

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LK185
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Name of Service:	Tir na nOg Montessori School - Pallasgreen
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Address of Service:	Corelish, Pallasgreen, Co. Limerick
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Eircode:	V94 KR98
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Name of Registered Provider:	Mary O'Connell
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	31/05/2023
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No of pre-school children:	AM	21	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Office, 2 nd Floor Estuary House, Henry Street Limerick
Inspection undertaken by:	M Riordan
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	Not applicable
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Description of service

Tír Na Nóg is a private sessional pre-school service situated in a rural setting close to the village of Pallasgreen in County Limerick. It offers a morning sessional service, Monday to Friday from 9.00am to 12.00md. The service presently has 30 pre-school children registered to attend the facility.

The service operates from a modular building located on the grounds of the registered provider's home. Within the premises the children have access to three preschool rooms. An outdoor play area to the front and the back of the school is available for outdoor play.

Staffing

The service is managed by the registered provider. There are two additional staff employed full time at the school. A relief staff member is also available if needed. All staff working at the service have achieved a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education. The registered provider has completed the LINC programme, a course designed to enhance inclusion of children with additional needs in early childhood care and education settings.

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 inspections may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 10, 11, 15, 16, 19, 25, 28.

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, 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
(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 present on the day of the inspection. Two additional staff were working at the service.

(b) The staff roster indicated that all three staff attend the service every day from time of opening to time of closure.

(2)(a) Two written references were available for each staff working at the service.

(b) References were from previous employers or from reputable sources.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures received from the National Vetting Bureau of An Garda Síochána were available for all staff working at the preschool.

(d) Police vetting was not required for any staff member working at the service.

(4) All staff held an appropriate qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education at level 6, 7 and 8. The registered provider has also completed the LINC programme, a course designed to enhance the inclusion of children with additional needs in the service.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.

Compliance Information

A detailed policy document was available at the service with a comprehensive list of policies included. This document was available for all parents to read on request. All policy folders were clearly displayed in the entrance lobby to the building. All policies were reviewed on a regular basis and were amended as required.

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 were 21 pre-school children under the supervision of the registered provider and 2 additional staff members. In Montessori room 1 there was 9 preschool children and 1 adult, in Montessori room 2 there was 6 preschool children and 1 adult, in Montessori room 3 there was 6 preschool children and 1 adult. The adult/child ratio was correct in the facility.

(3) The registered providers always ensured that the number of children and staff present in the service meet the requirements of the regulations.

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.*

Compliance Information

(1) A sample of 13 children’s registration forms were reviewed. The service had a record in writing containing the following particulars for each of the children’s records sampled.

- (a) The name and date of birth of the child.
- (b) the date on which the child first attended the service.
- (c) provision to record 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 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 (f) 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 received by the child.
- (i) Written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.

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;*
- (b) details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services;*
- (c) details of the adult:child ratios in the service;*
- (d) the type of care or programme provided in the service;*
- (e) the facilities available;*
- (f) the opening hours and fees;*
- (g) the policies, procedures and statements the service is required to maintain in accordance with Regulation 10;*
- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*
- (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

(2) A registered provider shall ensure that-

- (a) all documents and records relating to references and Garda and police vetting obtained under Regulation 9(2) are retained for a period of 5 years from the date on which the person to whom the document or record relates commences working in the service, and*
- (b) a record referred to in subparagraph (h), (j) or (k) of 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, or in the case of a preschool service in a drop-in centre or of a temporary pre-school service, for a period of 2 years from the date on which the child attends the service.*

Compliance Information

(1) The registered providers ensured that a record in writing was kept of the following information in relation to the service. This information was clearly displayed on the wall of the entrance lobby to the building.

- (a) The name, position, qualifications and experience of the persons in charge.
- (b) Details of the type of service in operation and the age profile of children for which the facility is registered to provide services.
- (c) Details of the adult: child ratios in the service.
- (d) The type of care or programme provided in the service. This was clearly displayed on the wall of the school near the entrance for parents to read.
- (e) The facilities available.
- (f) The opening hours and fees.
- (g) A record in writing was maintained of policies and procedures required in accordance with Regulation 10 and were found to be comprehensive and detailed.
- (h) Details of attendance by each pre-school child daily.
- (i) Rosters were maintained on a daily basis and available for inspection. These correlated with the numbers that were present on the day of inspection.
- (j) The service had a medication administration record template available that could be used in the event of a child requiring medication to be administered at the service
- (k) Details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.

(2) The registered provider stated the following:

(a) All documents and records relating to references and Garda vetting obtained under Regulation 9(2) were retained for a period of 5 years from the date on which the person to whom the document or record relates commences working in the service.

(b) A record referred to in subparagraph (h), (j) or (k) of paragraph (1) was retained for a period of 2 years from the date on which the child to whom it relates ceases to attend the service.

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

BASIC NEEDS:

The services objective was to ensure that each child's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the daily life of the service. A healthy eating policy was available at the service and children brought a healthy snack each day with them to the preschool. Fruit, sandwiches, yogurts and crackers were observed in the children's lunch boxes at break time. Childrens drinks were readily accessible to them. Perishable foods were stored in a fridge each morning until required for break.

All children were toilet trained and were independently using the bathroom facilities which were directly adjacent to each room. Tissues and wipes were observed easily accessible to the children and all waste was disposed of properly in lidded bins.

Children had daily access to an outdoor play area to the front and rear of the premises. Opportunities to run, climb, crawl and balance were available in this space. Children spend as much time as possible outdoors each day.

PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

The physical and material environment of the service was carefully planned and organised to ensure each child's learning was facilitated. Each room had many interest areas well developed included a construction area, a home corner equipped with a play kitchen, dolls and prams, an imagination play area with dolls houses, a rest /relaxation reading corner with soft furnishings located next to a book stand, an art/craft area with lots of paper and painting materials.

Children had access to a variety of materials and equipment which were rotated to suit the changing abilities and interests of the children and the changing curriculums plans throughout the year.

The outdoor areas of the service offered the children space for physical play, for movement and for exploration. The front garden was designed from natural materials and encouraged the children to learn about safe risk, to complete obstacles, to improve balance and co-ordination and to learn about gardening. Long periods were spend outdoors during the summer months with much of the indoor furniture moved to the outside.

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 has completed first aid responder training and the cert was in date until the 27th of March 2025.

(2)(a) There was a well-stocked first aid box located on the premises.

(b) The first aid box was readily available and easily accessible if required.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider had a current insurance certificate which outlined that adequate insurance was available for 33 preschool children to attend the sessional service. The insurance cover commenced on the 28th of November 2022 and expired on the 27th of November 2023.