

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015MN058
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Name of Service:	Tots to Teens
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Address of Service:	Carrowhatta, Scotstown, Co. Monaghan
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Eircode:	H18 NV97
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Name of Registered Provider:	Niamh Boylan
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	13/05/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	65	PM	36
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	No.18 The Grange Plantation Road Monaghan
Inspection undertaken by:	S. Skinnader and AM. Cunningham
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).

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Description of service

Tots to Teens has been operating as a community run childcare service since 2002. They provide full day care, part-time and sessional education and care to pre-school children aged from 0 - 6 years of age. The service is open from 8am – 6pm each weekday and caters for a maximum of 90 children. The service operates from rooms in the local GAA centre in the village of Scotstown Co. Monaghan. The service has 5 care rooms in operation the Little Ladybirds, Busy Bees, Bright Sparks, Shooting Stars and Sunny Rays Rooms. There are sanitary accommodations, two sleep rooms, nappy changing facilities, a kitchen, an office and a staff room also in the service.

Staffing

There are 30 staff and 1 student employed in the service:

- the person in charge and 2 others employed in administrative roles.
- 20 staff who work directly with the preschool children one of whom also works with the school aged children.
- 3 staff work in the kitchen.
- 4 staff who work with school aged children only.

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.

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A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulation 15, 19 and 23 and as a result, the scope of the inspection included The Little Ladybirds, Busy Bees, Sunny Rays and Shooting Stars 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 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*

(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) The service had a designated person in charge and a designated named deputy person to deputise as required. The person in charge was on the premises for the duration of the inspection.

(c) There was a clear management structure within the service.

The staff files for all staff members were reviewed on the last inspection and met compliance. The staff files for the 4 staff members and the student who had commenced employment in the service since the last inspection were reviewed. In addition, Garda vetting disclosures were reviewed for all staff member

(2)(a) & (b)

There were 2 written and validated references from a past employer or an alternative source available for the 4 members of staff and 1 student.

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(c) Documentary evidence of a processed Garda vetting disclosure was available for the 4 new staff and the student. Garda vetting disclosures were reviewed for all other staff members and were found to be within the re-vetting timeframes for staff who are currently working in the service.

(d) International police vetting was available for the 2 new staff members who had lived outside the Irish jurisdiction for a period of 6 months or more.

(4) The 3 staff members who worked directly with the preschool children held at least a minimum Level 5 Childcare qualification. A qualification was not required for the student or staff member working only with the school aged children.

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) During the inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.

(2) When the inspectors arrived unannounced to the service there were 5 rooms in operation the Little Ladybirds, Busy Bees, Bright Sparks, Shooting Stars and Sunny Rays. In the afternoon the Bright Stars Room was used for school aged children with those children staying on a full day basis staying in the Shooting Stars and Sunny Rays Rooms.

The following adult: child ratios were observed:

- Two staff in the Little Ladybird Room with 6 children aged 9 months to 1 year and 9 months. A floater member of staff was also available to this room.

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- Four staff in the Busy Bees Room with 14 children aged 2 years to 3 years and 2 months.
- Three staff in the Bright Sparks Room with 14 children aged 3 - 3 years and 10 months.
- Two staff in the Shooting Stars Room with 16 children aged 4 - 5 Years. There was also 1 student present in this room.
- Three staff in the Sunny Rays Room with 15 children aged 4 years 7 months to 5 years.

(8) On review the registered provider ensured that there were 2 qualified members of staff available on the premises at all times.

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.*

Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider ensured a record was kept in writing in relation to the children's details as outlined in Regulation 15(1)(a) to (i). A sample of thirteen children's registration forms were inspected, all of which were found to be appropriately completed with the required information.

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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-
- (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.
- (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

For the purpose of this inspection under Regulation 19(1)(b) Bright Sparks Room is not included.

(1)(b) The registered provider ensured the following care practices were in place having regards for the number of children in attendance and the nature of their needs.

- In the Ladybird Room there was an individual "Daily Schedule" displayed for each child attending the room detailing their sleep routines, number of bottles and when they were taken, meal and sleep needs. There was also a system in place for parents to inform the staff when different types of foods had been introduced to their children's diet during weaning. Meals in all rooms were of an age-appropriate consistency and portion size.
- Attention was given to personal care, faces and hands were cleaned and bibs were placed on the younger children for mealtimes.
- In the Busy Bees and Little Ladybirds Rooms there was a system in place where nappies were changed routinely and as required in a timely manner. The toilet trained children throughout the service were encouraged to be independent with toileting and discreet supervision was also provided by staff as required.
- In both the Busy Bees and Little Ladybird Rooms child led sleep needs were observed in operation with the staff following the younger children's sleep plans and staff being aware of the children's cues of tiredness in the older children.
- Practices promoting and developing independence with daily activities were observed in both the Little Ladybirds and Busy Bees Rooms, for example; the younger children were progressed out of highchairs and into age-appropriate tables and chairs for meals and tabletop activities. In the Busy Bees Room, the

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children were encouraged to remove their own shoes and place them on the windowsill prior to going to the sleep room and were encouraged to try and put on their own coats. Drinks were accessible at the low-level sink area for the children to independently access.

- Staff in the Shooting Stars and Sunny Rays room operated a key worker system which helps children to form secure relationships and build close relationships with a key person. This enables the children to feel emotionally secure when away from home and provides a reassuring point of contact for parents and guardians. Warm soft tones were used by the staff when speaking with the children.
- In all rooms fully completed medical care plans were displayed for any child attending the room with an additional medical need. This also contained a photograph of the child and details of where to find the child's medication should it be required.
- Staff were also very familiar with strategies and care practices in place to assist a child who required additional supports.

(2) and (3)

The registered provider ensured that no corporal punishment is inflicted on a pre-school child whilst attending the service. Soft tones, positive and respectful language were observed in interactions between the staff and children in all the rooms, for example "oh sweetheart, are you tired?", "great work" and "thank you". During nappy changing pleasant interactions were also observed which also included song singing.

In the Busy Bees room staff were familiar with different behaviour management strategies which didn't work with the children and were able to use others which did. For example, timers generally did not work within the room, whereas encouragement with turn taking and re-direction to playing with something else worked.

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

Infection Control:

- There was a constant supply of thermostatically controlled hot water, liquid hand soap and paper towels
- Throughout the service gentle handwashing reminders were given to the children in the various rooms after toileting, nappy changing, outdoor play and before meals.

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- Nappy changing procedures were carried out appropriately with gloves and aprons worn by staff and appropriately removed after use. Nappy changing mats were in good condition.
- Tabletops were cleaned after activities and before mealtimes.
- In the sleep rooms, individual baskets were available for the children's cot sheets to prevent cross contamination.
- There were individual lidded containers to store each child's soother.
- A mouth toy box was available in both the Little Ladybirds and Busy Bees Rooms.
- There was a "nose care station" in the Busy Bees Room and there was a face cleaning station in the Little Ladybirds Room where there was a face cloth for each child on a labelled hook.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service had adequate insurance cover for a maximum of 100 children expiring 27/3/27.