

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2025MH001		
Name of Service:	Tots Creche Ruxton Oaks		
Address of Service:	Ruxton Oaks, Navan, Co. Meath		
Eircode:	C15 NW2N		
Name of Registered Provider:	Annette Akerlind, Audrey Murray		
Service type:	Full-Day, Part Time, Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	08/10/2025		
No of pre-school children:	AM	48	PM 42
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 and D Murray		
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 purposely 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, supervisor and 12 childcare staff and cover staff for the kitchen. Present on the day of inspection were the manager, supervisor, 11 childcare staff (one of whom works from 10am to 2pm to cover lunches) and an agency staff in the kitchen. A manager from a neighbouring Tots creche arrived at 9.55am after the inspection commenced and the operations manager arrived at the service at 11.30am. to provide support to the staff during the inspection.

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 manager, supervisor, operation 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*

(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.

Eighteen staff files were reviewed which includes the staff member from another Tots service, the operations manager and the agency staff member in the kitchen.

(2) (a)(b) Thirty-six validated written references were available either from a past employer or from a reputable source.

(c) Garda vetting disclosure was available for all staff members and the agency staff member. 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 4 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 and the area manager 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

(2)(a) (b) References were not available for the agency staff member working in the kitchen.

(d)The operations manager stated that police vetting was required for the agency staff member, however, this was not available. A curriculum vitae was not available for the inspector to determine what police vetting was required.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The chef was working within the service through an Agency and is no longer working with the service.

Prior to any agency staff starting, all checks of staff will be completed, and a copy of all files will be on site at all times.

Summary Comment

The inspectorate accepts the assurances from the registered provider that the agency staff member no longer works in the service. The registered provider has given assurances that all vetting procedures will be carried out prior to a person working in the service. This response has addressed the non-compliance in 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

(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. All children were availing of full day care.
- **Wobbler Room:** Two staff members provided care for 10 children aged between 1 year 3 months to 2 years. All children were availing of full day care.
- **Toddler Room:** Three staff members provided cared for 12 children aged between 1 year 10 months to 3 years. All children were availing of full day care.
- **Preschool Room 1:** One staff member provided cared for 9 children aged between 2 years 8 months to 4 years 6 months. All children were availing of full day care.
- **Pre School Room 2** One staff member provided cared for 10. These preschool children were aged between 2 years 8 months to 4years 6 months. Four children were availing of full day care and 6 children were attending a sessional service.

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

Non-Compliance Information

- (1) During the inspection while the adult child ratios were met, the needs of the children were not met at all times as detailed below.
1. The Wobbler room children transitioned from the outdoor area back to the care room and were starting to prepare for dinner. At 12.08pm, some children were having dinner, a child from another room was using the toilet in this room from the outdoor area and one of the staff members from this room was assisting this child. One of the tables in the room was unsteady and children's dinners were slipping from the table. The inspector alerted the staff to this. Also, during dinner time as children were eating one of the two staff available in the room commenced placing the beds for sleep in the room. An additional staff member was required in this room to assist at mealtimes, assist children to the toilet from the outdoor area and placing the sleep beds out.
 2. In the ECCE room 2 upstairs there was 1 staff member with 10 children. Three of these children had additional needs and needed assistance with putting on their coats, completing activities and also close supervision. While the staff member was trying to attend to every child needs children were becoming restless. An additional staff was needed to support transition.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. Manager spoke with the staff after the inspection to inform them this was not the correct practice and puts rooms out of ratio. Manager stated that the children must use the toilet in the hall. This was reiterated at the staff meeting where all staff were in attendance. Manager also reminded staff that if they need assistance to contact the office.
- 2 This was discussed in the staff meeting and is monitored by the floor manager regularly. AIMS support staff is in place and children have moved rooms to allow for the high levels of support and care to be provided. Manager spoke with the staff member to call the office for support and assistance will be given. AIMS support staff now in place and at times of transitions management check with staff upstairs if assistance is needed, this check is completed by manager or assistant manager. Regular service walkarounds are completed to ensure all staff and children are ok and to check if assistance is required,

walkarounds have been added to the service routine and a floor manager routine has been created highlighting the need to support in rooms.

Supporting documentation submitted

Staff meeting notes attached to the email and sent to the inspectors on the 25/11/2025

Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider has addressed the non-compliance in Regulation 11.

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

Basic Needs:

- All children in each room were observed to enjoy outdoor play during the inspection.
- Children were supported to be independent with hand washing and toileting support was provided to children, if required.

Supporting relationships:

- Communication with staff and parents is informally at drop off and collection times and by using an electronic device.
- Children who became upset were nurtured and cuddled until they felt ready to rejoin the group.
- Staff were observed to have respectful, warm and responsive interactions with the children through the use of soft tones and positive non-verbal communication strategies such as being at the children's level.
- Staff were observed to engaged with and sit with the children during play time and having positive interactions during play activities. They were responsive to the children and were observed to give them choices regarding their play activities.

Non-Compliance Information

1. At 11.50am children in the Baby room were placed in their highchairs for dinner however, dinner was not served to this room until 12.05pm to 12.10pm. As children waiting they became restless and displayed

signs of tiredness. When the dinner arrived one child was falling asleep and did not eat it. The timeframe is too long for children to be expected to wait in their highchairs without becoming restless.

2. In the Toddler room from 11.30am to 12.25pm children were observed displaying signs of tiredness while preparing and waiting for their dinner. Two children fell asleep in staff members arms, another child rested its head on their hands on the table, two other children were laying down in the cosy areas rubbing their eyes. Three other children became restless and started hitting each other. On discussion with a staff member the practice in this room is that the children go down to sleep after dinner. The provision for sleep must be child led and not service led.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. Manager spoke with the staff member about how the children should not be placed in highchairs until dinner arrives, this discussion was had at support and supervision meetings on the 16/10/25. This was also discussed with all staff in the staff meeting on the 13/11/25. Discussed with all staff at the staff meeting and is being monitored moving forward to ensure all routines are child-led.
2. This was discussed with all staff at the staff meeting the importance of following the children's lead, staff were reminded to contact the office if a child is tired so alternative arrangements for sleep are put in place. The sleep policy was discussed with all staff at the staff meeting on the 13/11/25 and will be monitoring this closely through regular walkarounds within the service.

Supporting documentation submitted

Back to Basics document attached to the email and sent to the inspectors on the 25/11/2025.

Sleep assessment, staff meeting and back to basics attached to the email and sent to the inspectors on the 25/11/2025.

Summary Comment

The response and assurances from the registered provider have been accepted to address the non-compliances in Regulation 19.

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:

Appropriate measures had been taken to safeguard the children as outlined below:

- External gates and doors were secured to prevent children from exiting the service unsupervised and to prevent unauthorised persons from gaining access to the pre-school.
- Heavy equipment was secured to prevent tipping and injury.
- Cleaning products and hazardous materials were stored securely out of reach of the children.

Infection Control:

The following infection control measures were observed in the service as demonstrated by the following examples:

- The service was clean with cleaning schedules maintained on a daily basis.
- All bins for contaminated waste were foot pedal operated.
- Warm water, hand paper towel and liquid soap was available in the children’s sanitary facilities.

Fire Safety:

The following fire safety practices were observed in the service as demonstrated by the following examples:

- All emergency exit doors were accessible in the event of an evacuation.
- Fire drills were recorded on a monthly basis; the last recorded fire drill was the 19th September 2025.

Non-Compliance Information

Safe Sleep:

A risk assessment and a sleep plan was not available for 2 children under 2 years (one aged 16 months and one ages 20 months) which is contrary to safe sleep guidance. There was no evidence that the parents of the children were informed that the children were sleeping on floor beds rather than in cots.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

Management ensured all children sleeping on floor beds had the correct paperwork signed to ensure parents understanding of where their child would be sleeping.

Management spoke at the staff meeting about the importance of communicating with parents any changes in routine and transitions to floor beds to ensure awareness. Management also highlighted how the correct paperwork needs to be signed prior to children moving rooms.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Sleep plans are attached to the emails and sent to the inspectors on the 25/11/2025

Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider has addressed the non-compliance in Regulation 23.

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.