

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015TY048				
<b>Name of Service:</b>	Little Tot's Academy				
<b>Address of Service:</b>	Rosehill, Newport, Co Tipperary				
<b>Eircode:</b>	V94 Y220				
<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Deirdre Moloney				
<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional				
<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	10/02/2025				
<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>AM</td> <td>54</td> <td>PM</td> <td>44</td> </tr> </table>	AM	54	PM	44
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	North Tipperary Civic Offices, Limerick Road, Nenagh, Co Tipperary				
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	L McGeeney and N O'Donoghue				
<b>Title:</b>	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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	N/A
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### Description of service

This full day service was established in 2008 to provide care and education to children aged 0 – 6 years old. A registered school age service is also provided to primary school children from the junior classes. The service operates Monday to Friday, 7.30am - 6.15pm for 50 weeks of the year. This includes a daily three-hour session funded under the early childhood care and education scheme (ECCE) for eligible children which operates Monday – Friday, 9.10am -12.10pm.

The service is operated from a purpose built, detached, dormer premises in a residential housing estate in the town of Newport in north Tipperary. The children had access to three activity rooms downstairs, two activity rooms upstairs, sanitary accommodation areas, dining room, sleep room and outdoor play areas. There was also a kitchen, staff room and office in the premises.

### Staffing

The registered provider worked in the service on a daily basis in a management role and provided support or relief in the rooms when required. There were 14 staff employed to work directly with the children, including 2 staff employed under the access and inclusion model (AIM). There was a childcare student on work experience in the service on the day of inspection. There was a member of staff dedicated to catering who was training in a new member of catering staff on the day of inspection.

### 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.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9(2)(4), 11(1)(2)(4)(8), 15(1)(3), 16(1)(3), 19(1)(a), 23 and 25.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 15 Record of a preschool child.

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, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

### Part III – Management and Staff

#### Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

*(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

The staff files of the registered provider, 14 members of staff and the childcare student were reviewed as part of the inspection process:

(2)(a) Written, validated references from past employers were available in respect of 15 members of staff.

(b) Written, validated references from a source other than a past employer were available in respect of seven members of staff.

(c) Garda vetting had been carried out in respect of each member of staff and relevant documents were kept on file. The service had a process in place to ensure that staff were re-vetted on a three-yearly basis.

(d) Police vetting had been carried out in respect of members of staff who had lived outside the state for a period exceeding six consecutive months and relevant documents were kept on file.

(4) The staff employed to work directly with the children held recognised qualifications in early childhood care and education at levels 5, 6 or 8 on the national framework of qualifications or a letter from the Minister stating that their qualifications were deemed equivalent. The childcare student on work experience was working towards attaining a level 5 qualification in early childhood care and education.

### 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.*

*(4) Subject to paragraph (5), where a registered provider contemporaneously provides-*

*(a) a sessional pre-school service, and*

*(b) a full day care service or a part-time day care service, or both, the minimum ratio of adults to children applicable for the duration of the sessional pre-school service in respect of the children attending that service shall be the ratio specified in paragraph (3).*

*(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 12 staff working directly with 54 children aged between 1 and 5 years old across 5 rooms on the morning of the inspection as follows:

There were 2 staff in the Baby room with 8 children aged between 12 and 19 months old.

There were 2 staff in the Toddler room with 7 children aged between 21 months and 2.5 years old.

There were 2 staff in the Playschool room with 12 children aged between 2.5 and 3.5 years old.

There were 3 staff in Montessori room 1 with 16 children aged between 3 and 5 years old and

There were 3 staff in Montessori room 2 with 12 children aged between 3 and 5 years old.

The number of children had reduced to 44 children in the afternoon, being supervised by 10 staff across 4 rooms.

(2) The adult to child ratios were maintained at greater than the minimum requirements throughout the day in each room, including in the Montessori rooms when the ratios changed from 1:11 in the morning to 1:8 in the afternoon.

The service manager was included in the adult to child ratios at times when she was working directly with the children in the room. The childcare student was present in the Baby room but not included in the adult to child ratios. The catering staff were not included in the adult to child ratios.

(4) The adult to child ratio was maintained within the required ratios when sessional and part-time or full day services were provided contemporaneously.

(8)(a) There were at least two staff present at all times while the service was in operation.

### 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-

- (b) an employee who is authorised in that behalf by the registered provider, and
- (c) an authorised person.

### Compliance Information

A sample of completed registration forms were reviewed as part of the inspection process:

- (1) The registration forms contained all of the required information as detailed under parts (a) to (i) of this regulation.
- (3)(b) The registration forms were available on the premises and available for inspection by a member of staff
- (c) The registration forms were available on the premises and available for inspection by an authorised person.

### Part IV – Information and Records

#### Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:

- (a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;
- (b) details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services;
- (c) details of the adult: child ratios in the service;
- (d) the type of care or programme provided in the service;
- (e) the facilities available;
- (f) the opening hours and fees;
- (g) the policies, procedures and statements the service is required to maintain in accordance with Regulation 10;
- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;
- (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.

*(3) A record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection on the premises, and the documents and records referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall be open to inspection whether on the premises or elsewhere, by an authorised person.*

### Compliance Information

(1) The records required to be held in writing were available as follows:

(a) This information was held in the staff files.

(b)-(f) This information was available in the parent's handbook which was emailed to all parents when they enrolled their child in the service.

(g) The policies and procedures of the service were available in a folder in the office.

(h) Details of the children's attendance on a daily basis was recorded on the electronic application designed for the purpose.

(i) Staff rosters were available in the entrance lobby in the staff log where staff signed in and out.

(j) The service used a medication book with duplicate pages, designed for the purpose, for recording the administration of medications to children. The medication record book included space for signed parental consent, instructions regarding the medication to be administered and a record of when the medication was given.

(k) The service used a triplicate book, designed for the purpose, to record any accidents or incidents that occurred in the service.

(3) The records were available on the premises and open to inspection by 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

(1)(a) The following was observed on the day of inspection through direct observation, discussions with staff and review of records.

#### Basic needs:

- Staff supported children with toileting when required and supervised children with handwashing. The sanitary facilities displayed guidelines for children to follow when handwashing. Care was given to each child's individual needs with cleaning their face or nose when required.
- Nappy changing was carried out at regular times and when required throughout the day.
- The children were free to move about both indoors and outdoors. Waterproof overalls and boots were available for the children to wear when playing outside. The weather was cold on the day of the inspection, children were observed wearing coats, hats and waterproof leggings when outside.
- All of the children, except those in the Baby room, moved to the dining room for their dinner and some of the children also used the dining room for snack times.
- Nutritious meals were provided throughout the day at regular intervals, in line with the weekly menu plan and daily timetable. In each room children had access to their own water bottles throughout the day. In the baby room, the children were regularly given their Sippy cups with water.
- Bibs were available for children during mealtimes.
- Highchairs were available in the Baby room and dining room for use by the younger children at mealtimes. The children were observed to be in highchairs during mealtime only. Staff sat at the children's eye level when assisting them with spoon feeding.
- In each room, there was a rest area for the children to relax when they wanted to during the day such as after snack time or after waking up.
- Sleep was facilitated for children when required. The children in the Baby room slept in cots in the sleep room according to their individual sleep needs and routines. Children from the Toddler and Playschool

rooms, who had a daytime sleep, slept on floor beds or camp beds set up in their rooms after dinner. Rooms used for sleep were made cosy and conducive to sleep by the use of white noise machines, closed blinds and dimmed lights.

### Supporting relationships:

- Staff were observed to be engaging with the children both indoors and outdoors including chatting to them, sitting with them, engaging in their play and singing songs.
- The children were observed to play in both large and small groups. Children were seen outdoors on bikes and engaging with each other. The children were also seen to be supporting each other with outdoor blocks, stacking them up and counting together.
- In Montessori room 2, after snack time, it was observed that the staff and children were singing songs while using Lámh sign language. Each child was engaged and enjoyed this circle time activity.
- Staff had a strong positive relationship with the children. Staff used soft tones, spoke at the child's level and supported their interactions with other children.
- Children were observed to engage in parallel play with their peers.
- Staff recognised the importance of the family and each room had a family corner.
- Staff explained that the activities were child led and children voiced their interests. Staff supported their knowledge and learning through songs, activities, games and crafts.

### Physical environment:

- The children had access to a vast amount of equipment and materials, both indoors and outdoors, which was suitable to the age and stage of development of the children and well maintained.
- Gross motor development was supported through play in the outdoor areas where a variety of equipment was available such as bikes, trikes, balance bikes, balls, push toys, slides and outdoor kitchen play.
- The indoor environment allowed for children to freely move about and choose activities and equipment linked to their personal interests. Each room had a clear layout of areas such as construction area, role-play area and creative area.
- Sensory play was encouraged with sand play areas.
- Children's artwork was displayed throughout the service.

### Programme of activities:

- The children were observed to engage in free play, circle time and scheduled activities. Each programme of activities was identified in each room, with pictures and words. Staff stated that activities were planned based on the children's emerging interests and they noted that when they worked in this manner, the children were more interested and engaged in the activities.
- Staff discussed the different methods they used to support transitions. For example, sand timers were used to denote the passage of time in preparation for tidy-up and moving to the next activity. They were also used to support turn taking and sharing. Staff said that the children in Montessori room 1 had learned to identify when it was time to go outside to play by reading the colour coded clock on the wall and would prompt the staff by saying it was time to get ready to go outside for their scheduled slot at 11.30am. They knew that after snack time, when the big hand on the clock pointed to the light blue circle that it was time for them to get ready.

## 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 doors into the service were secured with electromagnetic locks and children could not leave the premises unattended. Visitors to the service could not gain unauthorised access to the premises.
- The electric cables were observed to be out of reach by children.
- The outdoor area was fenced and divided into sections for each care room. The outdoor areas were well kept and included astro grass and shock absorbent flooring.
- The cleaning equipment was kept out of reach of children.
- Climbing equipment in the outdoor area was secured into the ground on an area covered by impact absorbent matting.
- The stairwell between the ground floor and first floor was enclosed, with doors at the top and bottom. There was a handrail along one wall for staff and children to use when ascending or descending the stairs. Staff or parents supervised children when they used the stairs.

- Hot water for handwashing was thermostatically controlled not to exceed 43°C.
- The rooms upstairs were heated by radiators, which were thermostatically controlled so that the surface temperature did not exceed 50°C. The downstairs rooms did not have radiators as they were heated by underfloor heating.

### Infection control:

- The service had an infection prevention and control policy as well as a hand washing policy, nappy changing policy and cleaning policy.
- Staff and children were observed washing their hands at appropriate times during the day such as prior to snack and dinner and after nappy changing. Hand washing facilities were available in each room and in the sanitary accommodation areas where there was warm water, liquid soap and hand paper towels and bins available for use. There was also a hand washing sink in the outdoor play area.
- Nappy changing facilities were clean and equipment observed was free of tears.
- The windows in each room were open to maintain good ventilation.
- The bags and coats were kept off the floor and each child had their own individual hook for their belongings.
- Cots, floor beds and camp beds were spaced at least 50cm apart to ensure adequate ventilation and infection control.

### Administration of medication:

- The service had a policy regarding the administration of medication. Signed parental consent was sought prior to any medication being given to a child attending the service. No medication was administered on day of inspection.

### Safe sleep:

- Ten-minute sleep checks were completed on each child who slept in the service and a record was made of these checks. Parents had access to these sleep records on the services care application system.
- A member of staff stayed in the Toddler room and Playschool room while children were asleep.

### Fire safety:

- Fire doors and escape routes were kept clear of obstruction on the day of inspection.

### Outing:

- The service had a policy on the safe conduct of outings. Regular outings took place from the service to amenities in the locality such as nature walks around the housing estate, to the community playground

and to the recently created community sensory garden. These outings were undertaken on foot when there were sufficient staff available to ensure correct ratios could be maintained.

## 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) There were eight members of staff present on the day of inspection who held current certification in first aid response (FAR).

(2)(a) There was a first aid box available in the reception area downstairs and another in the office upstairs. The first aid boxes were suitably equipped and there were additional supplies available to restock the boxes when required.

(b) The first aid boxes were available if required by a child while attending the service.