

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2025KE003
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Name of Service:	Maap Childcare T/A Tots Creche and Day Care
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Address of Service:	Station Walk, Newbridge, Co. Kildare
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Eircode:	W12 XR84
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Name of Registered Provider:	Annette Akerlind, Audrey Murray
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	08/12/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	62	PM	48
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Suite 7, Vista Primary Care, Ballymore Eustace Road, Naas, Co Kildare
Inspection undertaken by:	F Carty and S Quigley
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

Maap Childcare T/A Tots Crèche and Daycare is registered to provide full day, part-time and sessional care to children aged 0 to 6 years. The service is one of thirteen services operated by the registered providers. The service operates from six care rooms in a purpose-built crèche facility. There are three rooms on the ground floor, and three rooms on the first floor. There is a separate sleep room and sanitary accommodation is provided together with an outdoor area which is located at the side of the building. The service opens from 7.00am to 6.30pm Monday to Friday. A sessional service is provided in conjunction with the Early Years Care and Education Scheme from 9.30am to 12.30pm, Monday to Friday for 38 weeks a year.

There is a kitchen on the premises where all meals and snacks are prepared.

Staffing

The service employs 17 people. The service has a designated person in charge and a deputy who were not assigned to care rooms but available to help out when required. The area manager was also present to facilitate the inspection and did 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 announced and focused on the area of governance and health, welfare and development of the child. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under the following regulations:

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

Regulation 11 – Staffing Levels

Regulation 19 – Health, welfare and development of the child

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 19, health welfare and development of the child. As a result, the scope of the inspection included the Baby room, Cruiser room, Wobbler room and Toddler room.

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, 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.

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(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)

The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required who were both on the premises throughout the inspection. There was a clear management structure in place in the service.

(2)

The recruitment records of all staff were reviewed as part of the inspection.

(a)(b)

There were 25 written, validated references available from a past employer in respect of 15 staff and seven references from a reputable source in respect of five staff.

(c)

Garda vetting disclosures were available for all adults. Staff files were reviewed to assess compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. Renewed Garda vetting was available for all staff.

(d) International Police vetting was available for 13 staff who had lived outside the State for a period exceeding 6 months as an adult.

(4)

Records were available detailing the required qualifications or equivalent for 14 staff members employed to work directly with the children.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a)(b)

Four references in respect of three staff members were not accepted due to them not being from a past employer or a reputable source.

(d)

International Police vetting in respect of two countries was not available for one staff member who had lived outside the State for a period exceeding 6 months as an adult.

(3)

The registered providers had not taken the required steps as outlined in Regulation 9(2)(a)(b) and (d) to ensure that staff were suitable and competent before allowing them access to children as follows:

- Two references had no validation date so it could not be ascertained if these had been validated prior to two staff members commencing work in the service.
- Four references were not accepted as they were not from a past employer or reputable source.
- International Police vetting was not sought or reviewed in respect of one staff member prior to their commencement in the service.

(4)

There was no evidence that two staff members who were working directly with the children had the required qualification at a minimum Level 5 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(a)(b)

The four references have been updated and are from reputable sources. Our recruitment specialist gathers all of the required paperwork prior to a staff member being hired.

We have this in place for all staff paperwork to be sought prior to the commencement of employment and the parameters of the paperwork has been outlined more rigorously since this policy was updated and training was given on the listed parameter changes.

(d)

All police vetting should be sought prior to a staff member starting in the company and must align with all countries the staff member has lived in for a period of 6 month or more after their 18th birthday.

(3) (4)

Our recruitment specialist gathers all of the required paperwork prior to a staff member being hired. We have the HR team check and validate all required paperwork, and an Area Manager and service manager sign off on the paperwork before a staff member comes in for their induction and training.

We have this in place for all staff paperwork to be sought prior to the commencement of employment and the parameters of the paperwork has been outlined more rigorously since this policy was updated and training was given on the listed parameter changes.

Supporting documentation submitted

(2)(a)(b)(d), (4)

Additional references, proof of international Police vetting and qualifications submitted for review.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions together with the supporting documents have been reviewed by the inspector and are deemed to meet the requirements of regulation 9.

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) An adequate number of adults were working directly with the pre-school children attending the service during the inspection.

(2) The registered provider ensured that the minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained in the service. On the day of inspection, there were 62 children present in the service being supervised by 11 adults.

(8)(a)

There were at least two adults 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

(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

(1)(a)(b) Drinking water was always available to the children in the care rooms. The service provided all meals for the children attending on a full daycare and part time basis. The service had a healthy eating policy in place and meals were prepared and cooked onsite. Younger children were given bibs for dinnertime.

Children's hands and faces were cleaned after dinner. Children's nappies were changed regularly, noses were wiped when required.

There was a designated nap time for the children who attended the Cruiser, Wobbler and Toddler rooms, however children in the Baby room were provided with the opportunity to sleep when they displayed signs of tiredness. All children were made comfortable for sleep, staff provided the children with blankets, and they offered soothers to those who used them.

Children's rest areas were available in the care rooms, there was soft matting, sofas and cushions available.

The children were able to move freely around the care rooms and engage in different types of activities of their choosing.

The adults supported children during group and individual play activities. Staff communicated with parents at drop off and collection times together with recording information about each child's day using an online application detailing information on food, sleep, nappy changes and activities.

The care rooms were a supportive learning environment for the children. The care rooms were bright and spacious and laid out with identifiable interest areas including a home corner, construction materials, and quiet corner incorporating a book area and low level shelving containing a wide variety of activities. The environments were laid out to support the children's independence. Low level tables and chairs were available in the care rooms.

Children’s artwork and large educational posters are displayed on the walls together with family photos. All the play resources were visible and accessible to the children at their height.

Toys were clean, in good repair and included a range of materials including wood, paints, and moulded plastics. There was an enclosed outdoor area available to the children. An artificial grass surface with sand play, large ride on toys and a football net was available. The children from the Wobbler, Cruiser and Toddler rooms accessed the outdoor area on the day of the inspection and were all dressed appropriately to the weather.

Non-Compliance Information

1. Inappropriate care practices were observed by the inspector as follows:
 - Three children were observed to be crying in the garden, gathering at the door when the inspector arrived at the outdoor area. Staff were not responding to the children’s upset but were talking to each other, not comforting the children. The inspector comforted one of the children bringing them over to an activity whilst staff observed and remained engaged in conversation with their colleague.
 - A staff member in the Wobbler room was observed to take a child by the wrist insistently to the bathroom. The child refused to go but the staff member was insistent and brought them.
2. Positive behaviour management strategies were not observed in use by one staff member in the Wobbler room. For example, a child who was climbing on furniture in the care room was told ‘no’ and ‘don’t do that’ in a negative tone which is at variance with the behaviour management policy in place in the service.
3. Children in the Baby room were not given the opportunity to self-feed. Two staff members were observed to feed 4 children at the same time whilst they were sitting in highchairs with the bowls out of reach. At times some children appeared to be frustrated that the food was not coming quick enough. Two other children in the room were given an opportunity to self-feed with help from a staff member. The independence of the children was not supported.
4. Staff stated that children in the Baby room were never given the opportunity to go outside to the garden. This does not support the overall health and wellbeing of the children who attend the service on a full daycare basis.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1-4 This was given to staff at the staff meeting/training night for all staff to read, sign and discuss at the training night. All staff understood regarding all languages and how to communicate more effectively for the children in their care and their colleagues in the service. The staff member was insistent on all children washing their hands before eating their meal, in line with our hand hygiene policy, Our staff were also given our Handling

children policy and discussion regarding handling children took place at the staff meeting/training night. Continuous professional development training is given and will continue to be given to all staff in the company with regards to all requirements of their employment. Where English is not the first language of the staff employed by the company extra support and training will be given to assist these staff to carry out their job without the need for translation.

Regular observation of these staff members care practices are maintained to make sure they are operating to our high standards of care at all times. Staff members have had training and understand that they must sit with children when they are eating, be attentive to the children at all times, encourage self-feeding at an appropriate age for their development.

Supporting documentation submitted

Staff training records and associated documents.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions together with the supporting documents were reviewed by the inspector and are deemed to meet the requirements of regulation 19.