

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC281
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Name of Service:	Na Seoda Óga
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Address of Service:	Community Centre, Station Road, Ballincollig, Co Cork
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Eircode:	P31 KV63
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Name of Registered Provider:	Jean Murphy
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	13/04/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	32	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Administration Building, St Mary's Health Campus, Gurranabraher, Cork T23 X440
Inspection undertaken by:	D Prendergast
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).

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Description of service

Na Seoda Óga is registered to offer sessional care and education to children aged 2 to 6 years. Two daily sessional services are accommodated; from 9.15am to 12.15pm and from 9.30am to 12.30pm, in conjunction with the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme. A registered school age service is also provided.

The early years service operates from two rooms within a community centre, in the town of Ballincollig, in Co Cork. Children's sanitary facilities are available adjacent to the care rooms. The premises also includes a staff sanitary facility and an enclosed outdoor play space, at the rear of the building.

Staffing

In total, there are six adults currently attached to the setting, including one student undertaking a work placement. The registered provider and the four other adults are each involved in the direct care of the children.

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.

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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 registered provider, deputy, 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.*

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(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 person in charge of operating the early years service was the registered provider. The requirement for a deputy was also met and was outlined in writing.
- (b) When the unannounced inspection commenced, the registered provider was working at the setting and remained available to facilitate the inspection process. The deputy was also present. Written records indicated that the registered provider was present at the setting throughout the hours of operation.
- (2) Following a review of previous inspection information, information available on inspection and discussion with the registered provider, it was determined that two new staff members had been employed since the previous inspection. Both of these new staff members worked directly with the children. A student was also present on an educational work placement programme. A total of three files were reviewed.
- (a) Of the six required written and validated references, two were from past employers.
- (b) Four of the references had been provided by sources other than previous employers.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures were on file for the three adults. Garda vetting in respect of an additional three staff had also been renewed, in line with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda Vetting every three years.
- (d) Police vetting was in place for the adult who had resided in another jurisdiction, while over the age of 18.
- (4) Written evidence regarding the attainment of a recognised award in early childhood care and education, as listed on the National Framework of Qualifications, was on file for the two staff members.

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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.

(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) Throughout the period of inspection, an adequate number of adults were observed to work directly with the children in attendance.

(3) The required adult to child ratio was adhered to:

- In the Small room, there were 2 adults responsible for the direct care and education of 13 children, who were aged 2 ½ to 4 years.
- Nineteen children, with an age range of 3 to 5 years, attended the Big room and there were 2 adults working directly with these children, The student was not included in the adult child ratios.

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;*

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- (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.

Compliance Information

(1) From the 33 child records available, a sample of 10 were reviewed and met the requirements from (a) to (i).

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:

- The children in the Small room were accommodated to have a snack break at 11.20am. A relaxed and social environment was apparent, with lots of chatting among the children. During this time, staff members readily assisted the children with tasks, such as opening food packaging and containers.
- The children were encouraged to use the sanitary facilities in an independent manner, with appropriate support provided by the adults, as the need arose.
- Drinking water was accessible in the care rooms throughout the morning; the children's reusable water bottles were stored at their eye level.
- Tissues were available within the children's reach, which supported them to attend to their own personal hygiene.
- The children's need for rest, relaxation and comfort was met through the provision of suitable areas within the care rooms, where they could take time to read books and relax.
- There was sufficient space for children to initiate activities and to engage in various types of play within the indoor environment. Outdoor play time was also observed during the inspection.

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Supporting relationships:

- A calm and pleasant atmosphere was evident in both care rooms. The children appeared at ease in their environments and confidently followed the various aspects of the daily routine, such as tidying up after free play and preparing for home time. This was supported through regular communication from the adults, who frequently alerted the children to upcoming transitions and plans.
- Staff were observed to support the children to build self-confidence and to interact positively with one another. For example, during free play in the Big room, the children had the opportunity to sing and dance in front of an audience of other children and in the Small room, each child had a turn to share their news, before the mid-morning snack. Children were also allocated helper roles, such as giving out lunch bags and placemats.
- The registered provider advised that a messaging application was predominantly used to share information with parents, along with informal daily discussion at arrival and collection times. Written descriptions, regarding the children's emerging interests and recently explored themes, were documented in individual notebooks, which were shared with parents each term.
- The inspector was informed that a messaging application was also used as a means of communication among staff, for example, to share ideas for curriculum activities. In-person staff meetings were held each term and the minutes from one such meeting were presented for review.

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 door was found to be secured when the inspector arrived to carry out the inspection. This practice minimised the risk of unauthorised access.
- High-level fencing and walls were in place to provide a secure enclosure of the outdoor play area.
- Cables from electrical equipment were inaccessible to the children.
- Radiator surface temperatures were maintained within a safe range.

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Infection control:

- To support effective handwashing, the children's wash hand basins were equipped with warm running water, liquid soap and paper towels. The children were noted to wash their hands after outdoor play and before the mid-morning snack.
- Foot pedal operated bins were available for the disposal of used paper towels.
- Perishable snacks were stored in the fridge, which minimised the risk of food spoilage.
- A combination of wall hooks and containers were used to store the children's coats and bags.
- Cleaning tasks, such as sweeping the floor and cleaning tables, were observed to be undertaken by staff at the end of the sessional service.

Administration of medication:

- Auto injectors, temperature reducing medication and an inhaler were all found to have been appropriately stored out of reach of children. The various medications were also in-date and had been suitably labelled, as required.
- During discussion, a staff member demonstrated familiarity with the procedure to be followed, in the event that emergency medication was required.

Fire safety:

- Fire exit signage was illuminated and clearly visible.
- Firefighting equipment was securely wall mounted.

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.

Compliance Information

(1) Current First Aid Response (FAR) certification was available for two staff members and the staff attendance records indicated that at least one of these adults was on duty, while the service was in operation.

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Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

A registered provider shall ensure that the pre-school service is adequately insured.

Compliance Information

The available insurance certificate demonstrated that adequate cover was in place, for up to 38 children to attend the sessional service at any one time. The policy was valid from 28 March 2026 until 27 March 2027.