

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DL111
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Name of Service:	Niall Mor Childcare Centre
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Address of Service:	Niall Mor Childcare Centre (Niall Mor Community & Enterprise Centre Ltd.), Killybegs, Co. Donegal
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Eircode:	F94 FYX2
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Name of Registered Provider:	Conor Conaghan
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date of Inspection:	18/07/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	30	PM	17
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Donegal Early Years Inspectorate, St. Conal's Campus, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal. F95 XK94
Inspection undertaken by:	K.Folan & S.Killeen
Title:	Early Years Inspectors

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	Not applicable
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Description of service

Niall Mor Childcare Centre is a community based full day care service located in the heart of the town of Killybegs, Co. Donegal. The service was first established in 2019 and operates from 07:30am-18.00pm each weekday throughout the calendar year. The service provides full day, part time and sessional preschool care to children aged 0-6 years. A school age service is also on the premises. The service operates from the ground floor of a purpose-built premises. On the day of the inspection there were three preschool rooms in use, pre-school room 1 and 2 and senior preschool. An additional satellite room was also available but is currently not in use. Adult and children's sanitary accommodation were provided as well as a designated kitchen and office. Children have access to four outdoor play areas on site, each one enclosed by boundary fencing.

Staffing

The service manager confirmed that a total of twenty-one adults worked in the setting. Fourteen of these adults were employed to work directly with pre-school children in the service, including the service manager and assistant manager who were available to provide relief cover for childcare staff at times such as during scheduled breaks. The service also had four ancillary staff members whose role did not involve working directly with the pre-school children; these included a cook who worked in the service's on-site kitchen, a cleaner and two office administration staff. Three adults were employed to work with the school age children. The service's registered provider does not work directly in the service.

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/ premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9,11,15,19,23, and 28. 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 inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the 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)

The registered provider ensured that:

- a) There was a designated person in charge and a named adult to deputise in their absence.
- b) The designated person in charge was available on the premises throughout the period of inspection.
- c) There was 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.

(2)

On the day of inspection, nine adults were present, the person in charge, seven adults who were employed to work directly with the children, one adult in a supernumerary role in the kitchen.

13 staff files had been reviewed on the previous inspection and were found to be compliant.

Staff files in respect of 9 adults who had commenced employment in the service since the last inspection were reviewed and the following information was available:

- (a) 17 written references from past employers for nine of the adults.
- (b) One written reference from a reputable source for one of the adults.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for 21 staff. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(4)
Four of the adult files reviewed, evidenced they held a major award at level 5 or above in early childhood care and education on the national qualification framework, or qualifications deemed by the Department of Children, Disability and Equality (DCDE) to meet the regulatory requirement.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a)(b)

1. Four of the available references were not validated.

- (d)
- 2. Police vetting from the police authorities in another state was available for two adults who had lived outside the state for a period of six consecutive months or more. However, one Police vetting from another state required translation and this was not available.
 - 3. Police vetting was not available in respect of one adult who had lived outside of the state for a period of six consecutive months.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- 1. All references have been validated and will be validated upon receipt in future.
- 2. Translation has now been obtained. In future, we will ensure translation is received and verified.
- 3. Police vetting was obtained for one adult. In future, gaps in employment records will be investigated and rectified.

Supporting documentation submitted

1. Photographic evidence submitted.
2. Document submitted.
3. Police vetting document submitted.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider adequately address the non-compliance found on inspection. This regulation is now compliant.

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.

(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)
On the day of inspection, there was an adequate number of adults working directly with the preschool children attending the service.

(2)
The minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained at all times throughout the inspection.
On the morning of the inspection seven adults cared for 30 children aged between 2 years and 7 months and 5 years.

- In preschool 1, 2 adults cared for 8 children aged between 2 years 7 months and 3 years and 10 months.

- In preschool 2, 2 adults cared for 6 children aged between 3 years and 7 months and 4 years and 5 months.
- In senior preschool, 3 adults cared for 16 children aged 4 – 5 years.

In the afternoon :

- In preschool 1, 2 adults cared for 5 children aged between 2 years 7 months and 3 years and 10 months.
- In preschool 2, 2 adults cared for 3 children aged between 3 years and 7 months and 4 years and 5 months.
- In senior preschool, 3 adults cared for 9 children aged 4 – 5 years.

(8)

The registered provider ensured that there were always at least two adults on the premises when children were present in the service as evidenced in a sample review of attendance records.

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;*
- (c) 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;*
- (e) 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.*

(2) A registered provider of a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or of 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 particulars specified in subparagraphs (a), (d), (e) and (f) of paragraph (1).

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

- (a) a parent or guardian of a pre-school child but only in respect of the record relating to that child,*
- (b) an employee who is authorised in that behalf by the registered provider, and*
- (c) an authorised person.*

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) is retained for a period of 2 years from the date on which the child to whom it relates ceases to attend the service.

(5) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (2) is retained for a period of 2 years from the date on which the child attends the service.

Compliance Information

On the day of inspection, a sample of 11 children's files were reviewed, a record in writing was held on file for the following.

- a) the name and date of birth of the child was available from 11 records.
- b) the date on which the child first attended the service was available from 11 records reviewed.
- c) The date on which the child ceased to attend the service was non applicable for the 11 records reviewed.
- 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 was available from 11 records.
- e) authorisation for the collection of the child was available for all 11 records.
- 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 was available from 11 records.
- g) the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner was available from all 11 records.
- h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child was available from 10 records.
- i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency was available for all 11 records.

(3) On the day of inspection, a record in writing in respect of each pre-school child was available and open to inspection on the premises by-

(c) an authorised person.

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
- (b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.

Compliance Information

- The rooms were bright and well laid out, with doors opening out into a secure play area that encouraged free flow between indoor and outdoor activities. Large, colourful murals adorned the walls, creating a vibrant and stimulating atmosphere that captured the children's imaginations. Inside, the space was thoughtfully arranged to promote sensory exploration and creativity through arts and crafts activities and the use of a sand tray.
- Fine motor skills were nurtured with engaging resources such as jigsaws, shape sorters, crayons, and paper for drawing, allowing children to develop coordination and control. The playrooms featured clearly defined interest areas, including a construction zone, beauty parlour, baby area, home corner, and a kitchen equipped with cooking utensils. Children also enjoyed doll houses and an art corner with individual drawers labelled with their photos to store personal artwork. A cozy book corner with a child-sized couch and a variety of age-appropriate books encouraged literacy and a love of reading.
- Open shelving with picture labels helped children identify the contents of each box, which included resources such as LEGO, farm animals, magnets, play dough, and cutters—supporting independent choice and self-directed play. This well-organized environment supported holistic development through play, creativity, and exploration.
- Tables and chairs in each room were appropriate to the age and stage of development of pre-school children attending the specific rooms.
- Activities were child led and children had the opportunity to express their views, take the lead and exercise choice in relation to their engagement in activities and in accessing play equipment throughout

the session. Children were seen lining up to go outside and there was a different child chosen each day to lead the class outside.

- The children were encouraged to be kind to one another and to offer help when needed. This was clearly demonstrated on the day of inspection when a child was having difficulty taking turns on a double-seated bike. Staff gently explained the importance of sharing and waiting for a turn, reinforcing positive social behaviour. To support the child, they offered an alternative game to play while waiting, which the child happily engaged in until the bike became available. This interaction highlighted the nurturing environment, and the emphasis placed on empathy, cooperation, and emotional development.
- The staff members demonstrated warmth and sensitivity in their interactions with the children. For example, when one child fell outside, they sought out staff for comfort. Staff got down to the child's level using soft and gentle tones, offered reassurance by taking the child's hand letting them lead the line back to the care room.
- The outdoor environment consisted of three distinct play areas. Two of these were directly accessible from Preschool Room 1 and Preschool Room 2, each featuring covered sections that allowed children to play comfortably in all weather conditions. A larger outdoor area was also located just outside the crèche grounds, offering additional space for active play and group activities. All outdoor areas were well-equipped with a wide range of developmentally appropriate resources designed to support physical, social, and sensory development. These included a large wooden boat, climbing frame, balancing beams, ride-on bikes and scooters, a covered sandpit area, chalkboards, a sound and water sensory zone, goalposts, and seesaws. The variety and quality of equipment provided rich opportunities for exploration, imaginative play, and gross motor development in a safe and stimulating environment.
- On the day of inspection, meals were observed at 12:45 p.m., with a variety of freshly prepared food provided by the service in line with its healthy eating policy. The main meal included chicken curry served with rice, broccoli, and garlic bread. An alternative option of potatoes, minced meat, vegetables, and gravy was also available for children who preferred a different choice. Drinks of milk or water were available throughout the meal, supporting hydration and independence.
- A weekly menu plan was displayed, and appropriate plates and utensils were observed being used by the children. Children were observed to be independent with their feeding and staff encouraged the children with praise to finish their food.
- Staff sat with the children and engaged in positive conversations about home life, plans for the weekend, staff were familiar with extended family's names like granny, aunties and sisters and brothers.

- Communication with parents is predominantly carried out through daily interactions at drop-off and collection times. Staff take these opportunities to share information about the child's day, including details about their activities, food intake, and other relevant updates. To further enhance communication, the service has recently introduced an electronic application that allows parents to receive live updates about their child's day. This includes real-time information on meals, sleep, activities, and general well-being, helping to strengthen the connection between home and the service and ensuring parents feel informed and reassured throughout the day.
- Ongoing observations and assessments were documented consistently, helping to build a complete and well-rounded picture of each individual child. These observations informed curriculum planning, ensuring that learning experiences were tailored to the children's developmental stages, interests, and needs. The curriculum was observed to be flexible and responsive, adapting to the emerging interests and preferences of the children. Learning records for the year were reviewed and included a wide range of engaging topics such as "All About Me," "Settling into New Classes," "People Who Help Us," and "Our Local Community." Other themes explored throughout the year included autumn, fire safety, healthy eating, the months of the year, World Book Day, the life cycles of frogs and butterflies, and an "Under the Sea" topic, among others. These themes supported holistic learning and reflected a balance of seasonal, developmental, and interest-led planning.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) (b)

Drinking water was not readily available to the preschool children throughout the session.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Drinking water is readily available in each room during the day.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence submitted.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider adequately address the non-compliance found on inspection. This regulation is now compliant.

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 was found to be secured on arrival preventing unauthorised access or exit from the premises.
- Materials and equipment were observed to be in a good state of repair.
- Warm running water was available for hand washing at a temperature below 43°C in each of the sanitary areas and handwashing sinks in the preschool rooms
- Cleaning products and equipment were stored out of the reach of children.
- The outdoor area was secured with tall fencing and a bolted gate.

Infection Control:

- The materials and resources throughout the service were visually clean.
- Tables were observed to be cleaned prior to and after mealtimes in all of the care rooms.
- Foot operated pedal bins were available within the service for safe disposal of waste and leak proof foot operated pedalled nappy disposal bins were provided in the nappy changing areas
- There was adequate handwashing facilities provided throughout the service with warm water, liquid soap and paper towels. Older children were observed to wash their hands with support, before snacks, meals, after messy play and outdoor play.
- Child friendly handwashing posters were placed beside the sinks. Handwashing was supervised by the adults to ensure all hands were cleaned effectively.
- Cleaning schedules were up to date and available to review.
- The sanitary facilities were observed to be ventilated by openable windows mechanical ventilation.
- The sanitary facilities were observed to be maintained and clean.

Administration of Medication:

- During discussions with staff in the pre-school rooms, the inspector was informed of a child currently on medication. Staff demonstrated awareness of the medication's administration instructions and storage requirements. Upon review, the medication was found to be stored in a restricted area and in accordance with the manufacturer's guidelines.

- Detailed care plans for children requiring them are maintained by the service. These include a copy of the prescription and were available for review on the day of inspection.

Fire Safety:

- Fire doors were observed to be unobstructed throughout the service.
- Fire evacuation procedures were clearly displayed in the care rooms.
- Fire extinguishers were on the premises and easily accessible.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

- In the outdoor play area accessible to children, an electricity supply box was observed with a broken door with sharp edges and exposing its internal components. When this was brought to the attention of the person in charge, they informed the inspector that ESB had been contacted and that the main power supply to the box had been turned off at the main power point.
- There was a number of bikes in the outdoor play area that the paint had eroded and rust was present, posing a risk to the children.
- There were two steel goal posts in the outdoor play area where the paint at the base had eroded, which could pose a risk to the children
- There were trailing wires in the Preschool 2 Room that were accessible to the children

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

- An electrician has verified that the power to box is turned off.
- Bikes have been repaired.
- Goal posts have been repaired.
- Trailing wires have been removed.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

- Document submitted.
- Photographic evidence submitted.
- Photographic evidence submitted.
- Documentary evidence submitted.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider adequately address the non-compliance found on inspection. This regulation is now compliant.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured adequate insurance was in place for the preschool service for 75 children up to 27 March 2026.