

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC436
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Name of Service:	Tír na nÓg Montessori
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Address of Service:	Glen Rover GAA Club, Dublin Hill, Ballyvolane, Co Cork
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Eircode:	T23 E6PK
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Name of Registered Provider:	Tracey O'Connor
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	19/09/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	31	PM	8
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate, 13 Market Square, Mallow, Co Cork, P51 DD5Y
Inspection undertaken by:	N O'Donoghue
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).

Conditions if applicable	N/A
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Description of service

Tír na nÓg Montessori is a registered sessional service operating from a local community centre in the Glen Rover GAA grounds. The service is registered to cater for children aged from 2 years to 6 years and also cater for children attending the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme. The service operates the ECCE programme from 8.45am to 11:45am, 9.00am to 12.00pm and 12.15 to 3.15pm, Monday to Friday. The service also provides sessional care to children aged 2 years to 2 years 8 months from 12.15pm to 3.15pm, Monday to Friday.

The premise consists of two care rooms and adult and children's sanitary facilities. The service has use of the community centre hall adjacent to the care rooms and use of the GAA pitch for outdoor play.

Staffing

There are six staff in total attached to the service. All six staff work directly with the children including the registered provider and early years educators.

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

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 19, 23, 25 and 27; however, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 16 and 21. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

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, deputy 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) The service had a designated person in charge and deputy person in charge on the premises on the day of inspection. In the event the person or deputy person in charge were not on the premises a named person able to deputise was available.
- (b) A person in charge or named deputy person in charge were on the premises at all times during the operation of the service.
- (c) There was a clearly identified management structure in the service. This included person in charge, deputy person in charge, and early years educators.

(2) There are six staff attached to the service; all six staff files were open to inspection.

- (a) Of the 12 references required, 8 validated references were available from past employers.
- (b) Of the 12 references required, 4 validated references were available from a source other than a past employer.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all six staff. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d) Police vetting was deemed to be required for one of the six adults working in the service. The copy of the police vetting was stored on file for the staff member.

(4) All six staff working directly with children held relevant qualifications in Early Childhood Care and Education at least at Level 5 on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

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) The registered provider ensured that there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children.

(3) On the day of inspection, the adult to child ratios were in adherence to the requirements of the regulation.

- In Butterfly session in the morning, there was 3 staff working with 17 children aged between 2 years and 8 months and 5 years and 5 months, all attending sessional care.
- In the Caterpillar session in the afternoon, there was 3 staff working with 4 children aged between 2 years and 2 months and 2 years and 5 months, all attending sessional care.
- In Ladybird session in the morning, there was 2 staff working with 14 children aged between 2 years and 7 months and 4 years and 8 months, all attending sessional care.
- In the Busy Bees session in the afternoon, there was 3 staff working with 4 children aged between 2 years and 9 months and 3 years and 10 months, all attending sessional care.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:

- (a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) The registered provider ensured details of the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee were stored on file in the premises.

Non-Compliance Information

- (1)
- (i) The registered provider did not keep a record of staff rota, hours or break cover on file. The inspector reviewed staff sign in records, which were not completed from the beginning of September 2025. Due to the service not maintaining a record of staff sign in and out times or lunch cover, the inspector was unable to determine if adult to child ratios were maintained at all times.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider created a group messaging chat to include weekly updates with the staff rota. The registered provider has assured the weekly updates of the staff rota will be sent in to the group for all staff members.

Supporting documentation submitted

The registered provider submitted photographic evidence of the staff rota and group messaging chat to the Early Years Inspectorate.

Summary Comment

Following the corrective action implemented, regulatory compliance is determined to have been met.

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) On the day of inspection, the following information was obtained through:

- Direct observation and discussion with staff
- Examination of relevant documentation.

Basic needs:

- During mealtimes, a relaxed social environment was evident. Staff allowed children to eat at their own pace and engaged in conversations with the children at snack time. Children were supported by staff with the opening of their snacks and placing them on plates.
- There was a supply of tissues available to the children and staff supported children with cleaning their noses when required.
- Children's toileting and hygiene needs were attended to regularly and staff assisted children when they needed it.
- Good handwashing routines were evident on the day of inspection. Staff supervised children to wash their hands before snack and after playing outside.
- Children in both care rooms had access to a rest area which included a couch and cushions.
- Children's interests and opinions were incorporated into circle time. This was observed when staff asked children about their homes and where they live. Children were given the opportunity to describe their home.

Supporting relationships:

- Staff spoke with children at their level, in a calm and relaxed tone. Staff would use positive language and actions when children accomplished tasks. This was observed when a child was writing and counting numbers. Staff responded by cheering and clapping for the child. The child was proud of their achievement and showed it to the staff in the room.

- Children engaged in parallel play and were observed to check in on their friends and include them in play.
- Staff were observed meeting with parents at the end of the session, updating them on the activities of the day. Staff also communicate with parents through an online mobile application and group messaging chat. These were shown to the inspector and regular updates and photos of the children's activities were observed on the mobile application.
- Staff supported children freely expressing their emotions in a safe environment. This was observed when children were asked their feelings during circle time.

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 service ensured there was adequate equipment available for the number of children attending the service. The service had additional toys and materials on the premises. It was observed on day of inspection that the service provides a number of sensory activities including water play and the use of porridge oats and rice.

Non-Compliance Information

In the Butterfly room there was not an adequate number of maintained books available to support children's development. The storybooks that were used by children on the day of inspection were missing pages, torn and unsuitable for the literacy development of the child.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider removed the unsuitable books and replaced them with well-maintained books. The registered provider will ensure to complete regular checks of the library going forward.

Supporting documentation submitted

The registered provider submitted photographic evidence of the library to the Early Years Inspectorate.

Summary Comment

Following the corrective action implemented, regulatory compliance is determined to have been met.

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 main entrance to the service was secured to prevent unauthorised access or unsupervised exit of a child.
- All low laying cables were safely secured out of reach of the children.
- The outdoor area was secured to ensure no unsupervised exit of a child.
- Cleaning materials were stored out of sight and reach of children.

Infection control:

- Regular handwashing was observed by staff and children. Children's hands were washed prior to mealtimes and after outdoor play. Staff hands were washed prior to mealtimes, after outdoor play and after supporting children with toileting.
- Windows were open for natural air ventilation.
- Staff cleaned the tables between activities and mealtimes.

Administration of medication:

- No administration of medication was observed on the day of inspection. Discussion with staff ensured staff were aware of the correct process for administering medication in the event it was required.

Fire safety:

- Fire exits were clear of any obstruction and were clearly identified in the room.
- Fire equipment was available in the event they were required.

Non-Compliance Information

General safety:

1. The children's sanitary facilities in both rooms were deemed unsafe for use by children. One toilet seat in the Butterfly room was broken. One toilet seat in the Ladybird room was missing and the other bathroom had a broken toilet seat. Not ensuring the children's sanitary facilities were suitable for use by children, exposed the children to a risk of injury.

Infection control:

2. The pedal bin in the Butterfly room was broken. A broken pedal bin poses a risk of cross infection to children using the bin.
3. The door of the refrigerator in the Ladybird room was missing. The door was placed to the side of the refrigerator. Not ensuring perishable foods were stored adequately puts the children at risk of contamination from foods not stored correctly.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General safety:

1. The registered provider purchased and fitted new toilet seat covers for the children's sanitary facilities. The toilet seats will be checked weekly and ensure they are safe for use by children.

Infection control:

2. A new pedal bin was purchased and replaced the broken pedal bin in the Butterfly room. The register provider stated the bins will be checked daily.
3. The registered provider purchased a new refrigerator for the Ladybird room. The registered provider will ensure the refrigerator is in good condition and working going forward.

Supporting documentation submitted

General safety:

1. Photographic evidence of the new toilet seats were submitted to the Early Years Inspectorate.

Infection control:

2. Photographic evidence of the new pedal bin was submitted to the Early Years Inspectorate.
3. Photographic evidence of the new purchased refrigerator was submitted to the Early Years Inspectorate.

Summary Comment

Following the corrective action implemented, regulatory compliance is determined to have been met.

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) The registered provider ensured that a member of staff with First Aid Responder (FAR) training was available to the children at all times.

- (2)
- (a) The first aid box was safely stored out of reach of children and accessible to adults within the care rooms.
 - (b) The first aid box was available to the children at all times; in the event they required it.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.

Compliance Information

It was evident throughout the day of inspection that children are supervised at all times, this was observed by staff engaging in supervision by sight and sound. Staff supported children when required. This was observed both indoors and outdoors.