

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015MO123
--------------------------	-------------

Name of Service:	Tir Na Nog Crèche & Montessori School Limited
-------------------------	---

Address of Service:	Church Road, Belmullet, Co. Mayo
----------------------------	----------------------------------

Eircode:	F26 EY70
-----------------	----------

Name of Registered Provider:	Mary Moloney
-------------------------------------	--------------

Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
----------------------	--------------------------------

Date of Inspection:	29/04/2026
----------------------------	------------

No of pre-school children:	AM	38	PM	38
-----------------------------------	----	----	----	----

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:	A Kennedy 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).

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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 operates from 8:00 to 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 eleven 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. An adult student was on educational placement 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. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 23, 26, 27 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

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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, deputy 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.*

(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.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Compliance Information

- (1) (a) There was a designated person in charge and a named adult to deputise in the event of her absence.
(b) The deputy designated person in charge was present in the service on the inspectors' unannounced arrival and the designated person arrived to the service later.
- (2) Following a review of previous inspection information, information available on inspection and discussion with the person in charge it was determined that one new staff member who worked directly with the children had been employed since the previous inspection. There was also a student on an educational work placement programme in the service. A total of two files were reviewed.

(a) Two written validated references from past employers particularly the most recent employers for one adult.
(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for the two adults whose files were reviewed. 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 not required for the two adults.
- (4) Evidence of the required qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education or equivalent was available for the new staff member who worked directly with the preschool children.

Non-Compliance Information

The following documentation was unavailable for inspection:

- (2) (a) There was no evidence of the validation of a reference for a staff member. A second written validated reference from a past employer was required for one staff member as the reference on file did not meet the regulatory requirements.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider submitted a written response to state evidence of validation of a reference was obtained for one staff member and a second reference with evidence of validation was obtained for one staff member.

Supporting documentation submitted

The registered provider submitted evidence of validation of reference for one staff member and a second reference with evidence of validation.

The updated CV for one staff member.

Summary Comment

The early years inspectorate has assessed the actions taken and evidence submitted and deems it to address the non-compliance under regulation 9

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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) There were 7 staff working directly with 38 children on the inspectors' unannounced arrival to the service. Sufficient staff were available during the inspection to work directly with the children and provide relief cover for breaks ensuring that adequate numbers of staff were always available.
- (2) The minimum adult to child ratios were maintained during the unannounced inspection as follows:
- Early Start playroom: 2 staff cared for 10 children aged 1-2 years of age attending full day care services.
- First Friends playroom: 3 staff cared for 15 children aged from 2 to 4 years of age.
- Bright Sparks playroom: 2 Staff cared for 13 children aged from 4 to 5 years of age.
- The designated person in charge was observed to provide break and relief cover in playrooms when needed.
- (8) (a)
- There were always at least two adults on the premises during the inspection. Staff rosters showed that two adults were present during service opening hours.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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:

On the inspectors' arrival to the service, the children from the Bright Sparks and First Friends playrooms were playing outdoors in one of the large, enclosed grass outdoor play areas. The gates were secured to prevent children from leaving the area. The staff admitted the inspectors to the service following production of identification documentation. The day of inspection was warm and sunny and children were wearing hats. The staff informed the inspectors in accordance with the sunscreen policy and procedures, the children had sunscreen applied at home before coming to the service. The children had individual containers of sunscreen in the service if sunscreen was needed to be applied while in the service. The toys and play equipment both indoors and outdoors were found to be in satisfactory condition. The internal door leading to the hallway to the upstairs area was secured preventing children from accessing the area. A safety gate was attached to a wall in the hallway and used by staff to control access to an area of the hallway. Children did not have access to the service's kitchen. Scissors were stored at a high level out of reach of children.

Infection Control:

Warm water controlled below 43°C, paper towel and liquid soap was provided for hand washing and drying. The staff were observed to prompt to and supervise the children washing their hands at key times including before eating, after playing outdoors and using the toilet. Child-friendly handwashing signs with prompts were displayed near wash hand basins to guide children on handwashing.

Cleaning schedules were available, and staff kept records of the cleaning undertaken in the service. Tabletops and work surfaces were cleaned with disposable paper towels and disinfectant spray.

The playrooms were observed to be kept adequately ventilated with the windows left open whilst maintaining the room temperatures at the required levels.

There was a designated nappy changing area with a designated wash hand basin. The children in nappies were changed in a timely manner, on a regular basis. Staff involved in nappy changing wore a disposable apron and gloves. There were a foot pedalled airtight sealable bins for the disposal of nappies. The children's barrier creams were clearly labelled for individual use and appropriately stored within the designated nappy changing areas, ensuring both hygiene and easy access.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Adequate supplies of disposable tissues were readily available in the playrooms. The adults were observed regularly washing their hands including after disposing of tissues into bins.

Children's soothers were stored in individual plastic containers in the early start room. Mouthed toys were removed after use and sterilised appropriately.

Administration of Medication:

There was no medication observed to be administered to a child during the inspection. The staff informed the inspectors that care plans were in place for children who may require medication to be administered to them in the service. Staff showed knowledge of safe practices in relation to the storage and administration of medicine in the service.

Safe Sleep:

There were eight cots available in the dedicated sleep room to enable the younger children to rest/sleep. On the day of inspection, one child from the early start room was observed sleeping at 10.40hrs and it was advised by the staff that the nine other children go for a sleep after their dinner. In the full day care junior room children were observed sleeping on the beds following signs of tiredness. Each child had designated linen in individual storage baskets and on the individual labelled stackable beds A staff member physically checked sleeping children's, colour, position and breathing and the room temperature and this was observed on the day of the inspection. Rest/quiet areas were provided in each of the playrooms to facilitate a child to rest or opt out of an activity if he/she chose.

Fire Safety:

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

Records on file demonstrated that fire drills were carried out each month which helped to ensure that adults and children were familiar with the procedures in the event of an actual fire.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. The staff inflated a small bouncy castle in the outdoor area during the inspection, and 3 to 4 children were observed to play on it. When the registered provider was informed of potential safety concerns the staff immediately removed the small bouncy castle from the area.
2. A window restrictor was absent on one of the windows in the early start room and could pose a potential safety concern.
3. There was no press lock under the sink in the early start room which could pose a potential access/safety risk as there were room sprays stored in these presses.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

- An electric cable from a stereo was within child reach in the sleep room and the early start room which could pose a potential safety concern.

Infection Control:

- The foot operated pedal bin was broken in the first friends' room and required replacement, and a flip top bin was provided in the early start room which could pose infection control risk.
- The nappy changing mat in the dedicated nappy changing area was ripped in places which could prove difficult to effectively clean. The nappy changing unit was not maintained in a clean condition.
- There were numerous baskets of children's play equipment to include plastic blocks, playdough accessories and wooden equipment stored on a high shelf in the children's sanitary accommodation posing a risk of cross contamination.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

The registered provider submitted a written response to state

- The small bouncy castle was removed. Immediately and the service will not use bouncy castles in future.
- A lock has been fitted to the window in the early start room, and this will be checked regularly.
- New press locks have been purchased and fitted on the presses, and these will be checked regularly.
- No plugs are used in these sockets any more we are now using wireless speaker for the relaxing music for the children to fall asleep to.

Infection Control:

- New bins purchased and these will be checked regularly to ensure they are in proper working order.
- There was an extra changing mat in the changing area on the day, and it was replaced immediately. The changing mat will be checked regularly.
- The storage baskets have been removed from the sanitary area and are now stored in the attic space.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety and Infection Control

The registered provider submitted photographic evidence of

- The bouncy castle removed.
- The lock fitted on the window in the early start room.
- New press locks fitted on the press in the early start room.
- Wireless speaker in the early start room and the sleep room.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

5. New bins in first friends' room and the early start room.
6. New changing mat in the dedicated nappy changing area.
7. The storage baskets removed from the sanitary accommodation.

Summary Comment

The early years inspectorate have assessed the actions taken and evidence submitted and deems it to address the non-compliances identified under Regulation 23.

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-*
- (c) an authorised person.*
- (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) Written records of the monthly fire drills undertaken in the service were kept by the staff. Records showed that the last fire drill was undertaken on the 13 April 2026.
- (b) Records were available of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the service. The records showed that the firefighting equipment was last serviced on the 11 December 2025, and the smoke alarms were last maintained on 30 May 2025.
- (2)(c) The fire records were on display in the service hallway and available for review by the inspectors.
- (4) Notices of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire with maps of escape plan were clearly displayed in the hallway.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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 observed to be supervised by the staff at all times during the inspection.

The children spent a large amount of time playing outdoors in the enclosed play areas during the inspection. The staff linked in with each other regarding supervision so that all staff were aware of the children they were supervising. The staff were observed to move around the outdoor areas allowing them to keep the children in their line of vision.

At mealtimes, staff were observed to position themselves beside the children, supervising them closely. The older children used the toilets by themselves when they needed to but were within earshot of staff members if they needed any help.

Staff supervised the children when sleeping and kept 10-minute observation records of the sleeping/resting children.

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 for full day care services covering the maximum number of 44 children registered with an expiry date of the 27 March 2027 was available in the service for inspection.