

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015MO123
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Tir Na Nog Crèche & Montessori School Limited
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Church Road, Belmullet, Co. Mayo
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<b>Eircode:</b>	F26 EY70
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Mary Maloney
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<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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<b>Dates of Inspection:</b>	06/11/2025
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	39	PM	37
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Year's Inspectorate, TUSLA, Child and Family Agency, 2nd Floor, St. Mary's HQ., Castlebar, Co. Mayo.
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	M Farrell and L Costello
<b>Title:</b>	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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	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 but is currently operating from 8:00-17:00 hours. The service is situated in a purpose-built, two storey building with residential accommodation on the first floor. 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 ten staff working in the service including childcare staff, a cook and the registered provider who oversees the day to day running of the service and works directly with the children.

### 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 sections of regulations 9, 10, 11, 16, 19, 22 and 32. 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.

### Additional information

This inspection was triggered by information received by the Inspectorate.

### 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

*(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,*
- (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.*

*a letter from the Minister confirming that paragraph (4) shall not apply to him or her before that date.*

*(7) A registered provider shall ensure that all employees, unpaid workers and contractors are appropriately supervised and provided with appropriate information, and where necessary training, including in relation to the following:*

*(a) the policies, procedures and statements of the service specified in Schedule 5.*

### Compliance Information

Following a review of previous inspection information, information available on inspection and discussion with the person in charge it was determined that no new staff members had been employed since the previous inspection of the 13 March 2025.

(2) (a), (b), (d)

The vetting files for the 10 staff had been reviewed previously and been found to be compliant at the close of the inspection.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all 10 staff. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(4) Evidence of the required qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education or equivalent was available for eight staff who worked directly with the preschool children.

(7) Written evidence was available to show that the service's policies, procedures and statements had been provided to the staff with confirmation that they had read and understood the policies. Discussion with the staff found that staff meetings and updates were held with the person in charge and written minutes were available of these meetings. The service had a staff supervision policy in place and discussion with staff found that there was an induction process in place in the service.

## Non-Compliance Information

- (1) (a) There was no identifiable deputy person in charge in the service on inspection.
- (c) There was no identifiable deputy person in charge and no clear management structure in the service identifying lines of authority and accountability in the absence of the designated person in charge.

## Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

### Corrective and Preventive Action

- (1) (a) The registered provider now has a named identifiable deputy person in charge in place in the service. In future a request for change of circumstance will be submitted for a new deputy person in charge and all documents and policies will be revised to reflect the service new management structure.
- (c) There is now a clear management structure in place in the service. In future if any changes happen in the service regarding the management structure, all documents and policies will be revised immediately.

### Supporting documentation submitted

Documentation regarding management structure and staff accountability.

## Summary Comment

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

## 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

The registered provider had the specified written policies, procedures and statements in place in the service. The following policies were selected for review and found to contain the required information:

- (j) policy on accidents and incidents;
- (l) policy on healthy eating.

## 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 inspectors' unannounced arrival to the service, there were 7 adults working directly with children on the inspectors' unannounced arrival to the service. The registered provider provided the relief cover for breaks.
- (2) The minimum adult to child ratios were maintained during the unannounced inspection as follows:  
 Early Start playroom: Two staff cared for 9 children aged from 1 to 2 years of age attending parttime or full day care services.  
 First Friends playroom: 2 staff cared for 14 children aged from 2 to 4 years of age attending parttime of full day care services.  
 Bright Sparks (Montessori) playroom: 2 staff cared for 16 children aged from 3 to 5 years. Two of the children availed of sessional services on the day with 14 children attending parttime of full day care services.
- (8) (a) Written records showed and discussion with staff members confirmed that there were at least two adults in the service at all times during opening hours when children were present.

## 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:*

*(k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

*(3) A record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection on the premises, and the documents and records referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall be open to inspection whether on the premises or elsewhere, by an authorised person.*

#### Compliance Information

(3)

The registered provider ensured that accident and incident forms and logbooks were available to the inspectors on the day.

#### Non-Compliance Information

(1) (k)

The service had two methods of recording accidents and incidents. This included an incident logbook in each room and an accident and incident form. On a sample review of the logbook inconsistencies arose, where on separate dates within a two-week period children had been recorded as falling and requiring first aid in the logbook, however no accident and incident form was completed. There was also no record of parents being informed of these incidents contrary to the service policy where it states 'that parents will be contacted and informed of any injury'.

#### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

(1) (k)

##### **Corrective and Preventive Action**

The service now has one method of recording accidents and incidents in a record book. The registered provider has spoken with staff and going forward parents must be informed of all accidents and incidents and the child's parent must sign the service record. All accidents and Incidents are to be recorded in one record book from the day of the last inspection.

##### **Supporting documentation submitted**

No documentation submitted.

### Summary Comment

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

### 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-*

*(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.*

*(3) A registered provider shall ensure that no practices that are disrespectful, degrading, exploitive, intimidating, emotionally or physically harmful or neglectful are carried out in respect of a pre-school child whilst attending the service.*

### Compliance Information

(1) (b) Appropriate and suitable care practices were observed in the service during the inspection with the staff demonstrating consideration of children's individual needs regarding sleep, eating and drinking, nappy changes/toileting and behaviour management. On the inspectors' arrival to the service two of the youngest children in the Early Start care-room were asleep in cots in the adjacent sleep room. When the children woke up by themselves, they were brought by staff to the care-room to join the other children. The staff explained to the inspectors that sleep was accommodated depending on children's individual needs. Following dinner, all the children from the Early Start care-room were placed in standard cots in the sleep room to rest/sleep for a structured rest/sleep time. The staff checked the children at ten-minute intervals and recorded observations of the children sleeping. The sleep room was adjacent to the care-room and had a viewing panel. There was an audio monitor in place connecting the care-room with the sleep room allowing staff to respond to children promptly when they heard them awaking. Information regarding the children's sleep, food intake and nappy changes were recorded by staff in individual notebooks to inform parents.

The children were provided with nutritious food at regular intervals during the inspection. On the inspectors' unannounced arrival to the service, children were observed to eat their midmorning snacks in some of the care-rooms with food provided from home. Each child had an individual placemat containing a photograph of them and background artwork created by the children placed where they sat in groups at

tables. At dinnertime, the staff in the Early Start care-room were observed to sit with the children while they ate to supervise them. The staff encouraged the children to feed themselves depending on their developmental stages and given plenty of time to eat without being rushed in accordance with the service's Healthy Eating policy. Some of the youngest children needed help eating and the staff were respectful and attentive to the children supporting them to eat at their preferred pace following the children's leads and ques. The children were provided with bibs by the staff to protect their clothing. Following eating, the staff confirmed with the children that they were finished and washed their hands and cleaned their faces preparing for rest time. Children were observed to have free access to drinks in their individual containers in the care-rooms.

The staff informed the inspectors that all the children attending the Early Start care-room on the day wore nappies that were changed regularly after mealtimes and also in response to children's individual needs. The staff were observed to be sensitive to the children during nappy change, speaking with them and including them in the process. The staff adhered to the service nappy changing procedure displayed in the nappy change area when changing nappies including wearing aprons and gloves and washing the child's hands after the process.

The children in the Early Start care-room enjoyed a group messy play activity relating to the care-rooms weekly theme of rainbows at an activity table during the inspection. The staff were observed to help the children put on overalls to protect their clothes and clean their faces and wash their hands after the activity. The staff respected the choice of a child who did not want to join in this activity and supported the child to play with a toy of the child's choice.

The children's behaviour was managed in a positive manner by staff. Positive language was used to redirect children when needed. The staff were observed to address the children with warmth during interactions and provide appropriate levels of praise and encouragement to the children.

- (3) No practices that were disrespectful, degrading, exploitive, intimidating, emotionally or physically harmful or neglectful were observed during the day or identified during conversations with the staff. The staff were observed to be responsive to children's needs and showed awareness of the service's behaviour management policy.

## Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

### Regulation 22 – Food and drink

*A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.*

#### Compliance Information

The inspectors observed that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food was provided to the children during the inspection in line with the service’s healthy eating policy. The children were observed to eat mid-morning snacks such as prepared fruits, chopped meats, bread, yoghurts and boxty in their care-rooms. Drinks stations were set up with individual containers in the care-rooms that were accessible to children. The children in the Early Start care-room all ate a warm meal at dinner time. The service offered a warm meal of meatballs in a tomato-based sauce and pasta that some of the children availed of. Other children had a warm meal provided from home such as vegetable pasta dishes and chicken curry with rice.

#### Non-Compliance Information

Records showed that there was no hot meal provided to children by the service for the months of July and August 2025. This was confirmed by staff members and the registered provider.

#### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

##### Corrective and Preventive Action

A plan has been devised to ensure that a hot meal will be provided for children in the service for the months of July and August. This will involve either meals prepared on site by a cook or the sourcing of meals from a caterer.

##### Supporting documentation submitted

Evidence of a proposed menu plan for hot meals.

#### Summary Comment

The actions and evidence submitted together with the commitment by the registered provider to provide hot meals during summer months has addressed the non-compliance found under Regulation 22 on inspection.

## Part VIII - Notifications and Complaints

### Regulation 32 – Complaints

*(1) A registered provider shall ensure that the complaints policy of the service specifies-*

- (a) the procedure to be followed by a person for the purposes of making a complaint in relation to the service,*
- (b) the manner in which such a complaint shall be dealt with, and*

*(c) the procedures for keeping a person who makes such a complaint informed of the manner in which it is being dealt with.*

*(2) A registered provider shall ensure that-*

- (a) a record in writing is kept of a complaint made to the provider in respect of the pre-school service, and*
- (b) the complaint is duly dealt with in accordance with the provider's complaints policy.*

*(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall-*

- (a) include the nature of the complaint and the manner in which the complaint was dealt with, and*
- (b) be open to inspection on the premises by an authorised person.*

### Compliance Information

- (1)  
The registered provider ensured that there was a complaints policy in place and available for review in the service. The policy stated;
- (a) the procedures to be followed by a person who wished to make a complaint about the service,
  - (b) the processes for dealing with the complaint,
  - (c) the way the person who makes a complaint will be kept informed of how their complaint is being dealt with.
- (2)
- (a) A record in writing was kept in the service of a complaint made to the provider regarding the service.
  - (b) The record showed the complaint was dealt with in accordance with the service's complaints policy.
- (3)
- (a) The service records included the nature of the complaint and how the complaint was dealt with.
  - (b) The information was available electronically to the inspectors on the premises.

### Non-Compliance Information

- (1) (a) The complaints policy required updating in relation to the information regarding a deputy person in charge in the service as this person was no longer in position, and access to complaints.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

(1)(a)

#### Corrective and Preventive Action

The information regarding the deputy person in charge in the service and access to complaints contained in the complaints policy is now up to date and correct. Going forward, policies will be updated immediately if there is any change in management structure or operational structure of the service.

**Supporting documentation submitted**

Documentation regarding the service's management structure and staff roles.

**Summary Comment**

The actions and evidence submitted by the registered provider has been reviewed by the Inspectorate and found to have addressed the regulatory non-compliance found under Regulation 32 on inspection.