

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2025MH001
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Name of Service:	Tots Creche Ruxton Oaks
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Address of Service:	Ruxton Oaks, Navan, Co. Meath
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Eircode:	C15 NW2N
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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 of Inspection:	10/03/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	43	PM	38
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Meath Child & Parent Support Hub, Commons Road, Navan, Co. Meath
Inspection undertaken by:	AM Cunningham, D Murray & M Mc Donnell
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

Tots Creche is privately owned and is 1 of 14 childcare services managed by the registered providers. The service provides full day care, part time and sessional care to children from 0 to 6 years and operates from 07:00 to 18:30hrs, Monday to Friday. Children who are eligible can participate in the Early Childhood Care and Education. The service is purposed built consisting of 6 care rooms namely the Baby room, Wobbler room, Toddler room, and on the first-floor Preschool room 1, Preschool room 2 and Toddler room 2 (not in use on the day of inspection). An office, kitchen, staff room and sanitary facilities are also available. An outdoor space is located to the rear of the premises.

Staffing

The service employs a manager, deputy manager, 12 childcare staff and a cook. Present on the day of inspection were the manager, 12 childcare staff (one of whom works from 10.30am to 3.30pm to cover lunches/breaks and nappy changing and a second staff member that works from 1300hrs to 1700hrs). One of the area managers arrived at 10.15am to the service after the inspection commenced to provide support to the manager during the inspection. One of the registered providers attended for feedback at the end of the inspection. Two students were completing work experience placements 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

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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.

Additional Information

The inspection was carried out following receipt of concerns received to the Early Years Inspectorate.

Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the manager, area manager, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection and one of the registered providers who attending for feedback.

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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.

(6A) Paragraph (4) shall not apply to an employee of a registered provider where - (a) the registered provider receives funding for the employment of the employee pursuant to a scheme funded by the Minister and known as the Access and Inclusion Model, and (b) the employment of the employee is for the purpose of providing support, pursuant to the scheme referred to in subparagraph (a), for a child attending the service to enable the child to participate in the programme known as the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) funding Programme."

(7) A registered provider shall ensure that all employees, unpaid workers and contractors are appropriately supervised and provided with appropriate information, and where necessary training, including in relation to the following:

- (a) the policies, procedures and statements of the service specified in Schedule 5;*
- (b) Part VIIA (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013)) of the Act, and*

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(c) these Regulations.

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 available.
- (2) (a)&(b) Eleven files were reviewed which included the two students and cook. All remaining files were reviewed on the last inspection and met compliance at the end of the inspection process.
- Twenty validated written references were available either from a past employer or from a reputable source.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosure was available for the 9 new staff members and two students. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d) Of the files reviewed, police vetting was not required for four staff members or the two students as they had not resided outside the jurisdiction for a period of more than 6 consecutive months as an adult. The police vetting required for four staff members was available.
- (4) The eight new staff members who work directly with the children had a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 to 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications.
- 6(A) One staff member provides AIM support in the afternoon to a child.
- (7) (a) Documented evidence demonstrated that all new staff completed induction training on the services policies and procedures and this was signed off by a member of the management staff.

Non-Compliance Information

- (2) (a)&(b) Two written references available for one staff member were not accompanied by a translation from a reputable source.
- (d) The police vetting available for a staff member was not accompanied by a translation from a reputable source.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (2)(a)(b)(d) All documents have been translated by a reputable source. A preventive action was not submitted.

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Supporting documentation submitted

The registered provider has submitted evidence of the two written references and the police vetting translated by a reputable source.

Summary Comment

The response and actions taken by the registered provider addressed the non-compliances in Regulation 9. This will be reviewed at the next inspection.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured that the following written policies specified in Schedule 5 were comprehensive to ensure the welfare and safety of the children attending the service.

- Complaints Policy.
- Behavioural Management Policy.
- Accident and Incident Policy.
- Child Safeguarding Policy
- Settling In Policy.
- Staff Training Policy.
- Staff Supervision Policy.
- Staff Absence Policy.

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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

- (2) The adult to child ratios were correct and observed as follows:
- **Baby Room:** Two staff members provided cared for 7 children aged between 6 months to 1 year 3 months. An additional staff member provided support to the room at nappy changing times, sleep times and staff breaks. Four children were availing of full day care, 2 children were availing of part-time care, and 1 child was transitioning into the service, attending for the morning.
 - **Wobbler Room:** Two staff members provided care for 6 children aged between 1 year 2 months to 1 year 10 months. All children were availing of full day care.
 - **Toddler Room:** Two staff members provided cared for 9 children aged between 2 years 2 months to 2 years 10 months. All children were availing of full day care.
 - **Preschool Room 1:** Two staff members provided cared for 16 children aged between 3 years 3 months to 5 years. Thirteen children were availing of full day care and 2 were availing of a sessional service and 1 child on induction in the morning.
 - **Pre School Room 2:** not in use on the day of inspection.
 - **Full Day Care Room:** One staff member provided cared for 5 preschool children aged between 2 years and 5 years. All children were availing of full day care.

- (8) Two staff members are present at all times in the service as confirmed by the staff roster.

Non-Compliance Information

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(1) In Pre-school Room, 1 although the adult/child ratios were met some of the children needed additional support, assistance and supervision during transitions. While queuing up to go outside children had to wait while other children were given assistance with outdoor clothing. Children became restless and started hitting each other. An additional staff member is required in this room to support the staff and children especially during times of transition.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1) The registered provider has looked at the transitions and support required by this room, the room has been split during ECCE hours, the smaller classrooms are calmer since we have done this. This has enabled the teacher to best support the children's needs and keep the class routine in place. The Assistant manager is responsible for supporting the Preschool rooms during transitions, home time and when otherwise needed. The registered provider has further split this class to attend to the full day and have seen a great improvement since implementing this.

An AIM teacher has been put in place for the children requiring this support, the service have introduced visuals in the class and have linked in with Betterstart regarding support information for transitioning.

Recently, the registered provider had vetting come through for the new staff so this staff member has enabled more support throughout the building.

The registered provider had a staff training night with all staff to discuss transitions and a further training night booked for the 12/05/2026.

Preventive Action:

The registered provider has implemented risk assessing each class to establish what support is required by each class or at certain times of day for transitions etc. and assigning support for the class, children and staff.

This also enables the registered provider to assess any training that may be required by staff to best manage the class routine, recognising children's additional/supportive needs and non-contact time for staff to source the visuals needed by individual children.

Supporting documentation submitted

Staff training on transitions notes, Settle-in/Transitions/ Collections and refusal Policy and staff meeting poster attached to email sent to the inspectors on the 06/05/2026.

Summary Comment

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The response from the registered provider has been reviewed and has addressed the non-compliances in Regulation 11.

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) A record was maintained of each child's attendance on a daily basis indicating arrival and departure times.

(l) A staff roster was maintained on a daily basis indicating the staff members arrival and departure times throughout the day.

(k) There were records in writing completed following any accidents/ incidents that recently occurred in the service. A review of a sample of 30 records from all care rooms evidenced that details of the incident, including the child's name, date of birth and details were recorded. The records were also signed and dated by management staff and parents.

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.

(2) A registered provider shall ensure that no corporal punishment is inflicted on a pre-school child whilst attending the service.

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(3) A registered provider shall ensure that no practices that are disrespectful, degrading, exploitive, intimidating, emotionally or physically harmful or neglectful are carried out in respect of a pre-school child whilst attending the service.

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:

- The staff members sat with the children at snack and dinner time helping the children when required whilst encouraging conversation and extending interactions. In the Baby and Wobbler room any child who became upset were nurtured and cuddled until they settled. Sleep was child led with the younger children placed to sleep as required. The older children availed of sleep after dinner.
- Children's nappies were changed regularly and in a timely manner with warm one-to-one interactions during direct care. During discussion with staff, they showed the inspector handwritten logs and electronic app records that are kept for nappy changing. If a child has any discomfort parents are alerted to this at pick up time verbally and on the electronic app. Staff members were responsive to the children's cues should they need to use the toilet, with discreet supervision provided and assistance given if required.
- The themes of the week were "Mothers Day" and "St Patricks Day" with the children making cards and doing art and craft activities which reflected these themes.

(2) No corporal punishment was observed being inflicted on any pre-school child on the day of inspection.

(3) In the care rooms inspected children's behaviour was managed in a positive way, and it was observed that minor problems were handled promptly and appropriately by the adults who were observed to engage respectfully with the children in their care. The children showed confidence around the staff members and an eagerness to engage with them in conversations and play. During activities children were offered choices and sought out staff members who readily acknowledged and encouraged the children's efforts and accomplishments.

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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.

Compliance Information

(1)(b) The sleep room adjoining the Baby room had 6 standard cots for the younger children requiring sleep. Stackable beds were placed on the floor in the Wobbler and Toddler room for the older children requiring sleep. Within the care rooms there were mats and cushions for children to take a break from activities and rest if needed.

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 following safety measures were in place on the day of inspection:

- The main doors to the service were secured with a buzzer system, and the outdoor spaces were enclosed and had secure gates. These security measures ensured that a child did not exit unsupervised and restricted unauthorised persons from gaining access to the service and outdoor space.
- The equipment and play materials in the care rooms were observed to be maintained in a good state of repair.
- The kitchen was inaccessible to children.
- Storage areas were secured to prevented access by children.

Infection Control:

The following infection control measures were observed:

- The hand-washing policy was implemented in practice with appropriate hand washing for staff and children at all times.
- Liquid soap, warm water, hand paper towels and pedal operated bins were available in the sanitary

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Fire Safety:

The following fire safety measures were observed:

- Fire drills were conducted on a monthly basis.
- The emergency exit doors were unobstructed.
- Staff were aware of evacuation procedures for the children in the event of a fire. The inspector was informed by staff that all additional staff in the building help evacuate the younger children from the building e.g. the cook, the manager and floater.

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,

(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) Fire drills were recorded on a monthly basis the last fire drill took place on the 9th February 2026.

(4) A notice to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed.

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 inspection children were adequately supervised at all times.

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Part VIII - Notifications and Complaints

Regulation 31 - Notification of incidents

A registered provider shall notify the Agency in writing within 3 working days of becoming aware of any of the following incidents occurring in the preschool service:

- (a) the death of a pre-school child while attending the service, including the death of a child in hospital following his or her transfer to hospital from the service;*
- (b) the diagnosis of a pre-school child attending the service, an employee, unpaid worker, contractor or other person working in the service as suffering from an infectious disease within the meaning of the Infectious Diseases Regulations 1981 (S.I. No. 390 of 1981);*
- (c) an incident that occurs in the service and that results in the service being closed for any length of time;*
- (d) a serious injury to a pre-school child while attending the service that requires immediate medical treatment by a registered medical practitioner whether in a hospital or otherwise;*
- (e) an incident in respect of which a pre-school child attending the service goes missing while attending the service.*

Non-Compliance Information

(a)(b)(c)(d)(e) The service did not have a policy or procedures in place to notify the Agency of accidents and incidents that occurred in the service and were not aware of their legal obligation to do so.

(d) A review of the incident and accident records demonstrated that two incidents were not notified to the Agency. Details of the two incidents identified that an injury likely to require medical treatment had occurred in one incident and that the child had attended accident and emergency in another. These incidents were not notified to the inspectorate.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)

The registered providers have recognised that they didn't have any policy or procedure in place to notify the agency of the two incidents that required medical treatment. The Accidents Incidents and Accident Incident Prevention Policy and Procedure has been updated and includes the notification of incidents to this policy. This Policy was shared with all Management on the 24th of March 2026 and will be followed if an incident occurs.

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The legal requirements regarding reporting incidents to our Accidents Incidents and Accident Incident Prevention Policy and Procedure and a meeting with Area Managers was arranged to discuss this policy and the procedure if any incidents occur in the future. All future incidents as listed below will be notified to the department within the required 3 working days.

A notification to the agency will be sent for any of the incident listed (a),(b)(c),(d),(e).

Supporting documentation submitted

Accidents/Incidents and Accident/ Incident Prevention Policy and Procedure to include the notification of incident to the agency was attached to the email sent to the inspector on 06/05/2026.

Summary Comment

The response and assurances from the registered provider have been accepted by the Inspectorate to have addressed the non-compliances in Regulation 31. This will be assessed at the next inspection.

Part VIII - Notifications and Complaints

Regulation 32 – Complaints

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that the complaints policy of the service specifies-

- (a) the procedure to be followed by a person for the purposes of making a complaint in relation to the service,*
- (b) the manner in which such a complaint shall be dealt with, and*
- (c) the procedures for keeping a person who makes such a complaint informed of the manner in which it is being dealt with.*

Compliance Information

(1)(a)(b)& (c) A Complaints Policy was available. Documentation to record any feedback and concerns by the service was available the registered provider stated they have received none to date