

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015MH202
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Name of Service:	Tiny Tots Montessori Dunboyne
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Address of Service:	1 Garnett Hall, Dunboyne, Co. Meath
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Eircode:	A86 NN25
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Name of Registered Provider:	Sheila Murphy
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	17/06/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	10	PM	Not applicable
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	2 nd Floor, 4/5, The Nexus Building, Blanchardstown Corporate Park, Ballycoolin, Dublin 15
Inspection undertaken by:	Y Kelly
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

Tiny Tots Montessori provides a sessional service to children from 2 to 6 years and operates a morning session from 09:00am to 12:00pm. Children who are eligible can participate in the Early Childhood Care and Education Programme (ECCE). The service is situated in a room in the registered providers own home with sanitary facilities. An outdoor space is located to the rear of the premises.

Staffing

The registered provider operates the service along with 1 other staff member.

Methodology

Tusla 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.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under the regulations 9, 11, 15, 19, 21, 23, and 26. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

As a result, the scope of the inspection included Tiny Tots Montessori room. A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 15.

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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 inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, staff member 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*

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(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) There is a designated person in charge for the service and a named person to deputise as required.

(b) The registered provider was present and in charge of the service when the inspector arrived unannounced to the service at 09:15am and was present for the duration of the inspection.

(2) The file for 1 adult was reviewed and garda vetting for 2 adults including the registered provider and the following was recorded:

(a) References from past employers were not required as all references were from a reputable source other than a past employer.

(b) Two written validated references were available from a reputable source other than a past employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for 2 adults whose files were reviewed. However, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. Please refer to the information outlined under regulation 23 of this report.

(d) International Police vetting was not required as no adult had lived outside of the state for a period of more than 6 months.

(4) Documentary evidence was available to confirm that 1 adult whose files were reviewed and who may work directly with the children in the service held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed eligible by the Department of Children, Disability and Equality.

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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.*
- (3) Subject to paragraph (5), a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 2 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) therefore at that reference number is satisfied.*

Compliance Information

- (1) On the day of the inspection there was an adequate number of staff members working directly with the children attending the service.
- (3) The adult to child ratio was correct in the service when the inspector arrived unannounced and remained so throughout the inspection. There were 2 adults, including the registered provider and the early years practitioner working with 10 children aged 4 years and 5 months to 5 years 9 months on the morning of the inspection. The registered provider works directly with the children also as part of the Access and Inclusion Model scheme.

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;*
 - © 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;*
 - © 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;*

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(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.

(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-

© an authorised person.

Compliance Information

(1) On review of 10 children's registration records, the required information and details were available. The following information was included:

(a) the name and date of birth of the child.

(b) the date on which the child first attended the service.

© a provision for the date the child ceased to attend the service.

(d) the name and address of an emergency contact of the child that can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service.

© 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.

(3)© Records were open to inspection by an authorised person. All records requested by the inspector were available for review.

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

(1)(a) The following observations were made on how each child's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the daily life in the service:

Basic needs:

- Children's snack and water bottles were brought from home and included crackers, yoghurts and fruit. Children were observed to sit and eat together and chatted socially during this time and staff offered help to children as needed and engaged in conversations with the children.
- Children's water bottles were accessible to the children in both the indoor and outdoor environments and children were observed to access water bottles independently.
- All the children attending the service were given the opportunity to spend time in the outdoor area during the inspection. Children spent time playing games in the outdoor area.

Supporting relationships around children:

- Staff demonstrated warm and caring interactions with the children. Children were offered comfort and support when needed. There was a welcoming atmosphere in the service. The early years practitioners demonstrated sensitivity and responsiveness to each child's individual needs and supported children's inclusion and involvement in play.
- Staff were observed interacting with children at their level and engaging in children's play.
- Identity and belonging were promoted in the service. For example, songs at circle time included each of the children's names. Children's artwork was displayed in the care room.

Programme of activities and its Implementation:

- Children's independence was supported. Children were free to move around the room and choose materials independently. Children also used the bathroom independently with staff support as needed.
- Staff facilitated circle time where children shared their news, had song time with musical instruments and practiced for their graduation.

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- Transitions were observed to be well managed; children were given verbal and visual cues to support them with the transitions. The children engaged well with tidying up, putting items away independently. Routines provided for predictability and comfort for young children. Children are involved in transitions in the daily routine and are given responsibilities during the daily routine. There was a daily routine timeline with pictures and photographs of the children so that children could anticipate what was happening next in the daily routine. Mo Scéal reports were completed for children and are shared with the primary schools that children will be moving to which supports transitions to school.
- Parents are invited into the service throughout the year and staff discussed that parents are invited into the service for the children's graduation day.

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

- There was age-appropriate furniture with child sized chairs and tables for children to sit whilst they played or for mealtimes.
- There were shelves with Montessori materials such as spindle boxes for early numeracy development, practical life resources such as dressing frames and matching and sorting activities and jigsaws. There was a kitchen with real-life materials such as bags, hats and phones and transportation toys such as wooden trains and train tracks to support imaginative and interactive play. There were art materials such as pencils and scissors to support creative art and mark making for children. There were natural materials such as a basket of corks and shells to promote open ended play. There was a selection of books which supported storytelling opportunities and children's language development.
- An outdoor play area was available for children. The equipment and materials included a wooden bridge which promoted gross motor and fundamental movement skills such as balancing skills, wooden kitchen with real-life pots and pans for dramatic play and plastic buildings bricks for construction play.

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 door leading into the service was appropriately secured to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the premises.
- The outdoor play area was fully enclosed by walls and 2 secure side gates and was mainly surfaced with grass.
- Cleaning agents were stored safely out of the reach of the children.

Infection Control:

- Thermostatically controlled running warm water, liquid soap and dispensed paper towels were provided in the sanitary accommodation of the service.
- Foot pedal operated bins were available in the care room and sanitary area for hygienic disposal of contaminated materials.
- Windows were open in the care room to allow fresh air to circulate.
- Children were observed to hand wash before snack time, and this was encouraged and supported by staff.

Administration of Medication:

- Medications were stored out of the reach of children. No children were observed having medication administered on the day of inspection.

Fire Safety:

- Emergency exits were unobstructed in the event of an emergency evacuation.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Garda vetting was available for 1 adult. However, one vetting disclosure was not dated within the previous three years in adherence to the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.

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Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Action

General Safety:

1. The identification verification stage of the vetting process was completed on 25 August 2025, and due to a misunderstanding that arose from changes to the vetting process, the process was not completed in a timely manner. The registered provider has since clarified the process for staff.

Preventive Action

1. As above, the preschool service has ceased operating permanently. If continuing in service, the registered provider would ensure that future vetting processes completed without delays.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

- Garda vetting application-Identification verification form.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the action submitted. The registered provider was unable to address the non-compliance as the service has ceased operating.

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.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire shall be displayed in a conspicuous position in the premises.

Compliance Information

- (1) The registered provider ensured the following:
- (a) A record of monthly fire drills was available on the premises with the last drill dated as having been carried out on 25 May 2026.
 - (b) The number, type and maintenance record for the firefighting equipment was available. Firefighting equipment was last serviced on 30 June 2025.
 - (4) Fire evacuation procedures were displayed in the care room of the service.

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Non-Compliance Information

(1)(b) An up-to-date record was not available of the number, type and maintenance of the fire alarm and detection system in the premises. The fire alarm and detection system was last serviced on the 27 May 2025.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Action

(1)(b) The fire and safety systems schedule contains details of the number, type and maintenance details of the fire alarm and detection systems in the premises.

Preventive Action

(1)(b) The preschool service has ceased operating permanently. Regular tests of the systems were carried out during the year and if continuing in service, the registered provider would ensure that each test was noted in the schedule in future.

Supporting documentation submitted

- Fire and safety systems schedule.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the action submitted. The registered provider was unable to address the non-compliance as the service has ceased operating.