

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015MO125
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Name of Service:	Tots 2 Teens
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Address of Service:	Tooreen, Ballyhaunis, Co. Mayo
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Eircode:	F35 YA33
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Name of Registered Provider:	Elaine Tener
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Service type:	Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	18/12/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	14	14PM	5
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Year's Inspectorate, TUSLA, Child and Family Agency, 2nd Floor, St. Mary's HQ., Castlebar, Co. Mayo.
Inspection undertaken by:	M Farrell
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

Tots 2 Teens is a non-profit, community-based childcare service located in a rural area in Treen, County Mayo. The service is registered to provide parttime and sessional services for children aged from 2-6 years of age. Morning sessions are provided from 9:00am to 12 midday and parttime services are provided until 2pm. The service is also registered to provide school age services. The service is in an extension of a local community centre building. There are two large playrooms, one of which is used for preschool children and the second used to provide school aged services, an office, kitchen, storerooms, lobby space and sanitary facilities.

Staffing

There are four staff employed in the service including two relief staff. The registered provider works directly in the service.

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. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under sections of regulations 9, 11, 15, 19, 23, 25 and 28. 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 inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the 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.*

(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) There was a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise in the service.
 - (b) Both the designated person in charge and deputy were present in the service during the unannounced inspection.
- (2)
- There were four staff members including relief staff in the service. The following vetting documentation had been obtained for the staff:
- (a) Two written validated references from previous employers particularly their most recent employer for three staff members. One written validated reference from their past employer for one staff member.
 - (b) One written validated reference from a source other than a previous employer for one staff member.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all 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) International police vetting was not required for any of the four adults.
- (4)
- Evidence of the required qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education or equivalent was available on file for the four staff members who worked directly with the 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.*

Compliance Information

- (1) An adequate number of adults worked directly with the children attending the pre-school service. There were two adults working directly with fourteen children on the inspector's unannounced arrival to the service on the morning of the inspection. Two adults provided direct care to five children during the afternoon of the inspection.
- (2) Part-time services were provided following the morning session with two staff directly caring for five children. The minimum required adult to child ratios of 1:8 for children aged between three and six years of age were maintained during the provision of the part-time service.

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:*
- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;*
 - (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;*
 - (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;*
 - (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;*
 - (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;*
 - (f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;*
 - (g) the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner;*

(h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;

(i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.

(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-
(c) an authorised person.

Compliance Information

(1) (a) to (i)

A sample of ten children's records were selected for review by the inspector. The children's records were found to contain the information required under the regulation.

(3) (c)

The children's records were made readily available to the inspector by the designated person in charge when requested to.

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

There was a healthy eating policy in the service and the staff promoted healthy foods in accordance with their service policy. The children brought food from home to the service to eat during the sessional service and food was provided for children attending the later parttime service. The staff sat with the children to supervise them closely while they were eating and chatted with them about Christmas time.

When children's noses needed to be cleaned, the staff prompted them to do so with tissue paper. Children were prompted and supervised by the staff washing and drying their hands before meals and after messy play activities and using the toilet. The children used the toilet when they wanted to, and staff assisted them if needed. One of the children's clothing needed to be changed following playing outdoors and a staff member was observed to prompt the child to try to change their clothes by themselves promoting independence.

There were sleep mats and bedding available if children wished to rest/sleep however none of the children needed to during the inspection. The children were observed to sit and relax on the soft seating near the book corner at times during the inspection.

The children were observed to choose a range of different play activities in the large playroom and adjoining smaller messy play/art area that were arranged in defined interest areas. For example, on the inspector's arrival to the service some children were playing with puppets and brushing the hair of dolls. Another child was pushing a doll around the floor in a toy pram and a group of children had dressed up wearing construction hats and high visibility vests. There was a farm area reflecting the rural location of the service including tractors that were a popular choice with children during the inspection. Children spent time at tabletop play activities in groups at tables for example making shapes with small, coloured blocks before lunchtime during the parttime service. There was free flow of children from the large playroom to the messy play/art area where they played with sand at sand-tables and had painted pictures earlier in the morning. Another popular play activity during the day was playing with toy food items making meals in the home corner.

The outdoor play area was well-developed, and the children spent a substantial time playing on ride on toys, climbing in the climbing area that had been made on a grass hillock and digging in the mud area. A large wooden playhouse and the music wall on a fence provided other opportunities for play but were not used by the children on the day. The children and staff also sang songs and played action games while outdoors.

The staff were observed to work closely with the children and involved themselves in their play. When reading books, the staff asked the children questions about the story helping to hold their attention. There was a daily routine displayed on the large playroom wall providing a structured day for the children which was followed during the inspection.

The staff were positive in behaviour management approaches using praise to reinforce the children's good behaviour. Staff encouraged children to share toys and take turns. There were several simple "friendship rules" displayed on the walls of the playroom for children to follow such as "we listen to each other", and "we share our toys". The staff were observed to remind the children of the rules when needed. The staff prepared the children for transitions from one activity to another. For example, before snack-time, child with a hand sign went around to the children to tell them it was nearly time to help tidy up/clean up. The staff prompted the children to form a line and sing songs when it was time to return indoors after playing outside.

The service was celebrating Christmas time at the time of the inspection and had held a Christmas show attended by parents the previous week. The staff were observed to chat with the children about visits to Santa preparing for Christmas. The staff had made a family wall using photographs of the children and their families helping to connect the service with home for the children.

Electronic messaging systems were used to provided information to parents. The staff told the inspector that an update message was sent to parents at the end of each week with information about the activities the children's

had taken part in. The staff were observed to speak with parents and give them relevant information when collecting children after the sessional service.

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 staff checked the outdoor area for hazards before the children went outside to play during the inspection. New fencing had been erected at the boundaries of the outdoor play area and the gates had been removed. Temporary barriers had been erected by the contractor undertaking the work and permanent barriers were due to be installed. During the inspection the main entrance doors to the service were secured by the staff who controlled access to the service. Items such as pairs of scissors and glue were stored on high shelving in the messy play/art area out of reach of the children. There were restrictor devices on low cupboards under sink units in the play area to restrict access by children. A storage area off the large playroom had a high-level securing mechanism in place to prevent children accessing the area. Cleaning products were stored out of reach of the children. The kitchen was inaccessible to the children during the inspection. The toys and play equipment were in good condition and suitable for the age ranges of the children using them on the day.

Infection Control:

The children and staff washed their hands at key times such as before eating using warm water and liquid soap and dried them with paper towels disposing them in foot pedal operated bins. Perishable food items including meat and dairy products were stored in a service refrigerator. The service was observed to be very clean with staff observed to clean surfaces such as tables after use. Records of cleaning were kept by the staff in line with the service's cleaning schedules.

Safe Sleep:

There were sleep mats and bedding available if children wished to rest/sleep however none of the children needed to during the inspection. The staff demonstrated awareness of safe sleep practices during discussion with the inspector.

Fire Safety:

The emergency exits were free from obstruction during the inspection.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Garda vetting was available for the four staff members. However, one of these vetting disclosures were not dated within the previous three years and were not in adherence to the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.

Administration of Medication:

2. There was emergency medication stored in the service to be administered to a child in the event of an emergency. There was no written individual care plan available on file for the medication including the processes to be followed by staff for management of the child in the event of an emergency. The emergency medication did not have the original prescribing details including name of child and dosage of medication to be administered.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. Garda vetting was renewed for one staff member. The staff will ensure a check is kept on the dates the Garda vetting expires in future. A reminder has been placed on phone calendars to remind staff to renew them.

Administration of Medication:

2. The service has now implemented a care plan policy and have submitted information. The parents have provided a medical practitioner letter outlining the care plan for the child. A securable metal medicine cabinet has been purchased and installed in the service. The service will also ensure that a care plan form is provided for parents in future when needed. The staff will ensure that all medicine has the correct name and instructions from a medical practitioner on the outer packaging of the medication.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Copy of the garda vetting renewal was submitted.

Administration of Medication:

Photograph of a metal storage cupboard, documentation regarding medication administration.

Summary Comment

The actions taken and evidence submitted by the service has been reviewed by the Early Years Inspectorate and been found to have addressed the non-compliance found under the regulation 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) Certificates were available in the service showing that three staff members held the required First Aid Responder (FAR) training in first aid for children.
- (2)
 - (a) A large suitably equipped first aid kit was safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position in the play area. The first aid supplies were stored on a high shelf out of reach of the children.
 - (b) The first aid supplies were readily available if the children attending the service required them.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

A certificate of insurance was available covering the maximum number of 22 children that the service was registered to provide parttime and sessional services to. The insurance was due to expire on the 27 March 2025.