

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015SO063		
Name of Service:	Tir na nOg		
Address of Service:	The Teeling Centre, Collooney, Co. Sligo		
Eircode:	F91 P68C		
Name of Registered Provider:	Terrence King		
Service type:	Full Day		
Date(s) of Inspection:	02/05/2024		
No of pre-school children:	AM	55	PM 42
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, TUSLA Child & Family Agency, Markievicz House, Barrack St, Sligo, F91 XC84		
Inspection undertaken by:	L Costello and M Farrell		
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 is in operation since 2008 and is governed by a local voluntary management committee. The service is registered as a full day care service catering for children aged 0 – 6 years. A school age service is also provided. The service operates weekdays from 8am – 6pm. The service is situated on the outskirts of Collooney in County Sligo, just off the main N17 road a few kilometres from Sligo town. The two-storey building was purpose designed and is part of the Teeling community complex. There are six care-rooms however only five were operating on the day of inspection, two sleep rooms, a reception area and a kitchen for preparing meals served on-site.

Staffing

Twenty-one adults in total are employed in the service. This includes a manager, childcare staff, an administration person, a chef and a part-time caretaker.

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, 23, 25, 26, 28 and 29 however, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 19. 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*

(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.

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(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) (b)

There was a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.

(2) (a) (b)

The records of all four adults employed in the service since the last focussed inspection on the 27 June 2022 were reviewed. Six written and verified past employer references or references from a reputable source in the absence of a past employer, were available in respect of four adults.

(c)

Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for 21 adults in the service. 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 provided for one adult employed in the service that had lived outside the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

(4) Two adults new to the service who worked directly with the children had attained major awards in Early childhood care and education at level 5 or above on the national framework of qualifications, or qualifications deemed by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) to meet the regulatory requirement

Non-Compliance Information

(2) (a)

There was no second reference on file from a past employer where there was previous employment for two adults.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

A second reference from a past employer was sought and validated for two adults on 16 May 24 and 29 May 24.

Two references from past employers will be sought prior to commencing employment.

Supporting documentation submitted

Documentary evidence submitted

Summary Comment

The actions submitted by the person acting on behalf of the registered provider has been reviewed by the inspectorate and the non-compliance has been addressed.

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.

(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) There were 10 adults working directly with 55 children on the inspectors' unannounced arrival to the service. A review of a sample of attendance records showed that an adequate number of adults worked directly with the children during service hours of operation.
- (2) The minimum adult to child ratios were provided on the morning of the unannounced inspection in accordance with the required ratios considering the ages of the children and the length of time each child spent in the service as outlined below:
 - Toddler care-room: 2 adults cared 9 children aged from 2 to 3 years of age.
 - Wobbler care-room: 2 adults cared for 8 children aged from 1 to 2 years of age, an additional adult arrived at 11am.
 - Little Leaders care-room: 2 adults cared for 16 children aged 3 years to 4 years of age.
 - Little Learners care-room: 2 adults cared for 15 children aged 4 years to 5 years of age.
 - Little Adventurers care-room: 2 adults cared for 7 children aged 3 years to 5 years of age.

In the afternoon the following ratios applied:

- Toddler care-room: 2 adults cared 7 children aged from 2 to 3 years of age.
- Wobbler care-room: 2 adults cared for 6 children aged from 1 to 2 years of age.
- Little Leaders care-room: 2 adults cared for 14 children aged 3 years to 4 years of age.
- Little Learners care-room: 2 adults cared for 15 children aged 4 years to 5 years of age.

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 gate was secure on the inspectors unannounced arrival to the service. A buzz entry system allowed for no unauthorised access to the service.
- The kitchen was inaccessible to the preschool child.

- Cleaning products in the care rooms were stored out of reach of the preschool child.
- Blind cords throughout the service were secure.

Infection Control:

- Children were observed to wash their hands prior to snack time and after using the toilet.
- Tables were observed to be cleaned prior to snack time and after messy play.

Administration of Medication:

- Staff were knowledgeable when interviewed about the service medication policy.
- Accurate records including consent for administration were recorded in the service.

Safe Sleep:

- The service had a designated sleep room with a total of ten standard cots.

Fire Safety:

- Fire evacuation procedures were clearly displayed in the care rooms.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Room temperature in the wobbler room was recorded at 24.3°C at 12:14, when brought to the attention of staff, windows and doors were open in an attempt to reduce the room temperature.
2. The sanitary area in the wobbler room was equipped with a ladder to assist the child to climb up to the nappy changing area. On observation the ladder provided was unsuitable for the age range of the children as they could not manage to independently climb up or down the ladder.
3. The door of the storeroom containing cleaning products next to the stairs used by the children from the Little learners care-room was found to be inadequately secured at on the day of the inspection. This was also a non-compliance on the most recent inspection of the 27 June 2022.
4. There was a large unsecured wooden branch with small metal hooks fixed into it positioned at a low level in the mud kitchen area. Several other small metal hooks were also positioned at low levels in the space and posed risks of injury to children.
5. Pieces of bark had come away from a wooden piece of equipment in one of the outdoor play areas leaving splinters exposed posing a risk of injury to children.

Infection Control:

6. Infant formula for children was provided from home in powder form resulting in a risk of cross contamination.
7. Nappy changing procedure were observed not to be in line with infection control guidance or the service policy. Gloves were not routinely removed after changing a soiled nappy and used to dress the child posing an infection control risk. Staff did not routinely use the foot pedal of the waste bin, using their hands to open and close the bin posing a risk of cross contamination.
8. Spacing between cots in the wobbler sleep room did not meet the required 50cm spacing between four cots, measuring at 34cm and 36cm. This poses an infection control risk.

Fire Safety:

9. Portable toilets had been positioned outside in front of the emergency exit doors to the rear of the building located at the bottom of one flight of stairs leading from the first floor. These portable toilets posed a potential hazard for people in the event of an emergency evacuation using this emergency exit.
10. The sleep room had a quantity of equipment including boxes of toys, spare waste bins and cardboard stored at the bottom of the sleep room which could potentially pose a fire risk.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

In a written response the registered provider stated:

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. Staff will open windows and doors regularly. The fan extractor above the door has been turned to the cool air and another fan was also provided. Staff will check the room temperature in the morning and open windows and doors regularly.
2. New steps were provided to assist the children to climb up to the changing area safely. The steps will be maintained. Staff will also support and assist the children using the steps.
3. The overhead close shutter on the door in the storeroom has been tightened, with the door now closing securely. The door of the storeroom will be checked and maintained regularly.
4. The unsecure wooden branch and small metal hooks have been removed. All toys, equipment and natural material will be secured safely and appropriately.

- The wooden piece of equipment has been sanded down to remove loose pieces of bark. Natural material and equipment will be checked and maintained regularly and will be removed and replaced when necessary.

Infection Control:

- Parents/guardians have been asked not to bring in baby formula from home. If for any medical reasons bottles need to be made regularly parents will be asked to state it in writing. This will be made up in line with best practice. Registration forms and parent packs will be updated to include information on baby formula.
- The correct procedure for nappy changing were discussed at a staff meeting and staff were provided with a copy of the policy and procedures. Staff will read and familiarise themselves with the nappy changing policy and procedure.
- The cots have been measured allowing 50cm spacing in between each cot. The 50cm spacing in between each cot are marked to ensure the cots remain the correct width apart.

Fire Safety:

- The portable toilets outside an emergency exit to the rear of the building has been removed. The service will ensure fire exits are always kept clear of obstruction.
- Equipment including toys, spare waste bin and cardboard stored in the sleep room has been removed. Extra equipment including toys, spare waste bin and cardboard will be stored correctly and removed if it is not required.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

- Photographic evidence.
- Photographic evidence.
- Photographic evidence.
- Photographic evidence.
- Photographic evidence.

Infection Control:

- Photographic evidence.
- Photographic evidence.
- Photographic evidence.

Fire Safety:

9. Photographic evidence.
10. Photographic evidence.

Summary Comment

The actions submitted by the person in charge acting on behalf of the registered provider have been reviewed by the inspectorate. The non compliances found on inspection in relation to regulation 23 have been addressed and will be reviewed on next inspection. This regulation is now compliant.

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) On the day of inspection, the registered provider ensured that a sufficient number of staff members on duty were trained in first aider response (FAR) training and were available to children attending the preschool service.
- (2) (a) (b)
A fully stocked first aid box is available in the reception area in the service available as required to the preschool children. Smaller first aid boxes with plasters are available in each of the care rooms.

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.
- (2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-
- (a) a parent or guardian of a pre-school child attending or proposing to attend the pre-school service,
 - (b) an employee, and
 - (c) an authorised person.
- (3) A registered provider shall ensure that a record referred to in paragraph (2) is retained for a period of 5 years after its creation
- (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) (b)

The registered provider has ensured that the required monthly fire drills take place within the preschool service. A list of all fire fighting equipment with the most recent maintenance date of April 2023 is available within the service.

(2) (c)

The required records were made available to the inspector on the day.

(3)

The person in charge is aware of the requirement to retain these records for a period of 5 years.

(4)

Fire evacuation procedures were displayed in a conspicuous locations throughout the preschool service for safe evacuation in the event of a fire.

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 90 children in a full day care service up until the 27 March 2025.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-

- (a) of sound and stable structure,*
- (b) safe and secure,*
- (c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated*
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

Compliance Information

- (a)
- Sound and Stable Structure:
- The pre-school service is located in a purpose built premises and appears to have no obvious defects. The service consists of six care rooms of which five were in operation on the day of the inspection.
- (b)
- Safe and Secure:
- The internal and external entry points were appropriately secured to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the service.
- (c)
- Lighting:
- The preschool service was adequately lit by means of natural lighting supplemented by artificial lighting. Care rooms on the ground floor consisted of floor to ceiling height windows and glass doors. All care rooms had light with the required shatterproof coverings.

Heating:

The ground floor of the service had an underfloor heating system in place. The Little Learners care-room on the first floor had heaters attached to the wall with control systems in place maintaining their temperatures below the required 50°C.

Ventilation:

The ventilation in the care rooms was provided via a combination of natural ventilation through openable windows and doors and a mechanical ventilation system that was operating in some of the care-rooms.

(d)

Cleaned, Maintained and Repaired:

The care rooms, sleep rooms and sanitary areas were cleaned and well maintained throughout the service. Cleaning schedules were displayed and up to date in the care rooms.

Non-Compliance Information

(c)

The mechanical ventilation system in the sanitary unit located beside the Little Leaders care-room did not appear to be operational with no audible sound from the system or air movement visible near the ventilation system vents in the ceilings. There was no documentary evidence available the inspectors to support that the system was operational at the time of the inspection.

(d)

The outdoor area of the preschool service required maintenance in the following areas:

- A wooden fence separating the outdoor play areas had flaking paint and this required to be maintained.
- Picnic benches in the outdoor had areas of flaking paint.
- The outdoor area had sections of unused and broken toys gathered and required to be removed.

Indoors:

- The cistern lid on one of the toilets in the Little Leaders sanitary unit had been replaced with a smaller lid that did not correctly fit the toilet and posed a safety risk.
- The ceiling in the Little Leaders care-room had areas of heavy brown staining and required maintenance/painting.

(e)

1. The water temperature in the sanitary units used by the children from the Little Learners care-rom was recorded at 46.1°C and 45.8°C which is above the required maximum level of 43°C.

2. Staff advised the inspector that a nappy mat was placed on a floor in one of the Little Learners sanitary areas to change nappies, where a waist high nappy changing unit was required to be used.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (c)
- The mechanical ventilation system has been replaced and are in good working order. The ventilation systems will be checked and maintained regularly and replaced when needed.
- (d)
- The wooden fence separating the outdoor play areas has been removed and replaced with an additional mud kitchen, sandbox and flower planter. The new mud kitchen, sandbox and flower planter outdoors will be maintained regularly.
 - The picnic benches in the outdoor area have been sanded down and repainted. The picnic benches will be maintained and painted when needed.
 - A section outdoors that had broken and used toys has been removed. Any broken and unused toys will be removed from the play areas.
 - The cistern lid in one of the toilets has been replaced with a new toilet. The toilets will be maintained and replaced when necessary.
 - The ceiling in the care-room has been painted. The care rooms will be painted and maintained on a regular basis.
- (e)
- The water temperature in the sanitary units has been adjusted to 43°C. The water temperature in the sanitary units will be checked regularly to ensure it is the correct temperature.
 - It was discussed at a staff meeting that any child that requires a nappy change will be changed in the Wobbler care-room on a high waist changing unit A notice will be displayed in the care-room as a reminder that children must be changed in the wobbler room on a waist high changing unit

Supporting documentation submitted

- (c) Photographic evidence submitted
- (d) Photographic evidence submitted.
- (e) Photographic evidence submitted.

Summary Comment

The actions submitted by the person in charge acting on behalf of the registered provider have been reviewed by the inspectorate. The non compliances found on inspection in relation to regulation 29 have been addressed. This regulation is now compliant.

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.

Non-Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) Sheets of paper towel were placed on the table by staff for children to eat their snacks off in one of the care-rooms at mid-morning snack time even though plastic plates were readily available in this care-room for the children's use.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (1)
- (a) It was discussed at a staff meeting as a reminder to use plates, cutlery and utilise provided instead of using single paper towels for snack time. A notice will be displayed in the care-room as a reminder to use plates, cutlery and utilise provided for all snack and mealtimes.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence submitted.

Summary Comment

The actions submitted by the person in charge acting on behalf of the registered provider have been reviewed by the inspectorate. The non compliances found on inspection have been addressed and this regulation is now compliant.