



Parent Handbook

Tots Are Us Ltd

10 Brenkley Way, Blezzard Business Park, Seaton Burn, NE13 6DS

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Opening hours: Monday to Friday, 07:00-17:30

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Welcome

Welcome to Tots Are Us Ltd. We provide a warm, nurturing and stimulating early-years environment where children can feel safe, build close relationships and learn through play. We work in partnership with families and treat every child as an individual.

This condensed handbook brings together the information parents and carers are most likely to need. It summarises our main policies and everyday arrangements. Full policies, risk assessments and procedures remain available from the Nursery Manager on request.

Key Contacts

Role or service	Details
Nursery Manager and DSL	Claire Maskey
Deputy DSL	Vikki Blackburn / Hannah Blair
SENCO	Claire Maskey / Hannah Blair
Nursery telephone	07467 827 852
Email	claire@tots-are-us.co.uk
Immediate emergency	999
North Tyneside Front Door	0345 2000 109
Ofsted complaints	0300 123 4666

What Parents Need to Do

- Label all belongings and provide suitable spare clothes, nappies and personal-care items where needed.
- Provide appropriate food, drinks, outdoor clothing and footwear each day.
- Keep contact, emergency-contact, medical, allergy and collection information up to date.
- Tell us promptly about absence, illness, medication, injury or changes at home that may affect your child.
- Arrive at the agreed drop-off and collection times and contact us immediately if delayed.
- Use telephone or text for urgent matters; do not rely on email, social media or an app message being seen immediately.



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1. About Our Provision

Tots Are Us is an Ofsted-registered early-years setting in Seaton Burn. We care for children from birth to five in a welcoming, play-based environment. Flexible arrangements may be available by agreement, including care that supports some shift patterns and local school collections.

Our Approach

- Children learn through play, everyday routines, relationships, themes and their own interests.
- Each child has a Key Person who gets to know their starting points, needs, interests and progress.
- We promote confidence, curiosity, independence, communication and positive relationships.
- We adapt support for children with SEND, disabilities, medical needs or English as an additional language.
- Children have daily opportunities for active and outdoor learning, subject to safety and weather conditions.

Our Environment

Children use our indoor play and learning rooms and our fenced outdoor area. We also use suitable local spaces for walks and outings. All areas, equipment and activities are checked and risk assessed, with supervision adapted to children's ages and needs.

Opening Arrangements

Our normal opening hours are 07:00 – 17:30, Monday to Friday. Any request outside these hours must be agreed in advance. Families must follow their contracted session times and the closures notified by the setting.



2. Starting and Settling In

Settling is planned around the individual child. Before the start date, we ask families about routines, health, allergies, development, communication, sleep, feeding, comfort, toileting and any professional involvement. Parents must provide all registration information, permissions and emergency contacts before care begins.

Settling Visits

We normally begin with short visits and gradually extend them as the child becomes comfortable. Arrangements may be changed where a child needs more time or different support.

- Bring a familiar comfort item if this can be used safely.
- Use a calm, clear goodbye and tell your child that you will return.
- Hand your child directly to a member of staff and wait for acknowledgement before leaving.
- Share anything that may affect how your child feels that day.

If a child remains significantly distressed or cannot be comforted, we may ask for early collection and agree a revised settling plan. Reasonable adjustments and visual, sensory or communication support will be used where needed.



3. Attendance Arrival and Collection

Absence

Parents must tell us as soon as possible if their child will be absent and explain the reason. If a child expected to attend has not arrived by 09:30 and we have not heard from the family, we will contact the parent or carer and then emergency contacts. Repeated or unexplained absence or lateness may be treated as a safeguarding concern.

Arrival

- Arrive at the agreed time; if early, wait until the booked session begins.
- Tell staff about sleep, illness, medication, injury, emotional upset or any change affecting the day.
- Do not leave a child until a member of staff has accepted responsibility for them.

Safe Collection

Children are released only to a known parent or carer or another suitable person authorised by the parent. Details of authorised persons should be added to the Baby's Days app along with photos. We may request identification or direct confirmation. If authorisation cannot be verified, the child will remain with us and additional charges may apply. Changes to collection arrangements must be communicated directly and promptly.

If a collector appears intoxicated, impaired, aggressive or otherwise unable to care safely for the child, we will prioritise the child's welfare, seek an alternative authorised collector and contact safeguarding services or police where necessary.

Late Collection

Contact us immediately if you expect to be late. The child will be reassured and supervised while we try parents, carers and emergency contacts. If nobody can be reached and the child remains uncollected for 60 minutes, we will contact North Tyneside Children's Social Care; we may seek help sooner if there is a safeguarding concern.

Delay	Charge
Up to 30 minutes	£10
Over 30 and up to 60 minutes	£20
Each further 30 minutes or part	Additional £10

Late fees apply from the agreed collection time, are added to the invoice and are payable within seven days. Informing us of a delay does not extend the booked session or automatically remove the fee. Persistent lateness may lead to a review of contracted hours or the childcare agreement.



4. Learning Development and Communication

Our curriculum identifies the knowledge and skills we want children to develop across the seven areas of the EYFS. We use play, themes, children's interests and everyday routines to teach these. Key people use each child's starting points to decide what to prioritise, adapt support and revisit learning until it becomes secure.

Assessment and Updates

- Staff observe children during normal play and routines and use this information to plan suitable next steps.
- Parents receive day-to-day information through Baby's Days and verbal handovers, including relevant care information.
- Parents are encouraged to share home learning, interests, achievements and changes that may affect development.
- Progress is reviewed regularly and termly reports are shared. Statutory progress checks are completed when required.

Communication

We communicate in person, by telephone, text, email and through Baby's Days. Detailed or confidential conversations will be arranged privately. Urgent absences, collection changes or safeguarding concerns must be given directly by telephone or text rather than through social media or the app.

Parents should raise questions early. We will listen respectfully, explain decisions and work with families wherever possible. Information about another child, family or staff member cannot be shared.

5. Safeguarding

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. All concerns about a child's safety or welfare are taken seriously, recorded and acted upon. Staff are trained to recognise abuse, neglect, domestic abuse, exploitation, online harm, radicalisation and other risks.

What Happens When There is a Concern

- The concern is reported immediately to Claire Maskey, DSL, or Vikki Blackburn / Hannah Blair, Deputy DSL.
- We record factual information and the child's own words without leading questions.
- We follow North Tyneside safeguarding procedures and contact Children's Social Care, the LADO, police or another agency when required.
- Parents are normally informed unless doing so could increase risk or interfere with an investigation.
- Information may be shared without consent when necessary to protect a child or meet a legal duty.

Concerns About an Adult

Any concern or allegation that a staff member, apprentice, student, volunteer or other adult may have harmed a child, behaved in a way that poses a risk or committed a relevant offence must be reported immediately. If the concern is about Claire Maskey, it should be reported directly to the North Tyneside LADO through the Front Door. Ofsted and other bodies will be notified where required.

Digital Safety

Personal phones, cameras and recording devices must not be used around children. Only authorised setting devices may be used to record children, in accordance with parental permissions and safeguarding procedures.



6. Health, Safety and Emergencies

We maintain safe premises, suitable staffing, daily checks and risk assessments for rooms, equipment, activities, outdoor areas and outings. Hazards are removed or controlled promptly. Children are supervised according to their age, development, needs and the activity taking place.

- A paediatric first aider is always available while children are present and on outings.
- Fire exits and emergency routes are kept clear; drills are completed and recorded.
- Visitors follow entry, identification and supervision arrangements.
- Cleaning products, medicines and hazardous items are stored securely.
- Parents must report any safety concern and follow arrival, parking, security and collection instructions.

Emergency Evacuation

If evacuation is necessary, staff will lead children to the designated safe area, check registers and headcounts, and contact emergency services. Children will not re-enter until it is safe. Parents will be contacted if collection arrangements change and must follow the instructions provided rather than attending the premises unless asked.

Lost Child

If a child cannot be located, staff will immediately protect the other children, check the register and last known location, search systematically and monitor exits. There is no fixed waiting period before calling police; 999 will be used where there is immediate danger or suspected abduction. Parents will be informed as soon as possible without delaying emergency action. The incident will be recorded, reported and reviewed.



7. Illness accidents and medication

When Children Should Stay at Home

Children must not attend if they are too unwell to participate comfortably, need more one-to-one care than can safely be provided, or may pose an infection risk. Diarrhoea or vomiting requires exclusion until 48 hours after the final episode. Other exclusions follow current health-protection guidance. Contact us if unsure before bringing your child.

If a child becomes unwell, we will keep them comfortable and supervised and ask for prompt collection. In an emergency we will provide first aid, call 999 when necessary and act in the child's best interests.

Accidents

Accidents, first aid and significant incidents are recorded on Baby's Days and shared with parents on the same day or as soon as reasonably practicable. Ofsted, the local authority, RIDDOR or another agency will be notified where legally required.

Medication

- Written parental permission and clear instructions are required.
- Medication must be in date, in its original packaging and labelled for the child where applicable.
- Tell us about any dose given before arrival, including the time and amount.
- Emergency medication must be available, in date and accompanied by an individual healthcare plan where required.
- Every dose given is recorded and shared with the parent or carer.

8. Food Drinks and Safer Eating

Parents provide all meals, snacks and drinks. Tots Are Us remains responsible for safe storage, preparation, serving and supervision while children are in our care. Uneaten food is returned in the child's bag so parents can see what was eaten, alongside the usual verbal or app update.

What Families Must Provide

- Clearly label all containers, bottles and cups with the child's name.
- Provide food suitable for the child's age, development, allergies and agreed feeding approach.
- Tell us immediately about allergies, intolerances, dietary requirements, weaning changes or a new food reaction.
- Prepare food to reduce choking risk: avoid hard, round, sticky or slippery pieces and follow staff advice.
- Do not send whole nuts, popcorn, hard sweets, chewing gum, marshmallows, raw jelly cubes or other known choking hazards.

Children sit upright and are always supervised within sight and hearing while eating. They do not walk, play or lie down with food and must not share food, drinks, cutlery or bottles. Staff check each child's food against recorded allergy, dietary and developmental information.

Babies and Bottles

Breast milk, formula and prepared bottles must be clearly labelled and transported safely. Bottles are warmed safely and never microwaved or propped. Remaining milk is discarded after a feed. We support spoon-feeding or baby-led weaning according to the child's development and the plan agreed with parents.

Allergy or Choking Emergency

Staff provide immediate paediatric first aid, follow the child's allergy plan, administer prescribed emergency medication and call 999 where required. Emergency action will never be delayed while waiting for another person. Parents are contacted and the incident is recorded and reviewed.

9. Sleep and Rest

Sleep and rest follow each child's needs and home routine wherever this is safe. Safer-sleep requirements and the child's welfare always take priority. Parents must tell us about routine changes, premature birth, medical conditions or professional advice affecting sleep.

- Babies and children under two are initially placed on their back in their own clear, flat and firm sleep space.
- Babies aged 12 months and under sleep only in a suitable cot, carrycot, Moses basket or travel cot - not a floor bed, pod, nest, beanbag, sofa, bouncer or inclined device.
- Sleep spaces contain no pillows, duvets, cot bumpers, positioners, weighted bedding, soft toys or loose items.
- Hats, hoods, bibs and outdoor clothing are removed and children's heads and faces remain uncovered.
- Children always have an adult in the same room. All sleeping children remain within sight and hearing.
- Physical sleep checks are completed and recorded at least every 30 minutes, or more frequently where required.
- Sleep start and finish times, checks and relevant wellbeing information are recorded on Baby's Days.

A child who falls asleep in a car seat, pushchair or sitting device will be moved promptly to an appropriate sleep space on return or when safe to do so. Children are normally allowed to wake naturally but may be gently woken after an agreed duration or for collection, medication or another necessary routine change.



10. Behaviour Equality and Inclusion

Supporting Behaviour

We see behaviour as communication. Staff use calm role modelling, clear boundaries, encouragement, redirection and co-regulation. Expectations reflect each child's age, development, communication, experiences and individual needs.

- Children may use a calm space with an adult but are not punished or isolated.
- Children are not forced to apologise or give physical affection; staff help them understand and repair situations appropriately.
- We never use corporal punishment, humiliation, shouting, threats or withholding of food, drink, rest or comfort.
- Physical intervention is used only when necessary to prevent immediate injury or serious damage, and is proportionate, recorded and shared with parents.

Equality and Inclusion

Every child and family is welcomed, valued and respected. We make reasonable adjustments and adapt routines, activities, communication and resources where needed. Children's cultures, religions, home languages, identities and family circumstances are respected and positively represented.

Discriminatory language, stereotypes, harassment or unfair treatment are challenged calmly and appropriately. Significant or repeated incidents are recorded and discussed with those involved.



11. Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

Claire Maskey and Hannah Blair are the setting SENCO. We identify needs early through observations, assessments, parental information and professional advice. Parents are involved throughout and do not need to wait for a diagnosis before suitable support is considered.

Assess Plan Do Review

1. Assess the child's strengths, needs and circumstances.
2. Plan outcomes, support, adjustments and a review date with parents.
3. Do the agreed support through everyday provision and targeted strategies.
4. Review progress and agree next steps with the family and relevant professionals.

Support may include visual or sensory resources, changes to activities or routines, additional adult support where available, an individual plan, funding applications or involvement from health visitors, speech and language therapists, the Early Years SEND Team or other professionals.

English as an additional language is not, by itself, a special educational need. We value home languages and may use familiar words, pictures, gestures and routines to support communication and belonging.



12. Outdoor Play, Outings and Risk

Children use our fenced outdoor area and take part in local walks, woodland experiences and visits to suitable community spaces. Outdoor learning is offered regularly and adapted, shortened or cancelled where weather, staffing, individual needs or another condition makes it unsafe.

- Parents must provide an all-in-one waterproof suit, wellington boots and weather-appropriate clothing and footwear.
- Regular routes, destinations and outdoor areas are risk assessed; staff continue dynamic checks throughout each activity.
- Children are closely supervised and regular headcounts are completed.
- Written consent is obtained for routine local outings. Separate information and consent are used for special trips, transport or additional charges.
- First-aid supplies, emergency contacts, a setting phone and required medication accompany the group.

Risk assessment does not remove every challenge from play. Staff balance risks and benefits so children can explore, build confidence and develop safe independence. Individual risk assessments and reasonable adjustments are used where a child's health, SEND, communication, behaviour or mobility requires them.

13. Photographs, Social Media and Privacy

Photographs and Recordings

Only authorised setting devices are used to photograph or record children. Images may be shared privately through Baby's Days, displayed in the setting or used online only in line with the permissions provided. Parents can change or withdraw optional consent in writing. A child will not be forced to take part in a photograph or video.

Parents must not photograph or record other children at the setting or share images containing another child without permission. Concerns about an online image or post should be reported immediately.

Data Protection and Confidentiality

Tots Are Us Ltd is the data controller and Claire Maskey is the Data Protection Lead. We collect information needed to provide safe, lawful childcare, meet safeguarding and funding duties, communicate with families and manage contracts and payments.

- Information is stored on authorised devices, Baby's Days or in secure paper files and is accessed only by people who need it.
- Information may be shared with Ofsted, the local authority, healthcare professionals, emergency services, HMRC, Children's Social Care or trusted service providers where lawful and necessary.
- Parents may request access or correction and may withdraw consent for optional uses. Some records cannot be deleted because they must be retained by law.
- Suspected data breaches are investigated and reported where legally required.

Data requests or concerns should be sent to claire@tots-are-us.co.uk. If unresolved, parents may contact the Information Commissioner's Office on 0303 123 1113 or at www.ico.org.uk.



14. Complaints

We welcome feedback and take concerns seriously. Raising a complaint will not adversely affect the care provided to a child. Most concerns can be resolved quickly by speaking privately with Claire Maskey.

Formal Procedure

- A formal complaint should be submitted in writing by letter, email or message.
- We will investigate fairly, keep a written record and explain the outcome within 28 days of receiving the complaint.
- Complaint records are retained for at least three years and made available to Ofsted on request.
- Safeguarding complaints are managed under safeguarding procedures and referred to relevant agencies where required.

Parents may contact Ofsted directly at any time about the safety or quality of childcare: 0300 123 4666 or www.gov.uk/complain-about-childcare. Ofsted cannot normally resolve individual contractual disputes.

Data-protection concerns should first be raised with Claire Maskey. If unresolved, contact the Information Commissioner's Office on 0303 123 1113 or at www.ico.org.uk.

15. Parent Checklist and Policy Access

Before starting	Each day and when things change
Complete registration forms and permissions	Tell us promptly about absence or delay
Provide two or more reliable emergency contacts	Share illness, medication, injury or emotional changes
Give full medical allergy and dietary information	Bring labelled food, drink and personal items
Confirm authorised collectors and photographs	Provide suitable outdoor clothing and footwear
Discuss routines development and additional needs	Check Baby's Days and speak to staff about concerns

This handbook is a parent-facing summary. Full versions of the setting's policies, procedures and risk assessments are available from the Nursery Manager. Policies are reviewed annually, after relevant incidents and whenever legislation, statutory guidance or setting arrangements change. Parents are informed of significant changes.

Policies Summarised

- Safeguarding Children; Health and Safety; Accidents, Illness and Medication; Behaviour; Equality, Diversity and Inclusion; SEND; Complaints; Data Protection and Privacy.
- Settling In; Late Collection; Curriculum and Learning; Communication with Parents; Food, Drink and Safer Eating; Outdoor Play and Trips; Emergency Evacuation; Sleep and Rest; Social Media and Digital Communication; Lost Child; Risk Assessment.

Please contact Claire Maskey if you would like a full policy, an accessible copy, help understanding any part of this handbook or an opportunity to discuss how an arrangement applies to your child.