

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2020MN002
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Mini Tots
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Tiermacmoe, Castleshane, Co. Monaghan
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<b>Eircode:</b>	H18 NW22
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Glenda Farnan
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<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	15/10/2025
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	21	PM	20
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate, Hampton Court, Cootehill Road, Drumalee, Co Cavan. H12 YY84
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	S Mc Kenna
<b>Title:</b>	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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not Applicable
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### Description of service

This privately owned service provides full day care to children aged 0 – 6 years. The service operates from 7.45am to 6pm and caters for a maximum of 28 children. This service is located in a purpose built 2 story premises adjacent to the registered providers own home, in a rural area of Clontibret Co Monaghan. There are 2 care rooms, the Creche Room and the Preschool Room, a nappy changing area, a sleep room, staff toilet, children’s sanitary accommodation and a kitchen. There are 2 outdoor areas to the side of the building.

### Staffing

There are 7 staff employed in the service including the registered provider, all of whom work directly with the children. The registered provider is also the designated cook in the service.

### 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 and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under Regulation 9 Management & Recruitment, Regulation 11 Staffing Levels, Regulation 19 Health, Welfare & Development of Child, Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child, Regulation 24 Checking In and Out and Record of Attendance, Regulation 25 First Aid, Regulation 26 Fire Safety Measures, Regulation 27 Supervision and 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 inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, 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, who is the registered provider, and a named person to deputise in their absence.

(b) Following discussion with the registered provider, and review of the staff roster it was confirmed that when the preschool service was in operation the designated person in charge or the named person in charge were on the premises.

(c) A management structure was in place, which was clearly identifiable through review of the staff roster, staff information on display and through discussion with the staff team.

(2) The files for 7 staff were reviewed.

(a) (b) Two written and validated references were on file for 7 adults.

A total of 10 written and validated references from a previous employer were on file.

A total of 4 written and validated references from a reputable source were on file.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for 7 staff. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years for all employed staff.

(d) A review of the employment history for the 7 staff, demonstrated that two adults had lived outside the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months. The required police vetting for the two staff was available on file.

(4) Documentary evidence was available to confirm that 6 staff employed to work with children, held an appropriate childcare qualification at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications, or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent. A qualification for the one student was not required.

### 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 day of inspection there was an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.

(2) The adult to child ratios were correct in the service when the inspector arrived unannounced.

The following adult to child ratios were observed when the service was operating at maximum attendance.

Two adults cared for 7 children aged 1 year 11 months to 2 years 2 months in the Creche room, all of whom attended on a full day care basis.

Three adults cared for 14 children aged 2 years 5 months to 4 years 4 months in the Preschool room, of whom 1 child attended on a sessional basis and 13 attended on a full day care basis.

In addition to the above, a student on work experience was present in the Creche room, and the registered provider performed cooking duties and covered staff lunches in the Creche room.

(8) A review of the staff roster demonstrated that the registered provider ensured that 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*

*(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 following examples demonstrate how children's learning, development and well-being was facilitated in the service:

#### Basic Needs

- The service provides all snacks and meals to the children in attendance. When younger babies require bottles, they are sent in by their parents. Shepherd's pie and vegetables was the dinner on the day served at 11.45am.

Staff sat with and helped children that required supports at meal times, while also using this time to engage in conversations with the children. Meal times were unrushed, and children were given adequate time to finish their meal.

- The younger children had their nappy changed in line with their daily routine, and older children were encouraged to be independent whilst using the toilet, with staff remaining nearby for support if needed.
- Children's appearances were cared for through the use of bibs at meal times for younger children plus aprons for messy play activities. Children were observed to be dressed appropriately whilst going outdoors. The children in the Preschool room availed of outdoor play during the inspection.
- The sleep requirements of babies and younger children were met in line with their individual routines; this was seen in practise on the day on inspection where children availed of sleep at various times based on their individual care needs. The older children who required a sleep, slept after their dinner in an area set up in the Preschool room. Cosy rest areas were available in both the Creche and Preschool rooms where children could rest throughout their day. A nursing chair was provided in the Creche room where adults could comfortably relax and feed or comfort young babies.

### Supporting Relationships

- The children were observed to be familiar with the staff who cared for them, calling their names for supports when needed. For example when they wanted their painting apron taken off when they were finished painting.
- The staff in the Creche were observed to communicate using soft gentle tones whilst interacting with the babies and younger children. Floor play was availed of with the staff remaining close by the children and engaging in play activities with them.
- The staff in the Preschool room were observed to promote positive behaviour, and praise was given for positive behaviour interactions. Children were provided with gentle encouragement to be mindful of other children's feelings when a child was observed to become a little upset. Staff were observed to go to the child's level, comfort them and reassurance was provided.
- The staff were observed to treat each child with respect. Positive regard was shown to children and their families, with parental wishes respected while also acknowledging children's individual choice. Links to family life were observed through displays of family's photos in both rooms, and conversations observed between staff and children about their family to include a daddy's birthday, demonstrates strong relationships between the service and the child's home life.

- The children parents/carers come directly into their rooms upon arrival and collection times, where information about the child’s day is exchanged in person with staff, with the addition of daily notebooks used for the younger babies.
- Displays of the local community were provided the service, to include photos of the local school and shop, and a visit from the Garda for a previous “Beep Beep” day to the service was included among the display.
- The staff team were observed to work well together, communication was clear, and transitions were smooth. Regular staff meetings occur to update staff on any changes, and frequent daily or weekly updates are provided in person.

### Physical And Material Environment

- The indoor rooms were comfortable, pleasant and laid out to suit the needs of the children in attendance. Comfortable and safe floor space for babies and younger children to engage in floor play was provided in the Creche room. Clearly defined areas to include rest area with books, home corner, dolls and play equipment, construction areas, dress up, table top, dress up and role play materials, and creative areas were provided in the rooms.
- Materials were freely available and accessible to children on low level shelves and boxes at children’s level, nurturing independence to retrieve and self-care to return.
- Many creative displays of children’s art work was provided throughout the service to include Autumn, Halloween art and a recent traffic lights activity from the children celebrating this year’s Road Safety Beep Beep Day.
- In the Creche room the children were observed to take part in a ghost painting activity. The children displayed signs of happiness throughout the activity and smiled and engaged with the staff and their peers. The children in the Preschool room were observed to enjoy engaging in free play of their choice and also enjoyed songs about hammers and Halloween themed songs before their dinner.
- Two well-resourced outdoor areas were provided. The Creche room has access to an outdoor area located directly off their care room. A ground surface of artificial grass is provided, and the area is secured by fencing. Some rockers, bouncing toys, a swing, a slide, a music wall and a play garage were included in the play equipment provided in this area. The second area had a ground surface of tarmac, mulched bark, surrounded by walls, hedging and a chain that separated the back area from the front of the house, providing an area for use for Preschool children. Many ride-on trucks, push along trucks, hoops, tyres, a tunnel, swings and seats were provided in this area.

### 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

The registered provider ensured all reasonable measures were put in place to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of children attending such as:

##### General Safety:

- The premises were appropriately secured to prevent a child from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the premises. A key coded magnetic lock on the main entrance door was in place, and the code is known only to staff and parents.
- The garden areas were observed to be safe with no hazards observed.
- The toys and play equipment provided to the children and observed in use on the day were maintained in good condition.
- Risk assessments were completed with records available for review.
- Handrails, and floor coverings throughout the service were maintained in good condition.
- Cleaning agents were stored out of the reach of children.
- Fire exits remained free from obstruction during the inspection.

##### Infection Control:

The inspector observed the following infection control measures in practice within the service:

- Thermostatically controlled warm running water to 37°C, liquid soap, paper towels and foot operated bins were provided. Hand washing was observed in practise after children used the toilet.
- Sanitary areas were ventilated through means of mechanical ventilation.
- Tables were observed to be cleaned before and after meals.
- Cleaning schedules were available for review. The service was observed in a clean and hygienic manner throughout.
- External waste bins were stored in an area not accessible to the children.
- Children soothers were stored in individually labelled boxes.

##### Safe Sleep:

- Sleep facilities provided were adequate for children aged under 2 years. A sleep room with five cots was available, individual ben linen was provided for each child.

- Sleep checks records were available for review which detailed at 10-minute intervals the child's skin colour, breathing pattern and position, and the sleep room was observed at 18.5°C which is in line with safe sleep guidance.
- Children aged over 2 years in the Preschool room who required a sleep slept on stackable beds, with their own individual bed linen, following dinner time. The beds were set up at one side of the Preschool room, and staff were observed to support and settle children to sleep. Sleep records maintained included the child's skin colour, breathing pattern and position every 10 minutes. The children sleeping on stackable beds were observed to be supervised at all times by the staff during the inspection.

### Non-Compliance Information

#### General Safety:

In the Creche room the undercounter fridge was unsecured, and bottles of temperature reducing medication were stored within the fridge, which if accessed poses a risk of harm to a child. It is acknowledged that when the inspector brought this to the attention of one of the staff in the Creche room, they promptly secured the fridge.

### Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective & Preventive Action

#### General Safety:

On the day of inspection, a member of staff when brought to their attention, securely locked the fridge.

Registered provider has had a meeting with staff to ensure the fridge is correctly secured at all times. Additional locks for the fridge door have been bought, to have spare if any get broken.

The registered provider will do regular checks in the room to make sure the fridge door is always securely closed and no children have any access to it.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

Photograph of the fridge with a locking device fitted.

### Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider and supporting documentation submitted has adequately addressed the non-compliance in Regulation 23.

## 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.*

### Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider used written records which detailed each child's arrival and departure time on a daily basis.

(3) (a) The registered provider insured that only preschool children, a person dropping or collecting a preschool child, an employee or unpaid worker can only enter the premises upon the registered providers approval.

(b) A visitor log was maintained which the inspector was requested to sign in and out.

## 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) Following review of staff files and the staff roster, it was evident that the registered provider ensured that there was a member of staff trained in First Aid Response (FAR) on the premises at all times, this was evidenced by 3 staff certificates on file, all of whom were rostered on duty during service operating hours.

(2) (a) & (b) Suitably equipped first aid boxes were available on the premises in each care room and were stored in accessible and conspicuous locations throughout the service and available at all times.

## 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 record of the fire drills that take place was available. The most recent fire drill was recorded on 06 October 2025.

(b) The annual maintenance certificate for the fire extinguishers was dated October 2025, and the smoke alarms was dated 23 June 2025.

(4) The fire evacuation procedures were displayed on walls throughout the service, which contained details in relation to the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 27 – Supervision

*A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.*

#### Compliance Information

On the day of the inspection the inspector observed the staff members appropriately supervising the children in attendance.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

#### Compliance Information

The registered provider had insurance cover in place for up to 32 pre-school children attending the service on a Full Day Care basis. The policy showed that the service had insurance in place from 28 March 2025 to 27 March 2026.