

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2022CC002
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Name of Service:	Toddle Inn Childcare
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Address of Service:	Harpers Creek, Glounthaune, Co. Cork
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Eircode:	T45 YW59
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Name of Registered Provider:	Kelda Browne
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	02/07/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	62	PM	55
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate Administration Building St Mary's Health Campus Gurrabraher Cork
Inspection undertaken by:	D Prendergast
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	N/A
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Description of service

Toddle Inn Childcare first notified in 2022. It is registered to provide sessional, part time and full day care to children from the age of one year. This includes children attending the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme, which is accommodated from 9.00am to 12.00pm, over 38 weeks of the year. The childcare facility is open from 8.00am to 6.00pm and operates 51 weeks of the year.

Located in a residential area of Glounthaune in Co. Cork, the service is provided from the ground floor of an apartment block. There are four operational care rooms, a designated sleep room, child sanitary facilities and an outdoor play environment available to the children. The premises also includes an office, a staff canteen, a kitchen, a laundry room, a milk kitchen and staff sanitary facilities.

Staffing

The setting employs a total of 25 adults, including the registered provider, who is not based at the service full time, but occasionally provides cover. Twenty-four of the adults are available to work directly with the children, including the person in charge, the manager and the cleaner. Each of these 24 adults has either attained a qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education, as listed on the National Framework of Qualifications, or holds a Letter of Eligibility to Practice/Letter of Qualification Recognition. The cook does not work directly with the children.

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 inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the service manager, 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 registered provider had appointed a person in charge and a manger, to oversee the operation the childcare facility. A deputy manager was also in place.
 - (b) The manager was on duty at the service when the inspector arrived and facilitated the inspection process. Review of the staff roster indicated that either the manager or the deputy were available at the setting, during the hours of operation.
 - (c) Written information regarding the service's management structure was displayed in the main entrance area; the names of the registered provider, person in charge, manger, deputy and room leaders were clearly listed.
- (2) Recruitment records in respect of the 25 adults employed at the service were reviewed and the following information was obtained:
- (a) Of the 50 required written and validated references, 38 were on file from past employers.
 - (b) There were 12 references available from sources other than previous employers.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all 25 staff. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
 - (d) Documentary evidence indicated that 7 staff members had lived outside the jurisdiction for longer than 6 consecutive months, while over the age of 18 years and the required police vetting was maintained. Translations into English were also available, as required.

(4) Records demonstrated that 21 of the adults had achieved a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education, as listed on the National Framework of Qualifications, or as recognised by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY). A Letter of Eligibility to Practice/Letter of Qualification Recognition was held by a further three adults. A qualification was not required in respect of the cook.

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) There was a sufficient number of adults available to the children throughout the period of inspection.

(2) The ratio of adults to children met the requirements of the regulation as follows:

Morning:

Room Name and Age Range of Children	Number of Children Present	Number of Adults Present
Little Stars (1- 2 years)	12	4
Discovery (2 - 3 years)	14	4
Explorers (3 - 5 years)	18	3
Inventors	18	4

(2 ½ - 5 years)

Afternoon:

Room Name and Age Range of Children	Number of Children Present	Number of Adults Present
Little Stars (1- 2 years)	9	3
Discovery (2 - 4 years)	17	3
Explorers (3 - 5 years)	14	3
Inventors (2 ½ - 5 years)	15	3

- (8)
- (a) According to the staff roster, the service was operated with at least two adults present at all times. A minimum of two adults were also on duty throughout the inspection process.

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:

(i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;

(k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (i) The current staff roster was presented for review and was noted to include the start, finish and break times of rostered staff.
- (k) A sample of 10 accident and incident records were assessed and were deemed satisfactory.

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)

Basic needs:

- The timing of children's meal and snack breaks ensured that there were no periods longer than two and a half hours in between; a mid-morning snack was accommodated in the Little Stars room shortly after 10.30am, lunch was observed at 12.30pm in the Discovery room and the children who attended the Inventors room had an afternoon snack at 3.00pm. The manager advised the inspector that breakfast was typically facilitated between 8.00am and 8.45am.
- A calm and pleasant atmosphere was evident at mealtimes. Staff members sat with and chatted to the children and offered appropriate assistance. The children appeared to thoroughly enjoy the food that had been prepared and some requested second helpings, which were provided.

- Drinking water was available to the children throughout the day, should they become thirsty at any stage; children could retrieve their reusable water bottles or sippy cups from low-level shelves in the care rooms, or could help themselves to cups and a jug of water, as noted in the Explorers room.
- During discussion, it was confirmed that staff were continuing the established practice of ensuring that nappy changing was undertaken at regular intervals and as needed. Toilet trained children were supported to access the sanitary facilities in an independent manner, with supervision, prompts and reminders provided by the adults, as required.
- The sleep room adjoining the Little Stars room was noted to be in use at various stages throughout the day, to cater for the children's individual sleep needs. During discussion, staff outlined that while many of the children followed general nap times, staff also responded to their cues. For example, if a child were to display signs of tiredness, they would be accommodated to sleep.
- In the Discovery room, a scheduled rest period was facilitated in the afternoon. This included some of the children from the Explorers and Inventors rooms, who also wished to rest. Children who preferred to engage in activities at this time had opportunity to do so, within the room.
- Rest areas were available for any child that required quiet time or space to relax.
- As the weather became warmer in the afternoon, staff members were observed to apply sunscreen to the children.
- The available space within the care rooms supported the children to explore their environment and to freely engage with materials. Outdoor play was promoted and included as part of the daily programme of activities, for children across the four rooms.

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 had a designated cook, who prepared the children’s meals and snacks in the onsite kitchen. Parents or guardians also had the option to provide food for the children’s snacks, if preferred.
- A four-week rolling menu was in place, with details of same displayed in the main entrance area. The meals and snacks listed were noted to be varied and suitable.
- The menu plan outlined that any changes to said menu would be communicated to parents via the digital application, which was in keeping with an earlier discussion with the manager.
- At the time of inspection, the mid-morning snack offered by the service consisted of buttered rice cakes or brioche, with chopped grapes, blueberries and bananas. Examples of the snacks that children had brought included sandwiches, yogurts and fruit.
- Spaghetti and meatballs in a tomato sauce, was served for lunch and this was followed by an afternoon snack of potato waffles, with water melon and cucumber.
- Water was available as a drink at mealtimes.
- Some of the children who attended the childcare facility had specific dietary requirements or food intolerances and details of these requirements were clearly visible in the various care rooms. In addition, the inspector was advised that meals were appropriately adapted, to exclude food allergens, as needed.
- In conversation with the manager, it was confirmed that any child who expressed hunger in between routine mealtimes, would be offered an additional snack.

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:

- Upon the inspector's arrival, the main entrance door was found to be secure. Entry for visitors and parents was via a buzzer mechanism, which reduced the likelihood of unauthorised access. Exit from within was through the use of a contactless hand sensor, which was positioned at adult height. This security mechanism minimised the risk of a child exiting, while unsupervised.
- A secure enclosure, which consisted of walls, wall panels and secured gates, was in place in the outdoor play area.
- Safety clips were in use to anchor blind cords.
- Low-level cupboards in the care rooms were secured, which reduced the risk of a child accessing potentially harmful items.
- Cleaning agents were stored out of the children's reach.
- Visibility markings were in place on glass panel doors, which reduced the risk of a child sustaining a collision injury.

Infection Control:

- Warm running water, liquid soap, stocked paper towel dispensers and pedal operated bins were provided at each of the wash hand basins, with some electric hand dryers also available. This supported hygienic handwashing and drying, which was observed to be carried out by children after they had their nappies changed and before mealtimes.
- Labelled storage of the children's toiletries was in place within the nappy changing areas. Disposable aprons and gloves were accessible and utilised by staff when carrying out nappy changing.
- Open windows in the care rooms allowed for natural ventilation, as the children played indoors.

Administration of Medication:

- The administration of medication was not observed.
- The medication held at the service was noted to be labelled and was safely stored out of the children's reach.

Safe Sleep:

- The air conditioning unit in the sleep room allowed for a consistent air temperature, which subsequently supported safe sleep practice. A temperature reading of 20.5°C was recorded, while said room was occupied by a sleeping child. This fell within the required range of 18°C to 22°C, for children aged over 12 months.
- Staff members were observed to physically monitor sleeping children and an online application was used to record checks of the children’s position, breathing, colour and the sleep room temperature.

Fire Safety:

- There were no fire safety concerns noted.

Outing:

- An outing from the service was not observed.

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.

Compliance Information

(1) Current First Aid Responder (FAR) certification was available for seven staff members and the staff roster indicated that at least one of these adults was on duty, while the service was in operation.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

Adequate insurance was in place. The available certificate was valid until 27 March 2025 and indicated that the service was insured to provide full day care, for up to 73 children.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-
(e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.

Compliance Information

(e) Adequate sanitary facilities were available for the children's use. There were three nappy changing stations, with three adjacent wash hand basins in place, to accommodate children in nappies. A further five wash hand basins were provided adjacent to the five children's toilets, which were located either adjoining or adjacent to the care rooms.