Compliance Information

(1)(a) The following observations are examples of how each child's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the daily life of the service.

Basic needs:

- The service promoted healthy eating and food, and snacks were provided at regular intervals during the day. The main meal of the day consisted of pasta, chicken and tomato sauce. Children had the opportunity to feed themselves appropriate to the age and stage of development. Where required, staff supported to children with eating and encouragement to finish meals. Water was available to the children within in reach throughout the day, both indoors and outdoors, should they feel thirsty at any stage.
- The service was found to be meeting the children's basic care needs. Appropriate arrangements were in place for nappy changing and toileting. Practice observed on inspection demonstrated respectful interactions, adequate supervision and hygienic procedures that supported the welfare of the children.
- The weather on the days was observed as cool. Staff were observed to ensure children were appropriately dressed in coats prior to attending outdoors.
- Children's rest and sleep were observed to be met appropriately. The service provided suitable arrangements for children and babies to sleep and rest in line with their individual needs and routines. Staff responded to children showing signs of tiredness and children were physically monitored while asleep in accordance to the services safe sleep procedures. Older pre-school children were facilitated with a scheduled rest period in the afternoon. For children who did not require a sleep, a rest area was available in each of the care room should it be required.
- Individual inclusion plans were available for review. Staff were collectively aware of the interventions required to always ensure the children's health, safety learning and development was facilitated in each case.

Supporting relationships:

- Staff were observed interacting warmly with the children in their care. During meals the staff members sat at the table and engaged in social conversation with the children, promoting a relaxed atmosphere.
- Children were observed to be engaged in their play during the inspection and the atmosphere in the service was observed to be calm.
- A key-worker system was in place in the service with named staff members assigned the responsibility for creating close relationships with a designated group of children. Parental communication was carried out by staff at collection and arrival times. Communication was further supported by daily use of an online application tool.

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Physical and material environment:

- The indoor environments in all care rooms were found to be well-resourced, child-centred, and aligned with the national quality frameworks. The rooms supported children's physical, emotional, social, and cognitive development through a balance of structured and open-ended play opportunities.
- The rooms were observed to provide a well-organised and stimulating learning environment. A range of play-based materials and equipment were available at child level on open shelving throughout, promoting independence, choice, and curiosity.
- The room layouts supported spontaneous play and movement around the rooms.
- A designated rest area was available with a variety of books being accessible, supporting children's language development and literacy skills.
- The outdoor play area provided an alternative change of environment for the children. A range of developmentally appropriate equipment was provided in the fully enclosed outdoor play area, which included sensory trays, slides, climbing apparatus and several ride-ons available. These items provided opportunities to provide challenge and safe risk. Pre-school children were observed engaging in energetic play on the all-weather grass surface.
- An outdoor toilet was also available to the children limiting disruption to their play and enabling staff to remain present in the outdoor area for supervision purposes.

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 was found to be secured on arrival preventing unauthorised access or exit from the premises. No unauthorised person is allowed access to the preschool children. A record is kept of any authorised person entering the service
- The outdoor area was secured with tall fencing, walls and a bolted gate. No hazards were identified.
- Materials were observed to be in a good state of repair throughout the service.
- Highchairs within the baby room were fitted with a 5-point safety harness and were in good state of repair.
- The staircase was fitted with a low-level handrail for children's use.

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- Gates were present in the hallway and the stairwell to prevent children from accessing the staircase unsupervised.

Infection Control:

- The materials and resources throughout the service were visually clean.
- Soap was readily available to children to wash their hands prior to eating, after both toileting and nappy changes. Child friendly handwashing posters were placed beside the sinks. Handwashing was supervised by the adults to ensure all hands were cleaned effectively.
- Tables were observed to be cleaned prior to and after mealtimes.
- Foot operated pedal bins were available within the service for safe disposal of waste.
- Sanitary facilities were observed to be kept maintained and clean.

Administration of Medication:

- When discussed with staff, it was apparent they were aware of their responsibilities for the safe administration of medication. No medication was administered on the day of inspection.

Safe Sleep:

- Sleep checks were observed to occur every ten minutes.
- The service had a designated sleep room with appropriate cots available to children.

Fire Safety:

- Fire doors were observed to be unobstructed throughout the service.
- Fire evacuation procedures were clearly displayed in the care rooms.
- Fire extinguishers were on the premises and easily accessible.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Garda vetting was available for 35 staff members. However, one of these vetting disclosures was not dated within the previous three years in adherence to with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.
2. Locks were not always present on cupboards containing cleaning items which were within reach of children. The inspector brought this to the attention of a staff member, and items were removed from the area.

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Fire Safety:

3. A large window to the side of the premises in the upstairs area had been screwed shut. This could impede or delay an evacuation of the premises in the event of an emergency. It is acknowledged the roof windows present were fully openable.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. Garda Vetting renewal was submitted, however there is currently a delay with the vetting department. We now have changed our procedure to renew Garda Vetting for staff every 2 years. This process will ensure that all Garda Vetting disclosures always remain current and within the required 3-year period, in line with Tusla requirements.
2. Safety locks are not fitted to any cupboards where art material is kept, for children to be able to access them. Staff have been informed that washing up liquid should be stored on the high shelf, out of reach of children. Staff have been reminded that our risk assessments are to be always adhered to.

Fire Safety:

3. The screw has been removed. A safety lock has been fitted to the window in its place.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. Proof of renewal submitted.
2. None submitted.

Fire Safety:

3. Photographic evidence submitted.

Summary Comment

The actions and evidence submitted have been reviewed. The non-compliances identified under Regulation 23 have been adequately addressed.

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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.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) See Statutory Notice section in relation to Improvement Notice 1062 served.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured adequate insurance was in place for the full day care service for 85 children up until 27 March 2027.