

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015TY156
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Name of Service:	Tots 2 Teens
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Address of Service:	Clonmel Community Resource Centre, Kickham Lodge, Kickham Street, Clonmel, Co Tipperary
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Eircode:	E91 P2N5
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Name of Registered Provider:	Cora Gentles
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date of Inspection:	17/02/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	34	PM	31
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Glenmorgan Building, Ferryhouse, Clonmel, Co Tipperary E91RF38
Inspection undertaken by:	A. McNamara & L. McGeeney
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).

Conditions if applicable	N/A
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Description of service

This full day care service for children aged 1-6 years is located in the town of Clonmel Co Tipperary. A sessional early years service is also offered 38 weeks per year. The service is operated as part of a range of services offered by Clonmel Community Resource Centre which is housed in a large two storey building. A purpose-built extension was added to the main building for the purpose of early years care. This space consists of six early years rooms, a sleep room, kitchen, and auxiliary spaces over two floors. Two outdoor play areas are available onsite. A registered school aged service is also provided.

Staffing

There are 25 staff working in the service. Twenty staff on the day of inspection were working directly with children. The service manager and chef were also present. The registered provider does not work directly in the service. Staff working directly with children held qualifications at Level 5, 6, 7 and 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

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.

Regulation 9 (1)(a)(b)(2)(a)(b)(c)(d)(4) Management and recruitment,

Regulation 11(1)(2)(8) Staffing levels,
Regulation 19 (1)(a) Health, welfare, and development of the child,
Regulation 23 Safeguarding health, safety, and welfare of the child,
Regulation 25 First aid,
Regulation 28 Insurance.

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 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, and*

(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 deputy designated person in charge who was able to deputise, as required.

(b) The designated person in charge was present for the inspection.

The staff files for 25 staff were reviewed on the day.

(2)

(c) Garda vetting was available on file for each staff member working in the service.

(d) Police vetting documentation was available for three staff working in the service, who had lived outside of the state for a period of longer than six months.

(4) Certificates of qualifications for the new staff working directly with children were available on file demonstrating that they held a qualification at the minimum level 5 and above on the National Framework of Qualifications.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a)(b) The inspectors reviewed twenty-five staff files. While it is acknowledged that twenty-six of the required references were available and validated, twenty references were not validated by the employer. There was only one reference available for two staff members. There were also no references available for one staff member.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Required references were validated and forwarded to the Early Years Inspector. Missing references were obtained and also forwarded to the Early Years Inspector.

Supporting documentation submitted

All required validated references were sent via email to the Early Years Inspector prior to completion of the report.

Summary Comment

All evidence submitted meets the requirements Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

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) At the time of inspection, there was an adequate number of adults responsible for the direct care of the children.

(2) The adult child ratios during the day of inspection met the requirements of the regulations as follows:

AM

Room	Age (years)	Min required ratio	Adult: child (morning)
Baby	0-1	1:3	3:3
Wobbler	1-2	1:5	2:6
Toddler	2-3	1:6	2:5

Playschool	2-3	1:6	3:6
Pre-school (ECCE)	3-5	1:11	6:14

PM

Room	Age (years)	Min required ratio	Adult: child (afternoon)
Baby	0-1	1:3	3:3
Wobbler	1-2	1:5	2:6
Toddler	2-3	1:6	3:5
Playschool	2-3	1:6	2:3
Pre-school (ECCE)	3-5	1:8	4:14

(8)(a) Documentary evidence indicated that there were always at least two adults on the premises while children were in attendance.

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:

Children enjoyed freedom of movement within their rooms and in the outdoor area. Each room had timetabled outdoor play time in the courtyard playground of at least 30 minutes each day.

The children had access to drinking water throughout the day. Each child had their own drinking cup or bottle that was refilled with water as required. Jugs of water and cups were available for any child that did not bring their own. Meals and snacks were served at regular times each day. The service provided the children with a hot meal in the middle of the day that was prepared in the service. Morning snacks were also provided by the service for

younger children. Afternoon snacks for all children and morning snacks for older children as well formula milk for babies were supplied by parents.

The staff supported the children to become independent with self-care skills such as self-feeding, dressing for the outdoors, washing their hands, using the toilet and tidying up after activities, suitable to their age and stage of development. Staff supervised these activities and assisted the children as required, for example, the children in the Toddler room were able to feed themselves with a spoon but found it a little difficult when the bowl was less full, at which point the staff said, 'can I help you?' and did so.

Nappy changing was carried out at regular times during the day and as required.

Children could rest and relax in the cosy areas in each room. Sleep facilities were available for the children who required a sleep during the day. Cots were available in the sleep room for the children from the Baby and Wobbler room to sleep according to their individual needs and routines. Camp beds were placed in the Toddler room after dinner for the children to sleep.

Supporting relationships:

The children were cared for by the same team of staff each day, which supported the development of secure relationships between the children and their main carers. Some staff had followed the children as they moved from the Baby room to the Wobbler room to the Toddler room, providing continuity of care and supported the smooth transition of children from one room to the next as they got older.

The favourable adult to child ratios in each room ensured that each child received as much individual time as they required and helped the staff to know the children better, to discover their likes, needs and emergent interests. Communication books were used in the Baby and Wobbler rooms to record information about the child each day including activities engaged in, sleep, meals and nappy changes. The books went between home and the service each day. Parents could also write in the books.

Physical and material environment:

Each of the activity rooms were bright, well maintained and well resourced. There were six activity rooms: four downstairs and two upstairs. The downstairs rooms were: Baby room, Wobbler room, Toddler room and Playschool room. The upstairs rooms were Pre-school rooms 1 and 2. Pre-school room 1 was not in use on the day of inspection which took place during mid-term break when there were less children than usual present. This room was also used for the school age care service.

Toys and materials were accessible to the children and laid out in interest areas such as the home corner, cosy area, tabletop activities and dining area. Many of the activities for the younger children were available in baskets and containers on the floor while materials for the older children were on shelves and in drawers of child height storage units.

The children's artwork was displayed on the walls of their rooms as well as along the walls of the corridors. Older work was sent home or glued into each child's learning journal.

The children's family photos were displayed on a wall in each room on a family tree.

There were two outdoor play areas: a courtyard which was enclosed by the walls of the building and used throughout the year and a larger outdoor play area that was used during the drier times of year. The courtyard was equipped with balancing and climbing equipment, slides, playhouse and ride-on toys such as tandem tricycles, peddle-free tricycles and cars.

Programme of activities

The service offered a child-centred and child-led approach to learning through play and exploration. The children were given freedom of choice, including whether to join in structured activities such as art or circle time.

The staff wrote down the children's emerging interests as they became apparent and found creative ways of supporting these interests. For example, on the day of inspection the story was 'The 3 Little Pigs', which had been chosen by one of the children. During free-play time, one of the activities available was an art project which involved the children making pictures of the 3 little pigs houses using straw, paper and glue. This extended learning from story time which engaged many of the children.

There was a pictogram timetable on the walls in some of the rooms which let the children know what was coming next by the use of actual photos of their room. This was positioned at the children's eye level.

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 premises was adequately secured to prevent children leaving unsupervised and unauthorised persons gaining access. The entrance door to the service had to be opened by a staff member. The outdoor play areas were secured to prevent children leaving.

There was soft fall matting under the climbing and balancing equipment in the courtyard playground.

Infection control:

There was warm running water, liquid soap, hand dryers and paper hand towels available for hand drying throughout the service. There were designated children's toilets available to the children. Designated staff toilets were also provided.

Children were supported to wash their hands at appropriate times during the day such as before eating, after messy play and after using the toilet or a tissue.

Staff wore gloves and aprons for nappy changing, in line with the nappy changing policy displayed on the walls in the nappy changing areas.

Cots in the sleep room were positioned at least 50cm apart as required to ensure adequate ventilation around each cot and to prevent cross infection.

Administration of medication:

The service had a policy regarding the administration of medication to children while attending the service.

A care plan was documented for a child with an allergy detailing the procedure to follow in the event of an allergic reaction, including the medications to be administered.

Safe sleep:

The service had a safe sleep policy. Children were monitored while they slept, and physical checks were carried out at 10-minute intervals. These checks were recorded on individual sleep records for each child.

Non-Compliance Information

General safety:

1. The water temperature at the hand washing sinks increased as the day went on. The water was tepid in the morning but had risen to 45°C by 1pm. This was greater than 43°C, the maximum temperature recommended to prevent a child from a scalding injury. On discussion with the service manager, it was discovered that the thermostats had been turned off as they weren't working effectively.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General safety:

1. The service manager contacted the inspectors following the inspection to inform them that the hot water to the sinks that the children had access to would be turned off until such time as they could regulate the temperature effectively.

Supporting documentation submitted

General safety:

Letter from manager sent to Early Years inspector stating the hot water had been turned off until the problem could be rectified.

Summary Comment

Corrective actions have been accepted and will be assessed in practice on next 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) The roster demonstrated that the manager planned for FAR trained staff to be present throughout the hours of opening.

(2)

- (a) There was a suitably equipped first aid box stored in an easily accessible position.
- (b) The first aid box was available to the children attending the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

An in-date certificate was in place to demonstrate that the service was insured to provide full day care for the number of children the service is registered to accommodate.