

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WD091
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Name of Service:	Tiny Tots Playgroup
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Address of Service:	Dunhill GAA Centre, Dunhill, Co. Waterford
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Eircode:	X91 N2YY
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Name of Registered Provider:	Bernadette Hutchinson
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	09/03/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	7	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Community Care Building, Cork Road, Waterford City
Inspection undertaken by:	A. Bradshaw
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

Tiny Tots Playgroup is based in the local community GAA complex. The service is based in a purposely designated room in the building. There is one care room with sanitary facilities and a kitchen off the room. There is a secure fenced outdoor area at the side of the building. The service is registered to care for up to 20 children aged 2 to 6 years old. The operating hours are from 09:00 to 12:00 during the school term.

Staffing

The registered provider employs two staff members and is also rostered to work directly with the children. There was a student on work placement during the 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.

Regulation 9 – Management and Recruitment;

Regulation 11 – Staffing Levels;

Regulation 15 – Record of a Pre-School Child;

Regulation 16 - Record in Relation to a Pre-school Service;

Regulation 22 – Food and Drink;

Regulation 24 – Checking In and Out and Record of Attendance;

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Regulation 25 – First Aid;

Regulation 26 – Fire Safety Measures.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 15(1) – Record of Preschool Child, regulation 16(1)(h) Records of a preschool child and regulation 24 - Checking in and Out and Record of Attendance.

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

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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.*

(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)(b)(c)

The service had a designated person in charge and a person to deputise if required. On a review of the staff roster it was evident that the registered provider or the designated person in charge was on the premises while the service was in operation. Through discussion with the staff, it was clear that there was a management structure in place.

(2)

The inspector reviewed the three staff files, and the student's file.

(c) Garda vetting was available. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every 3 years.

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(4)

On review of the files, evidence was available to demonstrate that all staff working with preschool children had achieved 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.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)

(a)(b) Required validated references were not available.

(d) Documents reviewed demonstrated that police vetting was required for two staff members, however only one of these was to the available the inspector.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(a)(b) The Registered Provider submitted the required validated references.

(d) The registered provider stated that the police vetting has been received.

They have developed a checklist to which will be used as a recruitment file check going forward to ensure all documents are in place.

Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of the validated references was submitted.

A copy of the police vetting was submitted.

A copy of the checklist was submitted.

Summary Comment

The action and plan submitted by the registered provider has addressed the non-compliance identified on inspection.

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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.

(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.

Compliance Information

(1)(3)

During the inspection, there was an adequate number of staff working directly with the children. There were two staff caring for seven preschool children. The registered provider was rostered to work directly with the children.

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.*

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Compliance Information

The required information from (a) to (i) was available in the children's records.

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.*

Compliance Information

The details required from (a) to (h) were available in the parental agreements, the attendance records, the policy folder and displayed in the care room.

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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, where required by these Regulations, 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.

(2) A registered provider-

- (a) of a full day care service, a part-time day care service, a sessional preschool service or a childminding service that is registered for the first time on or after 30 June 2016, or

shall ensure that a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the preschool children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises.

Compliance Information

- (1) (a)(b) The care room was inviting and welcoming for the children attending. The furniture and floor coverings were placed in such a way to create areas of interest and spaces for children to play singularly or in groups. Each area was themed and well-resourced with toys and equipment. On the day of the inspection children were using the various designated area in the rooms, some children were playing at the low activity table, which was set up with farm toys, others were in the play kitchen cooking and serving 'dinner', and others were sitting on the low couch reading books. Tables and chairs were placed adjacent to the table-top activities for ease of access for the children. The messy play area including the paint easel and sand tray was placed away from quieter play spaces to reduce any distraction that may occur.

Visual displays in the room includes labelling of the areas and shelving, personalised artwork and coats hooks.

The room had a low couch with cushions for children to take time out from play to read or rest, there were additional cushions placed on low window seats for children's comfort.

- (2) The outdoor area was directly off the care room to the side of the building. This area had artificial surfaces and a large climbing frame with a slide. There was a large picnic bench and the staff with the children

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were developing a nature area with bird feeders, a frog pond, and a bug hotel. On the day of the inspection the children had sown seeds in the greenhouse.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 22 – Food and drink

A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

Parents supplied the children's snacks for the morning. They were observed sitting having their snack at 11:15. The snacks were nutritious and included a variety of fruits, for example, melon, blueberries and bananas. Children were also observed eating muffins, bread rolls and sandwiches. Each child had their individual bottles of water which they could access at any time throughout the morning. This was in line with the services Healthy Eating policy.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) no person other than-

(i) pre-school child attending the service,

(ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,

(iii) an employee, or

(iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and

(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.

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Compliance Information

- (1) Children's attendance was recorded in an attendance book which had a record of the staff and children's attendance. The service also had a sign in and out book which each parent completed when dropping and collecting their child.
- (3) (a) The entrance into the care room was secured and managed by the staff which prevented unauthorised entry and exit from the room. The outdoor area had secure fencing, and the rear gate was locked.

Non-Compliance Information

- (3) (b) On the inspector's arrival there was no requirement to sign in and through discussion with the registered provider they confirmed there was no visitors record book.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider stated that sign in book has been placed at the entry of the service, and all visitors will be required to sign in and out in future.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence was submitted.

Summary Comment

The action and plan submitted by the registered provider has addressed the non-compliance identified 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

(2) (a)(b) The first aid kit was stored on a high windowsill and easily accessible if required.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) Though discussion with staff it was established that three staff have previous first aid training however this was not up to date.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider stated that they have completed a first aid responder course and that going forward additional staff will complete the training.

Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of the First Aid Responder certificate was submitted.

Summary Comment

The action and plan submitted by the registered provider has addressed the non-compliance identified on inspection.

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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 fire fighting 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) Fire drills were recorded and the maintenance records demonstrated that the firefighting equipment had been serviced in April 2025 and the fire alarm system had been serviced in March 2026.
- (4) The evacuation notice was displayed prominently in the service.