

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CW048				
Name of Service:	Tots to Teens				
Address of Service:	Shillelagh Road, Tullow, Co. Carlow				
Eircode:	R93 A073				
Name of Registered Provider:	Samantha Roche				
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional				
Date of Inspection:	12/08/2026				
No of pre-school children:	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>AM</td> <td>29</td> <td>PM</td> <td>25</td> </tr> </table>	AM	29	PM	25
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Child and Family Agency, Athy Road, Carlow.				
Inspection undertaken by:	E Cullen				
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).

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Description of service

This service is located just outside the town of Tullow Co Carlow. The service offers full day care, part-time and a sessional Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme to preschool children aged between 6 months and 6 years of age. The service also provides a school aged service. The service operates from 7.45am to 5.45pm from Monday to Friday for 51 weeks per year. The service operates from a purpose-built premises. There are five preschool rooms, a junior wobbler room, senior wobbler room, toddler room, preschool room and a sessional/school aged room on the first floor. The service has access to four outdoor play areas to the rear of the premises. There are two sleep rooms available for children attending the service.

Staffing

The service currently employs 21 staff members, which includes a management team, staff working directly with children, reception, kitchen and maintenance staff. The registered provider does not work directly with children in the service. Staff members held qualifications in Early Childhood Education and Care at Level 5, 6, and 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

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.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9 – Management and Recruitment, 11 – Staffing levels, 15 – Record of a pre-school child, 17 – Information for parents, 20 – Facilities for rest and play, 23- Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child, 25 - First Aid, 26 – Fire safety measures and 28 – Insurance. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 15, 20 and 23. As a result, the scope of the inspection included the senior wobbler, toddler and preschool rooms.

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 persons in charge, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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.*

(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) There was a designated person in charge on the day of inspection, and a named person was available to deputise as required.

(2) Documentation was reviewed for the twenty-one staff members employed by the service.

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

(d) International police vetting was available for four staff members who had lived outside the state for a period over 6 months.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

(4) Certificates of qualification were available on file demonstrating that staff members held a qualification at the minimum level 5 and above on the National Framework of Qualifications.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a)(b) Eleven validated references were not available for seven staff members from either a past employer, or from a reputable source. In addition, two reference which were available were not validated.
It is acknowledged that twenty-nine validated references were available for fifteen staff members.

(3) The registered provider did not take appropriate measures to ensure that all employees were suitable to work in an early years service prior to their commencement as demonstrated by the absence of documents required for (2)(a)(b) above.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

All references have now been received and validated (one C.E had finished up, so reference not received).
Checklists applied to all staff files and monthly checks will be carried out and documented to ensure that all relevant files are complete.

Supporting documentation submitted

Validated references and checklist.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The noncompliance identified has been adequately addressed.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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.

Compliance Information

(1)(2) On the day of inspection there were adequate numbers of staff were working directly with the children at all times. There were 29 children with 8 staff members directly supervising them during the morning of the inspection and 25 children with 7 staff members during the afternoon.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:

- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;*
- (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;*
- (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;*
- (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;*
- (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;*
- (f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;*
- (g) the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner;*
- (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;*
- (i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.*

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Compliance Information

(1)(a) – (g)(i) Prior to a child commencing in the service, all parents and guardians were issued with a child registration form. This registration form was developed by the service and contained all the required information for parents and guardians to complete.

A sample of ten child registration forms were reviewed on the day of inspection, and two were completed in full, with appropriate declarations signed by parents and guardians.

Non-Compliance Information

(h) Eight of the ten records reviewed did not have information on children's immunisation status. This posed a risk in the event of an outbreak of an infectious disease in the service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

We asked all parents to update us with immunisation records.

Checklist on each child's file and monthly checks carried out and documented, to ensure all relevant files are complete.

Supporting documentation submitted

Checklist.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The noncompliance identified has been adequately addressed.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 17 – Information for parents

A registered provider shall ensure that a parent or guardian of a child proposing to attend the service is provided with the information referred to in subparagraphs (a) to (g) of Regulation 16(1).

Compliance Information

Information for parents was available in several locations, namely: parent's handbook provided to new families entering the service, on information notice boards, in the services policies and procedures and via email.

The information provided to parents proposing to register their children in the service included: the details of staff members, the age profile of children who the service caters for, class of service and the hours which are on offer. Details of the services policies and procedures and adult to child ratios. Details of the facilities and the programme of activities and care provided were available and accessible to proposed parents.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Each early years room had also developed classroom specific welcome packs for the new children and families transitioning into the respective room. These contained room specific information such as details of the staff members and what to expect in the year ahead.

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-

(a) having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day, and

(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.

(3) A registered provider of a full day care service, a part-time day care service or a childminding service, other than such a service to which paragraph (2) applies, shall ensure that-

(a) a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the pre-school children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises, or

Compliance Information

(1)(a) There were adequate and suitable facilities available for the numbers of children attending the service. The early years rooms in use, were clean and organised. There was consideration given to the layout of the rooms, to ensure children could play together in groups or individually. Children's play and learning was supported through defined areas of interest and adequate materials and resources.

(1)(b) There were two dedicated sleep rooms available for use by children attending the junior and senior wobbler and toddler rooms. There was an adequate number of cots and low-level beds available to meet the sleep requirements of children in the service. Each classroom had a cosy space with floor mats, cushions or small couches for rest during the day.

(3)(a) Children could directly access three of the enclosed outdoor play areas from early years rooms on the ground floor. An additional garden was available adjacent to these spaces. On the day of inspection children were

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

observed to use the play areas off each classroom. The play spaces were free from hazards and equipment was safe for use by the age groups of children in attendance.

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:

There was a keypad and buzzer entry and exit system in place on the main entrance door of the building to prevent unauthorised persons gaining entry or children exiting unsupervised. The reception area was manned by a receptionist, and all visitors were requested to sign in on arrival. The kitchen and staff areas were inaccessible to children. All cleaning agents were stored safely and out of reach of children.

Accident and incident books maintained a record of any incidents, these were completed in detail and signatures confirmed that relevant parents, staff and a manager were informed.

Equipment used by children indoors and outdoors was in good condition and suitable for use by the age range of children using them.

Infection Control:

The service was clean and well maintained with cleaning schedules maintained daily by staff. Children were observed washing their hands before eating, after outdoor play, toileting, and nappy changing. There was warm running water, liquid soap and paper hand towels available for hand washing throughout the service. Tables and equipment were cleaned prior to food being served to children and appropriate safe food storage and preparation was observed.

During nappy changing processes observed, staff adhered to the services nappy changing policy. Staff ensured that they wore gloves and aprons during the nappy changing process and both child and staff hands were washed after nappy changing had taken place.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Administration of Medication:

Signed medication record books documented the details of any medications which had been administered in the service in line with the service policy on administration of medication. Medications supplied by parents were stored securely and inaccessible to children. Health care plans were put in place where required.

Safe Sleep:

Staff were familiar with best practices in safe sleep and carried out physical checks on individual sleeping children at regular intervals recording individual children's sleep positions, colour and breathing. The sleep room temperatures were continually monitored by staff, with a digital thermometer located in each sleep room. Staff were familiar with the service's sleep policy which was displayed in the sleep room.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. There were large gaps between several of the soft fall all weather tiles in two of the outdoor areas, posing a risk of tripping.

Safe Sleep:

2. The temperatures of the two rooms used for sleep on the day of inspection exceeded the required 18-22°C for children over the age of one year. The temperatures ranged from 23.1°C to 24.2°C while children were sleeping. It is acknowledged that children appeared comfortable as the staff and management had several measures in place to mitigate the temperatures, including the use of fans for air circulation, blankets were removed and additional sleep checks were being completed.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. Maintenance have pushed the all-weather tiles together in one area, the border needs to be secured to keep them together. Both gardens are predicted to be complete in 4 to 6 weeks. Regular checks/risk assessment to ensure this is remaining secure.

Safe Sleep:

2. We will source portable air conditioning units for sleep rooms to help maintain cooler temperatures within these rooms. These are all out of stock now, however once they come in, we will purchase them. Place air conditioning units in sleep rooms.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. Photographs

Safe Sleep:

2. No evidence.

Summary Comment

This regulation remains non-compliant. The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted to date, required works and purchase of equipment fall outside the timeframe of the report.

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) There were seven staff members trained in first aid response available to the children attending the early years service.

(2)(a)(b) There were suitably equipped first aid boxes stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous positions in each classroom available for the use of the children attending the early years service.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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.

Compliance Information

(1)(a) There was a record of fire drills which had taken place in the service. The most recent fire drill was recorded as having taken place on 29 July 2026.

(b) There was a record available demonstrating that the firefighting equipment was last serviced on 01 October 2025 and the smoke alarm system was last serviced on 11 June 2026.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service demonstrated insurance cover for a full day care. The insurance policy commenced 01 January 2026 and will expire 31 December 2026.