

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2022DL003
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Name of Service:	Niall Mor Childcare
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Address of Service:	Clara House, Killybegs, Co. Donegal
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Eircode:	F94 RV10
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Name of Registered Provider:	Conor Conaghan
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date(s) of Inspection:	29/01/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	37	PM	34
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, TUSLA Child & Family Agency, Markievicz House, Barrack St, Sligo, F91 XC84
Inspection undertaken by:	K Folan
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

Niall Mor Childcare is a not-for-profit early years' service located in the centre of the town in Killybegs Co. Donegal. It is one of two services operated by a board of management. The service is registered to provide full day, part time and sessional care to children aged 0-6 years.

The service is open between the hours of 07:30 and 18:00 from Monday to Friday. The service is located on the first floor of a community building. The premises contains four care rooms, two sleep rooms, children and staff sanitary accommodation, a kitchen, an office and storage rooms. An enclosed outdoor play area is available at the side of the service.

Staffing

The registered provider does not work in the service. There are 14 adults employed in the service, 11 adults work directly with the children, the person in charge and one adult works in the kitchen. In addition, a manager is employed to oversee both services and attended on the day to facilitate 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 regulations 9,10,11,15,22,23,24 and 27. 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 inspector wishes 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 named adults 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 place.

(2) On the day of the inspection 14 adults employed in the service were present.

Fifteen staff files were reviewed including the registered providers, and the following information was available:

- (a) Nineteen written and validated references from previous employers for six of the adults.
- (b) Eleven written validated reference from reputable sources for ten of the adults.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(4)

Thirteen 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.

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 following policies were reviewed and deemed to be compliant:

- (a) statement of purpose and function
- (b) complaints policy
- (c) policy on administration of medication
- (e) policy on managing behaviour
- (f) policy on safe sleep
- (g) fire safety policy
- (h) inclusion policy
- (i) outings policy
- (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.

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) On the morning of the inspection:

- In the Baby room, 2 adults cared for 6 children aged between 10 months and 15 months of age.
- In the Sun room, 2 adults cared for 11 children aged between 2 years and 2 years and 5 months.
- In the Rainbow room, 3 adults cared for 12 children aged between 2 years and 5 months and 3 years of age.
- In the Busy Bee room, 3 adults cared for 8 children aged between 1 to 2 years.

In the afternoon:

- In the Baby room, 2 adults cared for 5 children aged between 10 months and 15 months of age.
- In the Sun room, 2 adults cared for 11 children aged between 2 years and 2 years and 5 months.
- In the Rainbow room, 2 adults cared for 10 children aged between 2 years and 5 months and 3 years of age.
- In the Busy Bee room, 2 adults cared for 8 children aged between 1 to 2 years of age.

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-
- (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.

Compliance Information

On the day of inspection, a sample of 12 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 all records.
- b) the date on which the child first attended the service was available from all records reviewed.
- c) The date on which the child ceased to attend the service was non applicable for all records reviewed as all children were enrolled in 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 was available from all records.
- e) authorisation for the collection of the child was available for all 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 all records.
- g) the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner was available from all records.
- h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child was available from all records.
- i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency was available for all 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 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 service provides all meals and snacks to children. A four-week menu was available and displayed in the service.

On the day of inspection, the following menu was offered to children.

Breakfast: A choice of cereals

Snack: Fruit and Toast

Dinner: Chicken Casserole with mashed potato or pasta. An alternative of pasta bake was available for children who required it.

Evening snack: Ham and cheese toasted bagels.

Fresh drinking water was available to the children throughout the day.

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.
- Cleaning products and equipment were stored out of the reach of children.
- The outdoor area was secured with tall fencing and a bolted gate
- Children with food allergies were identified in the service and alternatives were offered.

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.
- 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.
- The sanitary facilities were observed to be maintained and clean.

Administration of Medication:

- No medicine was administered on the day of inspection; however, staff advised the inspector of the correct procedure to be followed in the event of a child requiring medicine.
- Records of previously administered medication were available for review, and the correct details were recorded.

Safe Sleep:

- Cots were available for all children under the age of two years of age.
- Cot mattresses were fitted with waterproof covers and had the correct safety mark.
- Physical sleep checks were carried out every 10 minutes on sleeping children.
- Sleep records were correctly maintained with the child's name, sleep position, breathing pattern and skin colour recorded.
- The temperature in both sleep rooms was monitored to ensure it was within the correct range of 16-20° Celsius.

Fire Safety:

- Fire exits were unobstructed throughout the building.
- Fire evacuation plans, including a map of the building were displayed on the wall in each care room.
- Fire extinguishers were on the premises and easily accessible.

Outing:

- Staff informed the inspector that children are brought on walks outside of the service. Outdoor risk assessments were in place and recorded for each outing.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) no person other than-

(i) pre-school child attending the service,

(ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,

(iii) an employee, or

(iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and

(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (3)(b) is retained for a period of one year from the date to which it relates.

Compliance Information

(1) Records demonstrated that each child was checked in and out of the service by staff in each room daily.

(3)(a)(b) A visitors' book was provided in the main hallway of the service. Visitors to the service were required to sign in on arrival to the service.

(4) Records were retained for the required time period of one year.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.

Compliance Information

The children were appropriately supervised at play times both indoors and outdoors and during mealtimes and sleep times.

During play time, the staff members positioned themselves around the room ensuring that all children were in view while having choice to move freely and direct their own play. Transitions to the outdoors were observed to

be managed well, with good communication observed between staff. This ensured that all staff members were aware what children were outside and what children they were responsible for.

Mealtimes were observed to be supervised effectively with staff members placed alongside children encouraging their independence and supporting if necessary.

In main sleep room, staff remained in the room, supervising the children who were asleep on floor beds.