

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WW209
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Name of Service:	Jolly Tots Creche
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Address of Service:	South Bray, 107 Oldcourt Avenue, Bray, Co. Wicklow
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Eircode:	A98 N927
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Name of Registered Provider:	Denise Johnston
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Service type:	Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	22/07/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	8	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	The Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, St John's Road West, Dublin 8.
Inspection undertaken by:	S. Early O'Brien
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).

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Description of service

Jolly Tots Creche is a community based, non-profit part-time service located in a housing estate in Bray, Co. Wicklow. The service operates from an adapted two-storey semi-detached house and consists of one care room. The building also serves as a community resource centre. The early years' service is registered to provide care and education to children from 0-6 years of age. Children who currently attend the service are aged between two and four years of age. The service does not operate the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme. The opening hours are from 09:00 to 17:00 Monday to Thursday and 09:00 to 13:00 on Friday each week. This includes a part-time service in the morning and a sessional service in the afternoon.

Staffing

There is a Board of Management in charge of the service. The registered provider does not work directly in the service. There are currently five staff members employed in the service to work directly with the children including the person in charge and deputy person in charge. Three staff were present on the day of inspection, including the person in charge who was managing the service on the day.

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 areas of governance, health, welfare and development of child, safety and records. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

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

- Regulation 9 (1)(2)(3)(4) - Management and recruitment,
- Regulation 11 (1)(2) - Staffing levels,
- Regulation 15(1) – Record of a Pre-School child,
- Regulation 19(1)(b) – Health, Welfare and Development of Child,
- Regulation 20(1) – Facilities for Rest and Play,
- Regulation 21 – Equipment and Materials,
- Regulation 23 - Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of child,

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 15(1)– Record of a Pre-School Child.

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

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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.*

(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) The centre manager is the designated person in charge of the service and there is a named person appointed to deputise as required.
 - (b) The centre manager was present and in charge of the service during the inspection.

(2)

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Upon review of the staff roster and staff files, it was identified that there was one new staff member employed to work in the service since the last inspection on 03 July 2025. All staff files were reviewed in relation to regulation 9(2)(c).

Documentation was reviewed in respect of one adult and met regulatory requirements as follows:

- (a) Of the two validated, written references that were required, none were available from a past employer.
- (b) Of the two validated, written references that were required, two were available from a source other than a past employer.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures were on file and had been obtained for five staff members demonstrating that the service adhered to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years for all staff.
- (d) Police vetting was not required as there was no evidence to suggest that any staff member had lived outside of the State for a period of more than six months as an adult.

(3)
The records outlined in regulation 9(2) above were dated prior to the commencement date of employment of the adults in the service.

(4)
Records were available demonstrating that all adults employed to work directly with the children since the last inspection held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications.

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.

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Compliance Information

- (1)
- An adequate number of adults were working directly with the children at all times during the inspection.
- (2)
- The minimum ratio of adults to children for part-time services was adhered to at all times during the inspection. On the day of inspection there were eight children attending the service being supervised by three adults on the morning of inspection.

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)(a)-(i)
- A sample of six records were reviewed and were completed as required by the regulation.

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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.

Compliance Information

Children's care needs were observed to be met promptly on the day of inspection. Staff were observed engaging warmly with children when providing this care. Children were encouraged and supported to be independent including cleaning up after their play and meals. The adults supported the children to manage their personal care. Staff reminded and assisted children with hand washing and cleaned their noses as needed. Children wearing nappies had these changed at scheduled times or as needed in between these times. The older children used the toilet independently.

Healthy eating was promoted in the service and staff reported that all meals are provided by the service for children attending on a part-time and sessional basis. On the day of inspection, the children were observed to be eating a lunch of beans and toast. Staff advised that alternatives were available, and food preferences were catered for on the day of inspection. Additional portions were available for those children who requested more. Children were encouraged to feed themselves and staff supported children who needed assistance. Children appeared happy and content within the care rooms. A choice of water or milk was available for drinking in the care room during lunch and drinking water was freely available at all other times during inspection.

Children were supported in transitions between activities within the care room. Children were familiar with these transitions and engaged in these smoothly. The environment appeared calm and there was very positive engagement between the children and adults.

Staff demonstrated a good awareness of the needs of each child in their care and responded to children's cues promptly, offering comfort and support when needed. Staff interacted warmly with the children throughout the inspection and were observed supporting children in their play. Staff encouraged and praised the children when promoting positive behaviour and provided appropriate distraction techniques where necessary. Staff provided an appropriate level of supervision whilst supporting the children's choice and independence during play and mealtimes.

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Staff members explained that information in relation to each child's day is communicated with parents daily at drop off and collection time. This sharing of information was observed on inspection as parents/guardians arrived to collect their children.

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.*

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

The indoor environment consisted of one care room with adjoining sanitary accommodation. The care room was bright with adequate space for the children. The room was adequately laid out with resources of interest accessible to the children. Children had access to an outdoor play area located to the rear of the service which was suitable to the ages of the children. This space consisted of a grass surface and was well resourced with a variety of toys for the children to use such as, as area for planting, a sandpit, climbing frame and slides.

The staff advised the inspectors that they facilitate daily outdoor play. The outdoor area and the equipment and materials available provide appropriate learning opportunities for the children based on their age and stage of development. On the day of inspection, children were playing outdoors and were adequately dressed.

(b) The care room had a cosy/rest area within the room to provide space for rest and relaxation for children who may require time out from the normal activity within the room and this consisted of a child sized couch, beanbags and cushions.

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Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

The tables and chairs provided in the service were suitable for the age and stage of development of the children in the care room.

A sufficient amount of materials for the number of children attending were available on low level shelving and were observed to be easily accessible to the children. The children were observed to have autonomy in leading their play choices without the direction of the adults.

The play equipment and materials were observed to be durable and easy to clean.

The equipment available included jigsaws, floor play toys, table top activities, a home corner, dress-up and provided opportunities for solitary and group play opportunities. Construction toys, and sensory toys were among the array of materials available in addition to mark-making resources such as crayons, markers, paints and glue. The presence of a family wall display and children's artwork demonstrated a sense of identity and belonging for the children.

The outdoor area and the equipment and materials available provided appropriate learning opportunities for the children based on their age and stage of development. On the day of inspection, the children were observed to have an opportunity to play outdoors and were adequately dressed for the weather.

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 toys and play equipment observed in use by the children in the indoor and outdoor areas on the day of inspection were safe and in good working order.
- The person in charge had taken measures to ensure the indoor and outdoor play environments were safe and free from hazards.

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- Medication, which is only administered in an emergency, was stored safely and out of the reach of children.
- Storage facilities for hazardous cleaning materials were inaccessible to children

Infection Control:

- Liquid soap, warm water and paper towels were available to facilitate hand washing in the care room and in the adjoining sanitary accommodation of the care room. Good hand-washing practices were observed after toileting, on return indoors from outdoor play, before eating and before and after nappy changing for staff and children.
- Foot pedal bins were available throughout the service for the safe disposal of used hand towels and other waste products.
- Tables were observed by the inspector to be cleaned before and after snack time.
- Cleaning schedules were available in the care room and the service appeared clean.

Administration of Medication:

- An adequate administration of medication record was available to document medication given should this be required in an emergency. All staff were familiar with the procedures outlined in the services administration of medication policy and procedure

Fire Safety:

- All fire exits were clear of obstruction.