

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015KE083
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Name of Service:	Tír na Nóg
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Address of Service:	Avilla, Old Connell, Newbridge, Co. Kildare
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Eircode:	W12 TP63
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Name of Registered Provider:	Ian Clarke, Orlaith Connolly Clarke
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	16/04/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	93	PM	52
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Suite 7, Floor 2, Vista Primary Care, Ballymore Eustace Road, Naas, Co Kildare
Inspection undertaken by:	F Carty and R Flynn
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).

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Description of service

Tir na Nóg is a privately owned service registered to provide full day, part-time and sessional care to children aged 0 to 6 years. The service operates from eight units in a purposely adapted crèche facility in Newbridge Co Kildare. The units are located in six separate buildings. There is a separate sleep room, sanitary accommodation together with three outdoor areas which are located within the creche complex. The service opens from 7.15am to 6.30pm, Monday to Friday. A morning Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme (ECCE) session is provided from 9.15am to 12.15pm for 38 weeks of the year.

There are kitchens located in each unit where all meals and snacks are prepared. An office, staff room, storage area and staff sanitary accommodation is also available on site.

Staffing

There are 22 staff employed in the preschool service including a manager and deputy manager. On the day of inspection there were 20 staff working directly with 93 children. The manager and deputy were also available to assist in the care rooms if necessary. One of the registered providers arrived for the closing meeting.

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

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This inspection was unannounced and focused on the area of governance, health, welfare and development of child and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under the following regulations:

Regulation 9 -Management and Recruitment,

Regulation 11 - Staffing Levels,

Regulation 19 - Health, Welfare and Development of Child,

Regulation 23 - Safeguarding, Health, Safety and Welfare of Child,

Regulation 26 – Fire Safety.

Regulation 30 - Space

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 19 and 23. As a result, the scope of the inspection included the Wobbler room, unit 3, unit 5 and unit 7.

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, person in charge, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

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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.*

(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)

The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required who were on the premises throughout the inspection.

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(2)

The inspection focused on the recruitment records for one adult employed since the last inspection on 8th April 2025. Documentation was reviewed in respect of this adult and met regulatory requirements as follows:

(a)(b)

Of the two validated, written references that were required, one was available from a past employer and one from a reputable source.

(c)

A Garda vetting disclosure had been obtained for the adult. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d)

Police vetting was required and was available for the staff member who had lived outside the State for a period exceeding 6 months as an adult.

(4)

Records were available evidencing that the staff member who was employed to work directly with the children held the required qualification or equivalent.

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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)

An adequate number of adults were working directly with the children at all times during the inspection.

(2)

The minimum ratio of adults to children for full day care services were adhered to at all times during the inspection. There were 93 children attending the service being supervised by 20 adults on the day of inspection.

(8)(a)

There were at least two adults on the premises at all times

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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

(1)(a)

The registered providers ensured that children's learning, development and wellbeing were facilitated in the service through the provision of the following practices. Meals were provided at regular intervals and drinking water was available to children throughout the day. Staff sat with children during their dinner and children were encouraged to feed themselves. All children were given water with their meal. Staff supported children who needed assistance with their meals. Additional servings were available in the care rooms and staff were observed providing additional portions to children who requested more or an alternative. During the meal, the staff engaged in conversation with the children, supporting the development of their communication and social skills. Staff were observed to use this time for warm one to one interaction with the children, supporting their sense of security. Children were provided with opportunities to develop their self-care skills, for example, tidying up following play, using the toilet independently, and washing their hands routinely.

Transitions to and from sleep were calm, with staff using soft tones to provide comfort and reassurance to children. Babies slept according to their individual routines, and children attending Unit 7 slept at a designated time. Staff reported that children could sleep outside of these times if required. Rest areas were available in all care rooms, allowing children to take a break from activities if required. Transitions from one activity to the next were well managed, and children were given verbal indications of the change approaching. Staff reported that parents have the opportunity to discuss their child at drop off and collection, and the service uses a software application to provide information to parents in relation to updates on meals, nappy changes, sleep and daily activities.

Staff were affectionate and respectful in their interactions with the children. They used the children's names, provided praise and encouragement, and dropped to their level when engaging in conversations. Toys and equipment were positioned at an accessible level on open shelving, which facilitated choice and spontaneous play. These included home areas, libraries, construction materials, small world, puzzles and mark-making. Child size tables and chairs were available to allow children to comfortably sit during mealtimes and while engaging in tabletop activities. There were a number of outdoor areas which provided an alternative environment for children

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which included, artificial grass surfacing, a kitchen, climbing frame, a playhouse, sand and water trays, seesaws, and a slide. On the day of inspection, all children were observed to avail of time in the outdoor area.

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 entrance door to the service was adequately secured to ensure the safety of the children within and to avoid unauthorised persons accessing the service or children exiting unsupervised.
- The toys and play equipment observed in use by the children on the day of inspection appeared in good working order.
- Cleaning agents and medicines were stored safely out of reach of children.
- All storage facilities were inaccessible to children.

Infection Control:

- Liquid soap, warm water and paper towels were available to facilitate hand washing. The children were supported to wash their hands at regular intervals including after being in the garden and before meals.
- Waste was managed appropriately with the use of pedal bins.
- A system was in place for effective sterilisation of soothers and mouthed toys.
- Individual bed linen was provided for children. Staff stated that bed linen is laundered weekly or as required.
- All cot mattresses in use had waterproof covers

Administration of Medication:

- Staff demonstrated, through discussion, that they were familiar with the procedures and practices in place for the administration of medication in line with the service policy on medication administration.

Safe Sleep:

An adult remained in the room at all times where children were sleeping on low beds ap here to enter text.

Fire Safety:

- All fire exits were clear of obstruction.
- Regular fire drills took place in the service.

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Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

1. Hand washing practices were inadequate to prevent the spread of infection in the Wobbler room as follows:
 - Children's hands were not washed before mealtimes and after outdoor play.
 - A staff member did not wash their hands before and after nappy changes.
 - Children's hands were not washed following nappy changes.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control:

- Staff Meeting was held immediately following the inspection to review handwashing requirements and infection control procedures.
- All staff in received refresher training on handwashing for both themselves & children.
- Spot checks by management are being done on a weekly basis to ensure compliance with handwashing procedures.
- Extra handwashing posters have been put up in both care room & bathroom.

Supporting documentation submitted

Infection Control:

Photos of posters and training records.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions together with the supporting documents were reviewed by the inspector and are deemed to meet the requirements of Regulation 23.

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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.*

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

A written record was available of monthly fire drills completed in the service. The last recorded fire drill was recorded on 13th April 2026 in Units 6 and 7, 8th April 2026 in Units 1, 2 and 5 and 15th April 2026 in Unit 4.

(b)

Records were kept of the maintenance of the firefighting equipment which was last serviced on 24 April 2025. The smoke alarm system in the premises was last serviced on 18 December 2025.

(4)

A notice of the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in the service

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 30 - Minimum space requirements

(1) Subject to paragraphs (2) to (6), a registered provider shall ensure that adequate clear floor space is available in the premises for the work, play and movement of children attending the pre-school service.

(2) A registered provider of a full day care service or a part-time day care service shall ensure that the minimum amount of clear floor space specified in column (3) of Schedule 7 opposite a particular reference number specified in column (1) of that Schedule in respect of the age range of children specified in column (2) thereof at that reference number is available for each child in that age range attending the service.

Compliance Information

There was adequate floor space for children attending Unit 3. The maximum floor space available to children was 19.31sqm. This allowed for eight children aged over 3 years on a full day care basis. Records showed that a maximum amount of eight children attended on a full day care basis daily.