

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CE147
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Name of Service:	Tir na nOg
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Address of Service:	Cloonfadda, Killaloe, Co. Clare
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Eircode:	V94 01P9
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Name of Registered Provider:	Elizabeth McGrath
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	14/04/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	21	PM	0
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Quality and Regulation Directorate Tusla Child and Family Agency Ennis Primary Care Centre Station Road Ennis County Clare V95TY4E
Inspection undertaken by:	J Hayes
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

Tír Na nÓg first opened in 1991 as a sessional early years service. The facility was purpose built and has two playrooms catering for up to a maximum number of 29 pre-school children, between the ages of 2 and 6 years. An enclosed outdoor play area was accessible from the playrooms. The service operates Monday-Friday 09.00hrs - 12.00hrs.

Staffing

The registered provider operates the sessional service assisted by two adults who were present on the day when the inspection was carried out

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 focused on an examination of compliance under regulations:

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment (1)(a)(b), (2)(a)(b)(c)(d) and (4)

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels (1) (3)

Regulation 19 - Health, welfare and development of child (1)(a)

Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

Regulation 25 - First aid (1) (2)(a)(b)

Regulation 26- Fire safety measures (1)(a)(b) (4)

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Regulation 28 Insurance

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 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,*

(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)

The registered provider was the designated person in charge, and a person is available to deputise when required.

(b)

The registered provider was the designated person in charge throughout the inspection.

Files were available in respect of the registered provider and the three adults working in the service. The findings included the following:

(2)(a)

Five written references from past employers with evidence of verification.

(b)

Where a past employer reference was not available, a reference was obtained from a source other than a past employer in respect of three references with evidence of verification.

(c)

Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for the registered provider and the three adults working in the service. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d)

International police vetting was not required. The adults had not lived in another State for a period longer than six months as an adult.

(4)

The registered provider and the three adults held Early Childhood Care and Education qualifications at Levels 5 to 6 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

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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)

During the inspection, an adequate number of adults worked directly with the children in attendance.

(3)

On the 14 April 2026, the ratio of adults caring for children was maintained. Three adults cared for the twenty one children attending the service on a sessional basis.

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 children's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the service through the provision of appropriate activities, interactions, materials, and equipment having regard to the age and developmental stage of the children.

Basic Needs of Children:

The children were encouraged to be independent while caring for their belongings, their play materials and equipment, at mealtime and whilst using the toilet. The children were encouraged and supported to manage their own personal care appropriate to their age and level of development. Parents/Guardians provided the children's lunches. The lunches observed included various types of fruit, vegetable, wraps, sandwiches, crackers and yoghurt.

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The children and adults sat together and conversed amicably during mealtime. Mealtime was observed to be a relaxed and sociable occasion. The children engaged in open ended play and educational Montessori based activities in the indoor environment. The children transitioned from opened ended, tabletop, play based activities which included constructive, manipulative and pretend play, then proceeded to engage in group games, song, rhyme and dance and story time.

Supporting Relationships Around Children:

The adults interacted with the children in a caring, kind and respectful manner. The adults listened attentively and conversed with the children at their level and responded promptly to their cues for assistance. Positive behavioural strategies were used during interactions, and the children were offered praise and encouragement. The adults demonstrated an awareness of the children's personal interests, preferences and capabilities. The transitions in the changes of activities in the two playrooms were facilitated with ease, as the adults notified the children in advance of any changes in the programme of care and learning. The adults supported the children as they played individually and as part of a group. The children chose their individual activities throughout the session.

The adults promoted speech development through open ended discussions, song and rhymes with the children. An informal communication approach was observed during interactions with parents/guardians at collection time.

Physical and Material Environment:

The programme of care and education was facilitated within two playrooms. The playrooms were bright and spacious and adequately resourced for the age range and stage of development of the children. Designated areas of interest were available and included a home corner, a construction area, a shop and shelving with appropriate and accessible materials and equipment for the children. A large area accommodated soft furnishings and a bookshelf with a large range of reading materials. This area was accessed by the children throughout the morning to rest and relax with their peers.

The outdoor play area offered a large space for the children to play-and engage in gross motor activities. The outdoor play area consisted of a grass and tarmac surface. The surrounding perimeter was secured by a fence, a wall and gates. The outdoor area had an all-weather covered structure to ensure regular access for the children and was resourced with a wide range of materials and equipment which included ride on toys, chalkboard, sand table and home corner. The children were also observed to be fully engaged in imaginative play with open ended materials.

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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:

- The entrance and exit to and from the service was secured to prevent unauthorised persons accessing the service.
- The outdoor play area was secured with fencing and gates to protect the children within.
- The children were supervised at all times during the inspection.
- Cleaning agents were stored in a secured area out of reach of the children.

Infection Control:

- The service was maintained in a clean and hygienic condition.
- A cleaning schedule was available demonstrating measures taken to maintain and clean the service.
- The sanitary facilities were equipped with warm running water, liquid soap, hand paper towels and lined, lidded pedal operated bins.
- The children washed their hands at regular intervals during the day. This included after using the toilet and prior to mealtime.

Administration of Medication:

- Medication was not administered during the inspection. Documentation was available should medication be required.

Fire Safety:

- Written records of completed monthly fire drills were available.
- The two fire exits and routes were clear from obstruction throughout the service.
- A fire assembly point and the fire exit route signage were readily identifiable.

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-

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- (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)

An adult working directly with the children held a record of up to date First Aid Responder (FAR) training.

(2)(a)

A suitably equipped first aid box was stored in an accessible and conspicuous position in the care room.

(b)

The first aid box was available in the service for use by the adult in the event of an emergency.

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)(a)

Records of completed monthly fire drills were available. The most recent fire drill took place in March 2026.

(b)

Up-to-date records of the number, type and maintenance service were available for the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarm system. The most recent service of the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarm system maintenance service took place in April 2026.

(4)

A fire action notice demonstrating the procedures to be followed in the service.

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Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

A registered provider shall ensure that the pre-school service is adequately insured.

Compliance Information

Up to date insurance cover was available for twenty-three children attending the service. The policy is valid until 27 November 2026.