

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015GY277				
Name of Service:	Tots Paradise				
Address of Service:	Montpellier, Athenry, Co. Galway				
Eircode:	H65 H702				
Name of Registered Provider:	Denise Rabbitte				
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional				
Date of Inspection:	30/04/2026				
No of pre-school children:	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>AM</td> <td>65</td> <td>PM</td> <td>52</td> </tr> </table>	AM	65	PM	52
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Quality Assurance Directorate, Clinical & Administration Building, Block A- (1st Floor-Green Corridor), Merlin Park, Galway.
Inspection undertaken by:	B Lavin, F Kelly, F Duffy.
Title:	Early Years Inspectors Inspection and registration manager

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

This privately operated service is attached to the registered provider's home. It is in the townland of Montpellier, which is near the town of Athenry, Co Galway. It provides a blended indoor and outdoor full day care service from 07.00 to 18.00, from Monday to Friday. The pre-school is divided into Classroom 1 and Classroom 2 (indoor), Geo-pod 1 and Geo-pod 2 (also known as Classroom 3 outdoors) and Classroom 4 is the outdoor room adjacent to Classroom 1. There is a designated wooden building and an outdoor area for the school aged programme. The service has stackable beds, providing the opportunity for children to sleep. There are secure outdoor play areas to the rear and sides of the premises.

Staffing

The registered provider works in the service daily. There was a named person in charge and a deputy person in charge. There were 23 staff members employed in the service, which include the registered provider, deputy person in charge, 1 kitchen worker and there were 10 staff members who work directly with the preschool children. There were nine staff members that work with the school age afterschool programme and one relief worker that can work with the early years children and the school aged children.

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 and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

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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 registered provider, 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.

(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 registered provider was the designated person in charge and there was a named person who was able to deputise as required.

(b) During the period of inspection, the person in charge was on the premises and facilitated the inspection.

(2) Following a review of the staff roster and discussions with the registered provider, it was established that there were 12 staff members that were employed in the service since the last inspection of the 10/10/24. These 12 staff files were reviewed. Garda vetting disclosures were also reviewed for six existing staff member's that were present at the previous inspection dated the 10/10/2024.

(2)(a) There were 23 of the required 24 written and validated references available from a previous employer.

(2)(b) The remaining written and validated reference was from a source other than a previous employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for all the adults working in the service. The service adhered to the

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re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew garda vetting every three years.

(d) Police vetting disclosures were available for the six adults working in the service who had lived outside the jurisdiction for a period of over six months as adults.

(4) The 11 staff members working directly with the early years children had attained major awards in Early Childhood Care and Education at level 5 or above on the national framework of qualifications, or qualifications deemed by the Department to meet the regulatory requirement.

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.

in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 3 of Schedule 6 opposite a particular reference number 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) There were 10 adults working directly with children on the day of inspection.
- (2) The minimum adult to child ratios were provided on the morning of inspection in accordance with the required ratios considering the ages of the children and the length of time each child spent in the service as outlined below:
- Classroom 1: Three adults cared for 18 children aged between 2 and 3 years of age.
 - Classroom 2: Three adults cared for 19 children aged between 3 and 4 years of age.
 - Classroom 3: Two adults cared for 17 children aged between 4 and 5 years of age.

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- Classroom 4: Two adults cared for 11 children aged 4 years of age.

Two additional staff members provided relief cover for breaks and nappy changes. The registered provider facilitated the inspection.

(8) There were at least two adults present in the service at all times during the inspection.

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

- Drinking water was available to all children in individual beakers throughout the day.
- Children were supported during mealtimes with feeding when needed. Independence was encouraged with self-help skills.
- Children sat at tables and chairs which were appropriate for their height and/or stage of development.
- The staff were observed sitting at the child's level and chatted in a respectful manner.
- Nappy changing was carried out regularly and promptly when required and handled in a positive and sensitive manner. Staff members were observed speaking to children during this time and using it as an opportunity for warm one to one interaction.
- The privacy and dignity of each child was respected during nappy changing and toileting.
- Older preschool children were facilitated with a scheduled rest period in the afternoon. For children who did not require a sleep, appropriate rest facilities were available in the care rooms and children were observed spending time in this area for short periods of rest throughout the day.
- Each room had its own designated outdoor play area with play materials designed for gross motor play. The children from each playroom spent time in their outdoor spaces exploring, climbing and playing.
- The adults working with the children were sensitive and responsive in promoting positive behaviours and supported children to find positive solutions to sharing toys, equipment and turn taking.

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- Children had plenty of opportunities to move themselves, to practice and improve their emerging skills, such as co-ordination and balance.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 22 – Food and drink

A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

- There was a 3-week menu plan in place in the service.
- In the morning before 09.00, the children had access to a selection of oat and wheat-based cereals, with milk and toast.
- At 10.30, the children had their snacks provided by parents and guardians which included raisins, cheese, bread sticks, crackers, rice cakes, sandwiches, fruit pieces and yogurt.
- At 13:15, the children had their main meal. On the day of inspection, the main meal was chicken goujons, mashed potatoes, vegetables and gravy.
- At 15:30, the children had bread sticks, rice cakes and fruit.
- Cutlery and plates were offered for children's snack/mealtimes, appropriate to the age and stage of development of the children.
- Clean and safe drinking water at a low-level drinks' tables were available and accessible to children in each playroom.
- There was a designated fridge for the safe storage of perishable foodstuffs from children's lunch boxes for their snack time.

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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:

- A bell system was in place on an internal entrance door to the service to control admission of people to the service. This door was secured during the inspection to prevent children from leaving unsupervised.
- Access to the kitchen was secured from children with safety gates.
- The outdoor areas were secured with fencing and gates to protect the children within.
- Medication and cleaning agents were stored in a secured area out of reach of the children.
- The blind cords were appropriately secured to the windows throughout the service.
- Visibility strips were installed on glass doors and windows for safety precautions and to prevent injury to children and staff.

Infection Control:

- Children were observed washing their hands after painting activities and before mealtimes.
- Warm water was available in all hand wash basins with temperatures ranging from 32.2°C to 38.6°C.
- Paper towel, soap and lidded bins were available at the hand wash basins and sanitary areas in the service.
- The service was maintained in a clean condition.

Administration of Medication:

- No medication was observed to be administered to a child by staff on the day of inspection. Temperature reducing medication was available. It was safely stored and in date. In conversation staff were able to detail the procedures for administering medication to children.

Safe Sleep:

- Stackable beds were available for the children aged over 2 years old who required a nap.
- Regular sleep checks were carried out by staff when children slept.

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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)
- Two staff had current First Aid Responder training (FAR) completed and were available to the children attending the pre-school service.
- (2)
- (a) There was a first aid box safely stored in each care room and easily accessible to staff on the premises.
 - (b) These first aid boxes were adequately stocked with the required necessary items.