

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015MO123
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Name of Service:	Tir Na Nog Crèche & Montessori School Limited
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Address of Service:	Church Road, Belmullet, Co Mayo
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Eircode:	F26 EY70
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Name of Registered Provider:	Mary Maloney O'Boyle
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	13/03/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	31	PM	31
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, TUSLA, Child and Family Agency, 2nd Floor, St. Mary's HQ., Castlebar, Co Mayo.
Inspection undertaken by:	M Farrell and L Costello
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

Tir Na Nog Crèche & Montessori School Limited is a service in Belmullet, Co Mayo and is registered to provide full day care, parttime and sessional services to children aged from 1 to 6 years of age. The service is registered to open from 07:50-17:20 hours. The service is situated in a purpose-built, two storey building. There are three playrooms, a separate sleep room, kitchen, office and sanitary areas used by the service on the ground floor. An enclosed outdoor play area is located to the rear of the premises.

Staffing

There are nine staff working in the service including the registered provider who oversees the day to day running of the service and works directly with the children, childcare staff, and a cook. There were two adult students on work experience placements in the service at the time of the inspection.

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

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under sections of regulations 9, 11, 15, 16, 23, 25, 26 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 registered provider, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

(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

(2)

It was confirmed with the registered provider following review of documents and discussion with staff that there were 11 adults in the service including two adults on student placement. The following vetting documentation and qualifications were available for the 11 adults:

- (a) Two written validated references from past employers in particular the most recent employers for seven adults and one written validated reference from a past employer for two adults.
 - (b) One written validated reference from another source for a second adult.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for 11 adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
 - (d) International police vetting was available for three adults who had lived outside of the State for more than six months as adults.
- (4) Evidence of the required qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education or equivalent was available on file for eight adults.

Non-Compliance Information

- (2) (a) There was no evidence of the validation of two reference for two adults made available for inspection.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

(2) (a)

The registered provider advised in writing that:

Corrective and Preventive Action

The references for the two adults have been validated. In future all references will be validated before adults start in the service. This has been added to the checklist of documents required to be completed before adults start in the service.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copies of validated references.

Summary Comment

The non-compliance found on inspection under Regulation 9 has been addressed by the actions taken and evidence submitted by the registered provider to the Early Years Inspectorate.

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.*

Compliance Information

- (1) There were 7 adults working directly with 29 children on the inspectors' unannounced arrival to the service. An additional 2 children arrived later to the service. The registered provider provided relief cover for breaks.
- (2) The minimum adult to child ratios were maintained during the unannounced inspection as follows:
- First Friends playroom: 2 staff cared for 13 children aged from 3 to 4 years of age attending parttime or full day care services.
- Early Start playroom: Two staff cared for eight children aged from 1 to 2 years of age attending parttime or full day care services.
- Bright Sparks playroom: 2 staff cared for 10 children aged from 3 to 4 years attending parttime or full day care services.

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.*

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

Compliance Information

(1)

The inspectors randomly selected a sample of ten children’s records for review from the children currently attending the service from across the three playrooms.

(a) to (i)

The ten records were found to be compliant with the required details under the regulation.

(3)

The children’s records were made available by the registered provider to the inspectors in the service on request.

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:

- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.

Compliance Information

- (1) (h) Accurate written records of the children’s attendance were kept by the staff in the playrooms during the inspection.
- (k) A sample of accident and incident forms reviewed had been completed with the required information and signed by both staff and parents.

Non-Compliance Information

- (1) (i) There was no daily staff roster available in the service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

- (1) (i)
The registered provider advised in writing that:

Corrective and Preventive Action

Staff members work the same hours every week. A roster has been completed and displayed in the hall. When any changes occur, the roster will be updated by the registered provider.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copy of the service staff roster.

Summary Comment

The actions and evidence submitted to the Inspectorate by the registered provider have addressed the non-compliance found on inspection under Regulation 16.

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 service's main entrance door at the rear of the building was secured with access to the service controlled by the staff members. The internal door leading from the service to the hallway at the front of the building was secured and children were unable to access the area. Blind cords on windows were observed to be appropriately secured. Toys and play equipment were in satisfactory condition and suitable for the age and developmental stages of the children using them. A weekly log was kept by staff in relation to the checking of outdoor play equipment for hazards. The outdoor area was enclosed and staff ensured that gates were secured to prevent children from leaving the outdoor area unnoticed. An area of the outdoor space containing a fallen tree following a recent storm was sectioned off and not in use following a risk assessment conducted by staff. The registered provider said that the area would not be available for use by the children until a maintenance person had made the area safe. The doors to the outdoor shed were secured to prevent children from accessing the shed. Cleaning products were stored out of reach of children with restrictors in place on cupboards under the sink in the Early Start playroom to restrict access by children to items stored there.

Infection Control:

There was separate storage of the children's personal belongings and cot linen. The staff informed the inspectors that cot linen was laundered frequently by the service. Disposable aprons and gloves were provided to be worn by staff for children's nappy changes in accordance with the service's nappy changing procedure displayed near the nappy change unit to provide direction for staff. The nappy change area used by the Early Start playroom had a clean wipeable nappy change mat on a nappy changing unit waist high to adults. Staff members were observed to clean down surfaces such as tabletops after use. Cleaning records were completed by staff and found to be up to date. Windows were opened at times to ventilate spaces. Hand hygiene was observed to be completed prior to mealtimes and after messy play. Care rooms were provided with a sink with warm running water, liquid soap and paper towels for effective hand hygiene.

Administration of Medication:

The staff told the inspectors that none of the children needed medication to be administered to them whilst in the service and that there was a system in place for recording medication administration should it be needed.

Safe Sleep:

There was a separate sleep room provided for the younger children in the service located adjacent to the Early Start playroom. Standard cots were provided for the young children to sleep/rest in. The staff observed resting/sleeping children at 10-minute intervals and made written records in relation to the children's colour, position and breathing patterns. The air temperature of the sleep room was recorded at 18.1°C.

Fire Safety:

Emergency exit routes were observed to be free from obstruction during the inspection.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Four cans of shaving foam were stored on a shelf in First Friends room. Shaving foam is not to be used in preschool service due to safety risk to children.

Infection Control:

2. The waste bin in Bright Sparks room was not foot operated posing an infection control risk to the preschool child.
3. The nappy bin provided in the nappy changing area used by the Early Start playroom was hand operated and not the required foot pedal operated nappy bin.

Safe Sleep:

4. There was no evidence of a safety standard mark on one of the cot mattresses in use in the service.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider advised in writing that:

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. Shaving foam has not been in use for a year. All old shaving foam cans have been removed.

Infection Control:

2. The pedal bin has been replaced in the Bright Sparks care-room. Staff have been informed to check it every day.
3. A pedal bin has been put in the changing area and the other bin has been removed. A foot pedal bin will be used going forward.

Safe Sleep:

4. The mattress was replaced with a mattress with a safety standard mark. All mattresses are now on a check list to be checked every Friday.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Photographic evidence.

Infection Control:

Photographic evidence.

Safe Sleep

Photographic evidence.

Summary Comment

The actions and evidence submitted to the Early Years Inspectorate by the registered provider has addressed the non-compliance found on inspection under Regulation 23.

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) There were certificates of first aid training available for two adults in the service. Both adults were present in the service during the inspection.
- (2) (a) There was a suitably equipped first aid box stored in a conspicuous place at a high level on a wall in the hallway near the early Start playroom. The first aid box had adequate supplies for the number of children attending.
- (b) The first aid equipment was readily available if needed for a child.

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 firefighting 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)(b) There was a record of the number, type and annual maintenance of the firefighting equipment showing that the firefighting equipment was last maintained on the 4 December 2024.
- (4) Notices of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were clearly displayed in the service.

Non-Compliance Information

- (1) (a) The last fire drill was recorded as undertaken on the 20 January 2025. This is not in line with the required monthly fire drills.
- (b) The certificate available for inspection regarding the testing/maintenance of the smoke alarms showed that the system was last maintained on the 02 April 2022. Smoke alarms are required to be maintained on an annual basis.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider advised in writing that:

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (1)(a) The service is going to carry out a fire drill during the first week of every month and all records will be completed immediately.
- (1)(b) The maintenance of the fire alarm/smoke alarm system has been carried out by a tradesperson. The service has planned with the tradesperson for the next maintenance of the smoke/fire alarm system with a reminder system in place for the service.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copies of fire drill records and smoke alarm/fire alarm maintenance records.

Summary Comment

The actions taken and evidence submitted to the Inspectorate by the registered provider has addressed the regulatory non-compliance found on inspection.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

A certificate of insurance covering the maximum number of 45 children registered to attend full day care services in the premises valid until the 27 March 2025 was displayed in the hallway.