

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WX135
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Name of Service:	Murrintown Community Childcare Ltd. T/A Tots to Teens
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Address of Service:	Murrintown, Murrintown, Co. Wexford
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Eircode:	Y35 PK58
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Name of Registered Provider:	Mary O Keeffe (Chairperson)
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time
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Date of Inspection:	01/10/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	46	PM	23
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla Child and Family Agency, Ely Hospital, Ferrybank, Wexford.
Inspection undertaken by:	E Cullen and L O'Connor
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	Not applicable
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Description of service

Murrintown Community Childcare Ltd. T/A Tots to Teens is a community based full day and part time care service and is managed by a voluntary board of management. It is registered to operate from 8.30am to 6pm and caters for children 1 to 6 years of age and can accommodate up to 62 children. As well as providing an early years service, it offers a school aged service for children attending primary school. The service is located in a purpose-built premises within the village of Murrintown. The service consists of four early years rooms, two interconnected sleep rooms, kitchen, entrance lobby, office and sanitary accommodation. Outside children have direct access to an enclosed playground which is safe, suitable and secure.

Staffing

The service currently employs 16 staff members which includes a service manager and deputy manager who are supernumerary and available for cover in rooms as needed, twelve early years staff who work directly with preschool children in the service, a cleaner and a school aged care practitioner.

The staff working directly with preschool children in the service held the minimum Quality Qualifications Ireland (QQI) at level 5, 6 and 8 qualifications in Childcare and Early Childhood Care and Education on the National Qualifications Framework.

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 (1)(2)(4)– Management and Recruitment, 11 (1)(2) – Staffing levels, 16 (1)(h, i, j, k)- Record in relation to pre-school service, 19 - Health, welfare and development of child, 20 – Facilities for rest and play, 22 – Food and Drink, 23- Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child, 25 - First Aid.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulation 16 Record in relation to pre-school service(h),(i),(j),(k).

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, deputy 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.

(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) There was a designated person in charge on the day of inspection and a named person was available to deputise as required. Staff members demonstrated familiarity with the details of the management and reporting structures within the service.

(2) Documentation was reviewed for the sixteen staff members employed by the service.

(a)(b) Two validated references were available for each staff member from either a past employer, or from a reputable source.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all staff members working in the service.

The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) One of three required international police vetting disclosures was available for a staff member who had lived outside the state for a period over 6 months.

(4) Certificates of qualification were available on file demonstrating that the fourteen preschool staff members held a qualification at the minimum level 5 and above on the National Framework of Qualifications.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(d) Two of three required international police vetting records were not available for two staff members who had lived outside the state for a period over 6 months.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider stated that the international police vetting records were applied for and are now on file.

Supporting documentation submitted

International police vetting records for two staff members were provided to the Early Years Inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The actions and evidence submitted by the registered provider have been reviewed. The non-compliance identified has been addressed.

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) On the day of inspection there were adequate numbers of staff working directly with the children at all times. There were 46 children with 10 staff members directly supervising them during the morning of the inspection. The service manager and deputy manager were supernumerary and available for additional cover as required.

(2) On the morning of the inspection, the staff to child ratios were maintained as follows throughout the service:

- In the wobbler room, there was 1 child aged 18 months old being cared for by 1 staff.
- In the toddler room, there were 8 children aged 2 to 3 years old being cared for by 3 staff.
- In the junior ECCE room, there were 15 children aged 2 years 10 months to 4 years old being cared for by 3 staff.
- The senior ECCE room, there were 22 children aged 3 to 5 years old being cared for by 3 staff.

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:

- (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.*

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (h) The children's attendance records were completed by each of the four care rooms and the records were reflective of the children who were present. The children's attendance records were maintained by staff members including at times when children were collected from the service.
- (i) A staff roster was available for review. It was reflective of the staff members present and the hours worked on the day of inspection.
- (j) A sample of administration of medication records were reviewed. The records reviewed provided the relevant details including the name of the child, time/date, dosage and the names of staff members present, and administering the medication. The records demonstrated that the service communicated with the parent and/or guardian and that each of the record was signed on the same day as the child receiving the medication.
- (k) A sample of accident and incident records were reviewed. The records reviewed demonstrated that the service recorded the relevant details including the time/date, details, treatment received and follow up actions. The records demonstrated that the service communicated with the parent and/or guardian of the child on the same day.

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-
- (b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.

Compliance Information

The interactions between the staff members and the children were observed to be warm and responsive in each of the care rooms while children were playing, during mealtimes, and during care routines such as nappy changes. The staff members were familiar with the children, their needs and interests. And they provided children with comfort and reassurance throughout the inspection. Staff members spoke with the children in calm and engaged tones while listening attentively to them. For example, In the Toddler room, a staff member sat with the children on the soft matting and asked them which songs they would like to sing. Two of the children excitedly responded with the name of a story book. The staff member playfully responded explaining that was a storybook and asked if they would prefer a story. The children stood up clapping their hands together while verbally responding 'yes!'. The staff member smiled at the children while one child retrieved the book from the library area. The children

were observed to sit attentively listening to the story. The practice of listening to children through hearing their preferences supports children's well-being and sense of belonging.

The children and staff members engaged in meaningful conversations. Staff members were overheard to warmly respond to children and extend the conversations using questions, prompts and guidance. For example, the nine children in the Toddler and Wobbler room were in the outdoor area during the morning of inspection with four staff members. During this time, there was one staff member kneeling with a child who was building a tower using the wooden tree stumps. The child excitedly jumped up and pointed towards the gate in the outdoor area where a tractor which was passing by. The staff member smiling at the child, responded by looking in the same direction as the child and playfully asked the child 'is it a tractor?' The tractor passed by the service as the staff member and child watched together smiling. Through providing children with the words to describe their interests supports the development of language and relationships between the children and staff members.

Communication with children was supported through varying ways which also included transition times. In the Junior ECCE room, the children were engaged in free play. The staff members explained to the group of children that they were getting the sand timer as there was 5 minutes left until tidy up time. When the sand timer was up, the staff member explained to the group children that it was tidy up time, and that circle time was next. The staff member outlined to the inspector that the routine was new for many of the children and how well they were responding to it. The service supports the transition of children from junior to senior ECCE rooms through the key staff members staying with the group for the two years, supporting the development of meaningful relationships between the children and their key workers. New children who joined the senior ECCE group were facilitated to transition into the service before the main ECCE group returned.

Children's ideas and knowledge was sought and listened to by the staff members. During circle time, discussions were taking place about autumn. The staff member explained that they were going to paint a scarecrow and they asked the children what they might paint onto the scarecrow. The children responded with ideas including eyes, cheeks and a mouth. Extending this further, the staff member asked the children what these were called, prompting with the sound of the word. The children responded loudly with 'Face'. The discussion continued and the children were asked if they would like to give the scarecrow a name and many suggestions were provided. Through listening to children and providing opportunities for an active role in their own learning encourages imagination and supports a sense of independence.

Children’s achievements were positively recognised by staff members. Children’s attempts and efforts were warmly recognised with staff members providing children with guidance and direction as required. For example, while in the outdoor area a child in the Wobbler room was trying to climb up the wooden structure. A staff member who was close-by recognised the child’s attempts to climb and warmly responded saying ‘you love climbing this’. The staff member provided insight to the child as to where to move their feet. When the child was closer to the top, the staff member recognised this by encouragingly saying ‘you are nearly there’. When the child climbed to the top, this staff member and another staff member responded saying ‘well done’ and clapping. The child stood up, turned around to face the two staff members and was smiling. Recognising children’s achievements supports their sense of confidence and supports children’s belief in their own abilities.

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 19 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.

(3) A registered provider of a full day care service, a part-time day care service or a childminding service, other than such a service to which paragraph (2) applies, shall ensure that— (a) a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the pre-school children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises, or

Compliance Information

(1)(a)(b)

The children have access to two interconnected sleep rooms with four cots which were accessible from the Wobbler and Toddler rooms. In discussion with staff members, they outlined that the sleep practices of the service were child led. Staff were familiar with the sleep needs of the children in the Wobbler and Toddler rooms. The children over 2 years in the Toddler room were provided with a stackable bed for sleep. There were three beds available in the care room and an extra four stackable beds were storage, if required. Each of the care rooms

provided children with an area to rest or retreat to during the day. The areas consisted of child-sized couches, soft mattings and furnishings.

(3)

The children attending the service had access to an outdoor area which was located at the back of the premises. All of the children attending the service were provided an opportunity for outdoor play. In discussion with staff members, it was outlined that the children had rainproof clothing. They outlined that the appropriate clothing promoted the opportunity for outdoor play each day. This was reflective of the service’s outdoor policy which outlined that children were provided with an opportunity for outdoor play on a daily basis. The area provided the children, of all ages, with an opportunity for many types of play and a space for movement. There was a variety of equipment available for the children to promote movement which included trikes, scooters, a slide and a tunnel to climb through. Opportunities for challenge and risky play were available for children which included a wooden balancing beam and a wooden climbing frame. The children also had access to an outdoor kitchen with supporting utensils, a sand tray, blackboards and a sheltered area with a table. The materials and equipment were in good condition and suitable for the age group of children.

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

The children bring their food from home. They were observed to eat their snack at 10am which consisted of fruit, sandwiches, cheese and yogurts. The staff members outlined that at 12pm, the children attending on a full-time basis were provided with their dinner and that this was re-heated the service. Children attending on a part-time basis were provided with an additional snack at this time. Dinnertime was observed and the children ate a variety of foods. An additional snack was provided to the children in the afternoon.

Children’s water bottles were available for the children throughout the inspection. Staff were overheard to encourage the children to get a drink throughout the day. And through practices including children bringing their water bottles to the outdoor area ensured that children had access to a drink at all times.

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 external doors and side gate in the outdoor play area were appropriately secured to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the service. Cleaning agents were stored safely out of the reach of children on high shelving and in locked cupboards. Foods, including grapes were appropriately cut for the children. This was reflective of the service's healthy eating policy, and it reduces the risk of choking. Large play equipment throughout the service was appropriately anchored and secured.

Infection Control:

Children's lunches were stored in the fridge and were labelled with the child's name. Personal items such as water bottles were labelled with the child's names. Soothers were also labelled with the child's name and stored in individual containers.

The staff members practiced the service's own nappy changing procedures. The staff members were observed to wear disposable aprons and gloves for each nappy change. The nappy changing mat was cleaned following each nappy change. The nappy changing areas used by the Wobbler, Toddler and Junior ECCE rooms appeared clean and the nappy changing mats were in good condition.

The handwashing practices observed were reflective of the service's own policy. Handwashing was observed following nappy changes, when children went to the toilet, after outdoor play and prior to eating. These practices reduce the likelihood of the spread of infection.

The cots, cot mattress and bedding appeared clean and in good condition. Individual boxes with children's names and bedding were stored in the sleep room. In discussion with staff members, they outlined that where cots are shared, the bed linen was changed for each child. This practice was reflective of the service's infection control policy and reduces the risk of the transmission of infection.

Administration of Medication:

The practices, as outlined within the service's own administration of medication policy were in place. In discussion with staff members, they were familiar with the service's procedures regarding the administration, storage and records relating to the administration of anti-febrile medication. For children who required emergency medication, the staff members were familiar with the symptoms and procedures in place in the event of an emergency. The relevant information relating to a child with emergency medication was clearly displayed in the care rooms. Medication, to include emergency medication and anti-febrile medication was in date and stored out of reach of children.

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 two staff members trained in first aid response available to the children attending the early years service.

(2)

(a)(b) First aid boxes were stored in easily accessible locations and were available to the children at all times.