

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WD091		
Name of Service:	Tiny Tots Playgroup		
Address of Service:	Dunhill GAA Centre, Dunhill, Waterford.		
Eircode:	X91 N2YY		
Name of Registered Provider:	Mary Casey		
Service type:	Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	24/05/2023		
No of pre-school children:	AM	9	PM n/a
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Community Care Centre, HSE Buildings, Cork Road, Waterford City.		
Inspection undertaken by:	M. Ryan		
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		

Description of service

Tiny Tots Community playgroup is run from a purpose-built extension of the Dunhill Gaelic Athletics Association (GAA) centre since April 2001. The center is located on the outskirts of the rural village of Dunhill in east county Waterford. Operation hours are from 9.00am to 12.00pm Monday to Friday, catering for children aged between 2 years 6 months and 5 years old, with a maximum capacity of 22 early years children. A separate dedicated outdoor play area is situated adjacent to the playgroup room. A large sized hall in the centre is available daily for physical activities and gross motor play.

Staffing

The service is governed by an independent childcare management committee who employ three childcare staff.

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 inspections may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9,11,17,19,23,25, and 26.

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, 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.

Compliance Information

(1)

- (a) The registered provider was the designated person in charge. The service also had a named person who was able to deputise as required.
- (b) At all times during the inspection the deputy person in charge was on the premises.

(2)

On review of the staff files, it was evident that one new staff member was employed to work with the children and one student was on placement since the previous fit for purpose inspection on the 6 October 2020.

The following was observed on the new staff members and student file:

- (a) There were four written validated references from past employers.
- (b) Not applicable as all written references were from past employers.
- (c) There was evidence of a completed Garda vetting disclosure certificate from An Garda Síochána.

(d) Not applicable as the staff member or student had not resided outside of the jurisdiction for a period of longer than six consecutive months while over the age of 18.

(4)
There was evidence that all staff employed to work directly with the children held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at level 5 and 6, on the National Qualifications Framework. There was evidence of continuous professional development and qualification certificates on file.

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)
On the day of the inspection there were 9 children from 2 to 5 years of age being cared for by 3 childcare staff.

(3)
The staff: child ratios exceeded the requirement for the Child Care Act 1991(Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 17 – Information for parents

A registered provider shall ensure that a parent or guardian of a child proposing to attend the service is provided with the information referred to in subparagraphs (a) to (g) of Regulation 16(1).

Compliance Information

All information required under the Regulation 16(1) (a to g): for parents or guardians of children proposing to attend the service were available in a comprehensive parent’s handbook. Further information such as staff details was available and displayed on the services notice board at the main entrance to the care room. The registered provider informed the inspector, that all parents or guardians were provided with this information in a printed format on their child’s enrolment.

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) Regulation 19 was assessed through direct observation, review of records and discussion with staff. The following was observed in relation to providing a programme of care and activities for the children attending the service.

The service had developed and implemented a play based, child led, programme with an emphasis on learning through play and creative activities. This was evidenced by the colourful decor of the playroom with posters, photographs, and children’s artwork. The deputy in charge explained that the ethos of the programme was to enable children to learn and develop at their own pace in a nurturing environment. Staff were observed to be caring in their interactions with the children and were observed giving one-to-one attention to different children, throughout the day.

The deputy explained that the service’s child led programme placed an importance on the code of behaviour to be maintained in the setting. Innovative ideas such as the kindness chart used, that had two Velcro expression faces, sad and happy.

For the children who were not kind to their friends a sad face was placed underneath their photograph but was promptly replaced with the happy face on change of behaviour. A further chart had simple graphic directions to encourage children to get involved and gain their attention such as 'walking feet', 'helping hands' and 'quite voices'. Staff were observed to be calm and used distraction, coaxing and encouragement to diffuse any problems.

The themes were seasonal with a documented weekly plan that was flexible depending on the children's emerging interests. Sealife was the theme of the week. The deputy in charge explained how this had extended into every area of the children's play choices such as during action songs like "row, row, row your boat," and crafts such as Jelly fish and fish made with bubble wrap. There were appropriate nursery rhymes chosen for the theme as well as matching games all keeping with the subject of water and the sea.

The childcare room and outdoor area were well resourced with opportunities for open-ended messy play and other interest areas, such as sand trays, and a large wall length painting easel that children were allowed to use at their own discretion. Throughout the day children were playing in an extensive well-stocked home corner with children's kitchen play materials such as ceramic cups, teapots, and tea trolley. Other areas of special interest available to the children were a shop area with a cash register, construction area with large Lego and large wooden tools, and comfortable reading area with age-appropriate books.

Each child got the opportunity to be a daily leader, this involved distributing the personalised table mats and bags to the other children while sitting around circular tables. After lunch children washed and recycled yoghurt cartons into a recycling bin and left over food items were separated into a compost bin. There was a kitchen available to the service for reheating if required. Some cooking activities were part of the curriculum evidenced by some of the photographs displayed.

Both the grounds and the premises belonged to a national sporting organisation and these were available to the play group. This consisted of open pitches and a green area directly accessible from the service.

The cordoned off outdoor play space was adjacent to and opened out from the playroom. The service was able to use some of the facilities in the centre, such as the large hall for physical activities and gross motor play. Children were observed finishing their day in this hall.

The service had an ample supply of scooters and balance bicycles that proved to be a thrilling experience as observed with some of the younger children in the group who had learned how to master this equipment with speed and precision.

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 service has taken the following measures to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of children attending:

GENERAL SAFETY:

The external door to the service was secured by a high-level twist thumb bolt on the inside that prevented children from exiting the premises as well as ensuring no unauthorised access.

The low-level windows were protected by a wire mesh and the kitchen door had a high-level bolt rendering it inaccessible to children. Cleaning agents were stored in a high cupboard in the kitchen.

Infection Control:

There was a documented daily, weekly, and monthly cleaning policy for the premises, garden, toys and equipment. Cleaning schedule templates were available for the early years room, toilet areas, toys, equipment and all the furniture in the room.

Hygienic hand drying facilities such as paper towels and liquid soap were provided adjacent to the wash hand basins. Children washed their hands before eating and after toileting. Self-toileting was encouraged and supported. Children were assisted and given tissues to blow their noses and encouraged to bin these tissues after use. Foot pedal bins were located at various locations in the service. The infection control policy included exclusion times for illnesses and diseases.

Non-Compliance Information

GENERAL SAFETY:

1. Finger guards were broken on the door into the rear lobby area. This posed a potential risk of a finger injury to the children's fingers if trapped in the door corner.
2. The timber gate that opened from the external play area onto the grounds of the sporting organisation was warped and the lock was broken, which potentially could provide children with an opportunity to exit into the outer grounds of the centre unsupervised.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

GENERAL SAFETY:

1. The registered provider stated in the response that the service is installing new foam finger guard on the door.
2. The registered provider stated in the response that the service is replacing the gate in the outdoor area.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photo graphic evidence was sent to the office of the inspectorate on 26 June 2023 demonstrating that.

1. New finger guards were installed to replace the broken one on the door into the rear lobby area.
2. A New timber gate with a new spring loaded lock secured the children's outdoor play space removing the opportunity for children to exit into the outer grounds of the complex.

Summary Comment

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

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)

A staff member employed to work in the service had current First Aid Responder Training for children. This staff member was rostered to work fulltime in the service.

(2)

(a) There was a first aid box in the childcare room stored on a high shelf that was easily accessible.

(b) The first aid box was suitably, always equipped and available.

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 firefighting 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)

(a) A record in writing of fire drills indicated that the last fire drill took place on the premises on the 12 May 2023.

(b) A record of the number, type and maintenance firefighting equipment and smoke alarms was maintained. It was recorded that fire equipment was last serviced on 4 October 2022 and smoke alarms were last serviced on 28 February 2023.

(4)

The fire evacuation procedure for the service which contained details of the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in a conspicuous position in the childcare room.