

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2018MH501
Name of Service:	Churchfields Tiny Tots
Address of Service:	Churchfields, Ashbourne, Co. Meath
Eircode:	A84 HF65
Name of Registered Provider:	Barbara Woods, Jeannie Kyle
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
Date of Inspection: Day 1	30/07/2024
Date 2 of Inspection:	31/07/2024

No of pre-school children:	AM	39	PM	39
Day 2	AM	33	PM	33

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Family Resource Centre Commons Road, Navan, Co. Meath
Inspection undertaken by:	D.Murray, AM. Cunningham.
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

Churchfields Tiny Tots is a private childcare facility established in 2018. This service provides full day care, part-time and sessional care to pre-school children from 2 to 6 years. A school aged service is also provided. The service operates from 07:15am-18:00pm and participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education Programme (ECCE). The premises is purpose built and consists of 6 care rooms, a sensory room, an office, kitchen, staff room and sanitary facilities.

The rooms were as follows:

Downstairs:

Genius Gems room facilitates the care of children from 2 years to 3 years 6 months attending the service on a full day care basis.

Best Butterflies has 2 rooms which facilitate the care of children with additional needs from 3 to 5 years attending the service on a part-time basis. This room was closed on the day of inspection.

Superstars room provides care and education to children from 3.6 years to 4 years attending the service on a full day care/part- time basis.

Upstairs:

Busy Bees provides care and education for children from 2.6 years to school going age attending the service on an ECCE basis with a morning session from 08:25am to 11:25am and an afternoon session from 13:35pm to 16:35pm. This room also facilitates children attending on a part-time basis.

This room was not in operation on the day of inspection.

Clever Cookies room provides care and education for children from 2.6 years to school going age for children attending the service on a sessional basis in the mornings from 9am to 12 am. This room accommodates school aged children in the afternoon.

On the day of inspection this room was used to facilitate the older pre-school children starting school in September 2024 and school aged children who were attending the service on a full day care basis.

Staffing

The 2 registered providers employs a pre-school manager, school aged manager, deputy manager, 20 childcare staff, 9 school ages staff and a cook.

30/07/2024 Present on the day of inspection was the deputy manager, 7 childcare staff with 1 additional staff member commencing work at 2pm, 2 school aged staff and a cook. The pre-school manager and school aged

manager arrived to the service when the inspection had commenced. One of the registered providers arrived for feedback.

31/07/2024 Present on the day of inspection were the school aged manager, deputy manager, 7 childcare staff and a cook.

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.

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, managers, 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) The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.
- (b) A designated person in charge was on the premises when the inspectors arrived unannounced to carry out the inspection.
- (c) A clear management structure that identified specific roles of each employee was displayed in the reception area.
- (2) (a)&(b) Thirty five staff files were reviewed.
- Seventy validated written references were available either from a past employer or from a reputable source.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for the 35 staff. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d) Police vetting was available for 8 staff members who had resided outside the jurisdiction for a period of more than 6 consecutive months as an adult.
- (4) All childcare staff members had a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 and above on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

Non-Compliance Information

- (4) On the 30/07/24 In the Clever Cookies room, the two staff members caring for 10 pre-school children did not have a childcare qualification.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (4) The younger children in this classroom had finished their ECCE pre-school year and were all due to start school 3 weeks later. They had moved into the school aged room, to enable them to settle into this new group with new teachers before the next transition of starting primary school.
- An early years qualified staff member will now be placed in the school aged classroom with the younger age group who are due to start school.

Summary Comment

The assurances from the registered provider that an appropriately qualified staff member will care for the pre-school children has addressed the non-compliance.

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) On the morning of the inspection there was, a deputy manager, 7 childcare staff and 2 school aged staff working directly with the children attending the service. The pre-school manager and school aged manager arrived at the service when the inspection had commenced. One of the registered providers arrived for feedback.

(2) On both days the correct adult/child ratio was maintained in the service throughout the inspections.

All children attending the service were availing of the full day care service.

30/07/2024:

The rooms were as follows:

Genius Gems room had 2 staff members providing care for 9 children ranging in age from 2 to 3 years 6 months attending the service on a full day care basis.

Best Butterflies rooms were closed on the day of inspection.

Superstars room had 4 staff members providing care to 20 children ranging in age from 3.6years to 4 years attending the service on a full day care basis.

Clever Cookies room had 10 pre-school children ranging in age from 4 years 6 months to 5 years 6 months with 2 school aged staff members. Seven school aged children were also present.

One staff member was available to provide relief for breaks.

31/07/2024:

The rooms were as follows:

Genius Gems room had 2 staff members providing care for 9 children ranging in age from 2 to 3 years 6 months attending the service on a full day care basis.

Best Butterflies rooms were closed on the day of inspection.

Superstars room had 3 staff members providing care to 17 children ranging in age from 3.6years to 4 years attending the service on a full day care basis.

Clever Cookies room had 2 staff members providing care to 7 pre-school children ranging in age from 4years 6 months to 5 years 6 months. Nine school aged children were also present.

(8) (a) According to the staff roster 2 adults were present on the premises at all times

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 observations were made on how each child's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the daily life in the service:

Basic needs:

- Children were encouraged to become independent and self-caring, suitable to their age and stage of development which included hand washing, caring for their belongings and tidying away after activities and play.

- The staff members sat with the children at snack time helping the children when required whilst encouraging conversation and extending interactions.
- Staff supported children’s learning with activities that were observed to be fun and creative. There was a variety of themes in the different care rooms such as “Super Hero’s”, “Summer 24,” with the children’s artwork displayed to reflect these themes.
- The service embraces outdoor play and learning. Children were observed enjoying outdoor play with both their peers and staff members.

Supporting relationships around children:

- The staff members were observed to be very caring, kind and attentive in their interactions with the children and demonstrated sensitivity and responsiveness to each child’s individual needs, likes and preferences. The staff members frequently initiated conversations with the children, responded meaningfully to their verbal and non-verbal cues and provided regular praise and encouragement using gentle tones of voice.
- The staff members communicated with parents through an electronic device and verbally on a daily basis regarding activities pertaining to their children. Overall, the children appeared comfortable, happy and relaxed in their environment.

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-

(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,

Compliance Information

(1)(b) Cosy areas consisting of mats and soft furnishings are available in each care room for children to take a break from activities if needed. Stackable beds were placed on the floor in the Genius Gems room for children who require sleep.

(3)(a) The outdoor space consisted of 5 areas enclosed with walls and fencing with secure gates. The surface areas consist of a combination of wood chip, tarmacadam and artificial grass surface with age-appropriate play equipment. Sheltered areas permitted outdoor play in all types of weather.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

- The care rooms are well resourced and had areas of interest with supporting equipment which incorporated natural/sensorial materials, art and crafts and a range of suitable toys and books which were easily accessible on open shelving.
- Equipment in the 5 outdoor spaces was age-appropriate to the children using the area. Equipment included climbing frame, wooden activity units, ride on toys, mud kitchen, building blocks, play house, see saw, wooden benches, wooden hut, sand table and push along toys.

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 service has a 3 week menu plan with a variety of meals ranging from meat, fish and poultry all prepared onsite by the resident cook. All children attending the service brought a packed lunch which they have during the day. Children have breakfast on arrival consisting of a choice of cereals and toast. On the day of inspection, the children had a snack at 10am which consisted of a selection of fruit with small crackers. The main meal was chicken curry and rice which was served to the younger children at 11:50am and to the older children at 3pm. A further snack was served at 16:30pm which consisted of brioche rolls with butter and a selection of fruit. Water was the drink of choice and was available in all the care rooms.

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 requirement has been met.

- The door to the service was secured with an intercom system and the outdoor spaces were enclosed with secure gates. These security measures ensured that a child did not exit unsupervised and restricted unauthorised persons from gaining access to the service and the 5 outdoor spaces.
- All cleaning agents were stored out of reach of the children.
- All play materials are placed on stable based shelving units. Play materials and equipment were observed to be safe and suitable for the developmental age of the pre-school children attending each room.
- An indoor and outdoor risk assessment are conducted daily.
- The cords on the blinds were mounted to the walls at the windows in the care rooms, out of reach of children.

Infection Control:

The following infection control measures were observed:

- The hand washing policy and nappy changing policy were implemented in practice with appropriate hand washing for staff and children at all times.
- The service was clean with cleaning schedules maintained on a daily basis.
- All bins for contaminated waste were foot pedal operated.
- All pacifiers were stored in individual boxes in the cot room.
- Fridges were available for the storage of perishable items in the children's lunch boxes.

Safe Sleep:

Safe sleep practices were observed in the service as demonstrated by the following examples:

- Temperature of the Genius Gems room was maintained between 18 to 22⁰C while children were sleeping. An air conditioning system was used to reduce the air temperature.
- A sleep log recording the position, colour and breathing pattern was recorded at 10 minutes intervals on all sleeping children.
- Block out blinds were available which created an atmosphere conducive to sleep.

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 service provided evidence that a person had up to date First Aid Responders course and was available at all times to the children attending the pre-school service.

(2)(a) and (b) A suitably equipped first aid box was available and safely stored in the premises.

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)(a) A written record was available of the fire drills completed in the service. The last recorded fire drill took place June 2024.

(b) A record was maintained of the mains powered smoke alarms and firefighting equipment on the premises. The mains powered smoke alarms were last serviced on the 17th June 2024. The firefighting equipment was last serviced in November 2023.

(4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was conspicuously displayed in the reception area and in the care rooms.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured that the service was adequately insured for 102 children at any one time attending for full day care. The policy showed that the service was insured from 28th March 2024 to the 27th March 2025.