

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC019
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Name of Service:	Aingeal's Réamhscoil (Eochaill) Teoranta
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Address of Service:	Ionad an Phobail, Sráid Mhór Thuaidh, Eochaill, Co Cork
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Eircode:	P36 TD32
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Name of Registered Provider:	Dara O'Donnell Murphy
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	06/05/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	33	PM	11
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Administration Building, St Mary's Health Campus, Gurrabraher, Cork T23 X440
Inspection undertaken by:	D Prendergast & M Creagh
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	N/A
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Description of service

Aingeal's Réamhscoil (Eochail) Teoranta is a privately owned sessional service, that is registered to cater for children aged 2 to 6 years. Two morning sessional services are provided and there is one session accommodated in the afternoon. Both are in conjunction with the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme, which is facilitated over a 38-week annual period.

Located in Youghal town centre, the service operates from a semi-detached, single storey, community building. There are two operational care rooms, namely Seomra 1 and Seomra 2. Adjacent child and adult sanitary facilities are provided, along with a reception area and a large hall.

Staffing

The service employs seven adults, including the registered provider, who is not service based. In addition, there are two relief staff members attached to the setting. Each of the eight adults who work directly with the children have attained a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education. Two of the adults are employed under the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) support scheme. Four students were also undertaking work experience.

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.

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.*

(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) The registered provider had ensured that both a designated person in charge and a deputy person in charge was assigned to the setting.
- (b) The person in charge was present when the unannounced inspection commenced and remained to facilitate its duration. The staff roster for the previous week indicated that either the person in charge, or the deputy, were available on the premises while the early years children were present.
- (2) Recruitment records in respect of the nine adults attached to the service were reviewed, along with those of the four students. The following was noted:
- (a) Of the 26 required written and validated references, 16 were from past employers.
- (b) Ten of the written and validated references had been provided by sources other than previous employers.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all nine staff. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. Although Garda vetting was not required for the four students, who were under 18 years of age, this documentation was available.
- (d) Police vetting was deemed to be required for one of the adults and was maintained on file.
- (4) Eight of the adults held a recognised qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education, as listed on the National Framework of Qualifications. Qualifications were not required in respect of the registered provider, or the students.

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.*
- (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) At the time of inspection, it was observed that there was an adequate number of staff working directly with children.
- (3) The adult to child ratio met the requirement for a sessional category service, which is 1 adult to 11 children. In the morning, Seomra 1 was attended by 19 children, aged 3 ½ to 5 years, with 3 adults present. During the same period, there were 14 children in Seomra 2, who were aged 4 to 5 years. Three adults were available to these children. The afternoon session in Seomra 1 accommodated 11 children, aged 3 to 4 years and 3 adults were responsible for their care.

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)

Basic needs:

- During the sessional service, a mid-morning snack was facilitated shortly after 11.00am, in Seomra 1. This part of the daily routine was observed to be relaxed and unhurried, with conversation and social interaction encouraged. Staff members were readily available to assist any child who required help to open lunch boxes or food packaging.

- Reusable water bottles, which belonged to the children, were maintained where they could be easily seen and retrieved as needed, throughout the day.
- The children's need for rest, relaxation and comfort was met through the availability of a cosy area, in each of the care rooms.
- As they accessed and used the adjacent sanitary facilities, the children's independence was supported by the adults. The inspectors were advised by the person in charge that nappy changing was accommodated as needed.
- The available space within the care rooms sufficiently met the children's need to move freely, as they engaged with play resources and participated in routine tasks. The service did not have a designated outdoor play space, however, children had access to a large hall, which was well utilised on the day of the inspection.

Programme of activities:

- A play based, emergent curriculum was implemented at the setting, with an emphasis on the Irish language.
- A balance between child led and adult initiated activities was observed over the course of the inspection. For example, the children engaged in free play activities such as reading, construction and imaginary play and later in the morning, an adult directed circle time was facilitated.
- There was evidence of detailed planning in relation to long and medium term curriculum activities. The service's yearly plan was noted to include a broad range of themes and seasonal activities and also reflected information regarding the children's emerging interests. Current topics of exploration, which included farm animals and planting seeds, were depicted in a visual curriculum chart. This was accessible to the children within the care room.
- Children were supported to participate in and prepare for various aspects of the daily routine. For example, turn taking was encouraged during circle time and as the children prepared to go to the hall, one of the children was selected to lead the group. The adults were also observed to regularly communicate upcoming transitions to the children.
- Children's language development was supported through singing, circle time discussion and informal conversation, throughout out the morning.

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

- A policy on healthy eating was implemented and reflected through the various foods that had been provided for the children, by their parents and caregivers. Examples were observed to include sandwiches, crackers, yogurts and a selection of fruit. The children brought their own reusable water bottles from home.
- The person in charge advised the inspectors that none of the children who attended the service had any dietary requirements or food allergies.
- In conversation, the person in charge informed the inspectors that if a child expressed hunger outside of the allocated snack times, they could choose something to eat from their lunch box. It was also stated that the service usually maintained a supply of snacks for this purpose.

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:

- A buzzer entry system was in place at the entrance to the service, which reduced the risk of unauthorised persons gaining access.
- Cleaning supplies were maintained out of the children's reach.
- Cables and flexes were inaccessible to the children.
- All of the examined play resources appeared to be in good working order and were free from pinch points.
- Fire extinguishers were noted to be safely wall mounted.
- Safety clips were in place to secure blind cords.

Infection control:

- Wash hand basins were equipped to facilitate handwashing practice, which was observed before the mid-morning snack.
- A refrigerator was available and utilised for the storage of perishable snacks.
- Wipeable placemats were provided for the children's use at snack time.
- Single use aprons and gloves were available for nappy changing procedures.
- Cleaning records were displayed in the sanitary facilities and were completed to date.
- Adequate ventilation was ensured through open windows.

Fire safety:

- Fire exits were illuminated with appropriate signage.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection control:

1. In the sanitary facility with the nappy changing unit, the bin available for the disposal of nappies was not foot pedal operated. Direct contact with the lid of the bin was therefore required in order to dispose of nappies, which increased the risk of cross infection. It was noted that evidence in relation to a suitable replacement bin was received following the inspection.
2. The surface of the nappy changing unit was damaged and some of the chipboard was exposed. This impeded effective cleaning. It was acknowledged that the surface was repaired following the inspection and photographic evidence to this effect was submitted.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection control:

1. The written reply from the person in charge stated that following the inspection, the nappy bin in the sanitary area was immediately replaced by a foot pedal operated bin. A foot pedal operated bin will be maintained for nappy disposal and will be replaced as required.
2. The damaged surface of the changing table was immediately repaired and replaced with a wipeable covering. As a preventive measure, regular checks of the changing table will be carried out and any further damage will be addressed immediately.

Supporting documentation submitted

Infection control:

1. Photographs of the new pedal operated bin.
2. Photographs of the repaired nappy changing table.

Summary Comment

The corrective actions implemented have addressed the non-compliances identified under Regulation 23.

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) Seven of the staff members had recently completed FAR training and corresponding certificates were forwarded following the inspection. The staff roster indicated that at least one of these adults was available during the service's hours of operation.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a)(b)

While it was acknowledged that the first aid materials were safely stored in wall mounted cabinets, insufficient supplies were maintained. There were no large, or extra-large wound dressings available and only two of the eye pad dressings were in-date.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

In her written reply, the person in charge stated that eye pad dressings, large and extra-large dressings have been ordered and are due for delivery by 30 May. As a preventive measure, regular inspections of the first aid box will be carried out. Any items missing or out of date will be replaced immediately.

Supporting documentation submitted

A screen shot of the order summary for the first aid supplies.

Summary Comment

Following the corrective action implemented, regulatory compliance is determined to have been met.

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 firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.
- (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) A record of the monthly fire drills carried out at the service, was available on file. The most recently documented fire drill was dated 28 April 2025.
 - (b) Servicing records and information regarding the firefighting equipment and smoke alarm was accessible. It was noted that the firefighting equipment was serviced on 2 September 2024 and the wired smoke alarm was tested on 11 June 2024.
 - (4) The service's fire evacuation procedure was displayed in each of the care rooms.