

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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| TUSLA Identifier: | TU2015CC341 |
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| Name of Service: | Réaltaí Cúram Leanaí Teoranta |
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| Address of Service: | Fernwood, Glyntown, Glanmire, Co. Cork |
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|-----------------|----------|
| Eircode: | T45 CK26 |
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| Name of Registered Provider: | Glenn Muliett |
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| Service type: | Full Day |
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| Date of Inspection: | 03/07/2023 |
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|-----------------------------------|----|----|----|----|
| No of pre-school children: | AM | 45 | PM | 40 |
|-----------------------------------|----|----|----|----|

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| Address of the Early Years Inspectorate: | Early Years Inspectorate Administration Building St Mary's Health Campus Gurranabraher Cork |
| 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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| Conditions if applicable | Not Applicable |
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Description of service

Réaltaí Cúram Leanaí Teoranta first notified in 2009. It is a privately operated full day care service that also offers part time and sessional care. It is registered to cater for early years children, aged 0 to 6 years. The Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme is facilitated over 38 weeks of the year, with sessional service times staggered, to support the safe drop off and collection of children; the first sessional service operates from 8.45am to 11.45am, the second from 9.00am to 12.00pm and the third from 9.15am to 12.15pm. Daily opening hours are between 7.30am and 6.00pm. A registered school age service is also provided.

The premises is situated in a residential area of Glanmire in Co. Cork and consists of a single storey, detached building. There are four operational care rooms; Naíonra 1, Naíonra 2, Naíonra 3 and the Toddler room. Naíonra 2 was not in operation at the time of inspection and a fifth registered care room was in use as a storage/meeting room. Children's sanitary facilities are accessible either adjoining or adjacent to the care rooms and a designated sleep room is located next to the Toddler room. An office, a kitchen, a staff room and staff sanitary facilities are also available. There are two outdoor play areas onsite and parking is provided at the front of the service.

Staffing

The service employs 23 adults, 18 of whom work directly with the children who attend. The registered provider, service manager, two kitchen staff and the maintenance worker are not involved in the direct care of the children. Two students were undertaking work placements 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, health, welfare and development of the child, safety, premises and facilities. The inspections 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.

Additional Information

On 4 July 2023, an Immediate Action Notice was issued to the registered provider, in respect of two students who were noted to be working directly with children, without appropriate Garda vetting. A subsequent response was received from the registered provider on the same date.

Since the previous inspection, the service has engaged with the Better Start Quality Development programme.

Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, 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.

(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) The registered provider was the person in charge of operating the childcare facility and deputy persons in charge had also been assigned.
 - (b) The registered provider was on duty at the service when the unannounced inspection commenced and remained available for the duration of the inspection.
- (2) The registered provider confirmed that 12 adults had commenced working at the service since the previous inspection was undertaken on 10 February 2022. Therefore, recruitment records in relation to these 12 adults were reviewed, along with the qualifications of all staff who worked directly with the children.

- (a) Of the 24 required written and validated references, 17 had been provided by past employers.
 - (b) A further seven of the references were from sources other than previous employers, with suitable records of validation available for three of these references.
 - (c) Garda vetting from the National Vetting Bureau had been obtained for 10 of the adults.
 - (d) Employment history records demonstrated that police vetting from other jurisdictions was required for eight of the adults and the relevant documentation was in place.
- (4) Copies of qualifications in Early Childhood Care and Education, as listed on the National Framework of Qualifications, or as recognised by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY), were on file in respect of 17 of the 18 staff members, who were employed to work directly with the children.

Non-Compliance Information

- (2)
- (b) Records of validation were unavailable for four references, which had been obtained from sources other than previous employers.
- (c) Garda vetting from the National Vetting Bureau had not been obtained for two students who were working directly with the children. An Immediate Action Notice was issued to the registered provider on 4 July 2023, in relation to the absence of the Garda vetting. The response from the registered provider on the same date confirmed that the students were no longer working at the service.
- (3) It was noted that three of the adults had commenced working at the service before the registered provider had received and considered their Garda vetting.
- (4) One of the adults who was employed to work directly with the children, had not obtained written confirmation from the DCEDIY that the studies they had undertaken met the minimum requirement of a level 5 award in Early Childhood Care and Education. It was acknowledged that this adult was not included in the adult child ratios.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(b)

Validations for the students were undertaken by the internship company, who serves as an intermediary. In future, the service will conduct verifications.

(c)

The students are no longer working at the service. In future, the service will conduct Garda vetting for people who have not lived in Ireland and will be working directly with children.

(3)

Garda Vetting was obtained for these employees three months after arriving in Ireland. The registered provider was unaware of the need to obtain Garda clearance or clearance from any other jurisdiction that a person has not lived in. The service will conduct Garda vetting for any future employees and students who have not previously lived in Ireland.

(4)

The adult has not yet received a letter of temporary qualification recognition. In the meantime, she will be working in cleaning and preparation tasks and occasionally with school age children.

Supporting documentation submitted

(2)(b)

The statement from the registered provider is accepted as evidence.

(c)

The response to the Immediate Action Notice stated that the students no longer have access to or contact with children in the service.

(3)&(4)

The statements from the registered provider are accepted as evidence.

Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider was assessed and accepted in meeting the requirements of the regulation.

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 service's policy on Healthy Eating was reviewed and deemed to meet the necessary requirements.

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) At all times during the inspection period, an adequate number of adults were observed to be available to the children.

(2) The registered provider ensured that the requirements of the regulation were adhered to. The rooms were in operation as follows:

Morning:

| Time | Room Name and Age Range of Children | Number of Children Present | Number of Adults Present |
|--------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 9.35am | Naíonra 1 (2 ½ - 4 ½ years) | 20 | 3 |
| 9.41am | Naíonra 3 | 17 | 3 |

| | | | |
|--------|-----------------------------|---|---|
| | (4 – 7 years) | (12 early years children and 5 school age children) | |
| 9.45am | Toddler (1 to 2 ½ years) | 13 | 3 |

Afternoon:

| Time | Room Name and Age Range of Children | Number of Children Present | Number of Adults Present |
|--------|--|---|-----------------------------|
| 2.16pm | Naíonra 1 (3 - 4 years) | 11 | 3 |
| 2.18pm | Naíonra 3 (4 – 7 years) | 17 (13 early years children and 4 school age children) | 2 |
| 2.26pm | Toddler (1 to 2 ½ years) | 16 | 3 |

Two students and an additional staff member were not included in the adult child ratios.

- (8)
- (a) A minimum of two adults were consistently available on the premises throughout the inspection process and review of the staff roster also confirmed this practice.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:

(a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;

(j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) A curriculum vitae and photo I.D. were available in respect of each of the 12 adults whose files were examined.
- (j) Administration of medication records were maintained and presented for review. Written parental consent was in place for staff to administer medication which had been specifically prescribed to children.

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:

- Meal and snack breaks were facilitated for the children at regular intervals throughout the day; the inspector was informed that breakfast was accommodated between 7.30am and 9.00am, the mid-morning snack was observed at 10.40am, followed by the hot lunch meal between 12.00 and 12.30pm and the registered provider advised that two further afternoon snacks were provided at 2.00pm and 4.00pm.
- The crockery and cutlery used at mealtimes were observed to be developmentally appropriate and were easily handled by the children. The younger children had opportunities to self-feed, with the adults available nearby to assist, as required.
- The children's reusable water bottles were available on low shelving in the care rooms, should they require additional fluids.

- Staff advised that nappy changing routines were carried out at frequent designated times throughout the day and as the need arose. Older children were noted to access and utilise the sanitary facilities independently.
- Each care room was furnished with a rest area, where children could relax, as needed. In the Toddler room, a scheduled rest period was observed after lunch and it was noted that the younger children in this room were also accommodated to sleep according to their individual rest needs. An adjoining sleep room was available to facilitate this practice.
- The adults were responsive to the children’s emotional needs, as was observed when upset children were picked up, spoken to in gentle tones and offered reassurance.
- The available space within the care rooms supported children to freely partake in their chosen activities. Outdoor activities were also accommodated at the time of inspection.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

- Each of the rooms in operation had an adequate supply of waist height tables and child sized chairs. Low set shelving and pull-out drawer units were used to store interest items at the children’s eye level.
- Since the previous inspection, new flooring had been installed in the Toddler room and new low-level tables had also been provided for the children’s use.
- The service’s participation in the Better Start Quality Development programme was reflected in improved care room layouts and further developed interest areas.
- For example, sensory shelves had been incorporated in Naíonra 1 and Naíonra 3, which included trays with sand or coloured dried rice, sensory toys and shakers. Additional interest items such as a tool bench and play tools, jigsaws, magnets, a dolls house and Montessori materials had also been added to Naíonra 1.
- A new enclosed space, with soft mats, musical instruments, push toys and an activity centre, had been introduced into the Toddler room. The inspector was advised that this area was often used as a separate

quiet space for younger children to play and explore, particularly at times when the main room was more active.

- Other age and stage appropriate materials accessible across the three care rooms included animal figures, train sets, connectable shapes, plastic bricks, books, hand held vehicles and car garages, play kitchens, and art supplies.
- There were three interconnecting play spaces at the front of the premises, which were partitioned by wooden fencing and gates. Among the available equipment in these areas were embedded tyres, footballs, hand held vehicles, picnic benches for table top activities, sand play areas, wheelbarrows, a small wooden bridge and a seesaw.
- A second, partially covered outdoor play environment was provided at the side of the building. This area had an artificial grass surface and was decorated with several colourful potted plants. It featured play resources such as ride on toys, a shop checkout, large connectable discs, building blocks, footballs and additional picnic benches.

Non-Compliance Information

1. Some of the sound making toys in the Toddler room were not fitted with working batteries and could not be properly utilised by children for exploratory play.
2. In the Toddler room, an adult chair was unavailable for staff to comfortably attend to the care needs of the younger children, such as soothing upset children and carrying out feeding routines.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. The batteries were replaced. Staff will replace batteries as needed, or will remove the toy from use.
2. A temporary chair has been placed in the Toddler room and an arm chair has been ordered. The chair will remain in the Toddler room.

Supporting documentation submitted

1. The statement from the registered provider is accepted as evidence.
2. A photograph of the new chair and a receipt for same were submitted.

Summary Comment

The non-compliances identified under this regulation have been adequately addressed.

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 children’s meals and snacks were predominantly provided by the service. Parents or guardians of the children who attended the ECCE service only, supplied snacks for the mid-morning break and some chose to continue this practice during the summer months.
- On the day of inspection, the mid-morning snack provided by the service consisted of brioche rolls, yogurts and apple, with water to drink, while examples of the snacks supplied by parents included bananas, strawberries, yogurts and croissants.
- A hot lunch of penne napoli with vegetables, was prepared in the onsite kitchen and served to the children, with water offered as a drink.
- The children’s specific dietary requirements and food allergies were noted and displayed in the care rooms. The inspector was advised that this information was also available for kitchen staff.
- Dinner menus were presented for review, along with written records regarding the variety of snacks and breakfast cereals offered at the childcare facility. It was noted that relevant allergens were also included on said menus.

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:

- Upon arrival, the prevention of unauthorised access was observed to be ensured; the main door was secured, with a buzzer entry system in place.
- The outdoor play spaces were enclosed by a combination of fencing, walls and secured gates.
- Door sensor alarms were fitted to the fire exit doors that led to the outdoor play spaces, to alert staff if a child exited the care rooms, while unsupervised.
- Blind cords were tethered with suitable tension devices.
- In all three care rooms, restrictive opening devices were in place on the low-lying cupboards, which contained potentially harmful items.
- Glass panels were fitted with visibility strips, which reduced the risk of a collision injury.
- First aid boxes were inaccessible to children.

Infection Control:

- Adequate handwashing facilities were in place; warm running water was available at the children's wash hand basins, along with liquid soap and paper towel dispensers.
- In Naíonra 1, the children were noted to wash their hands before the mid-morning snack and children who attended Naíonra 3 were observed to wash their hands prior to the lunch meal.
- Single use aprons and gloves were worn by adults during nappy changing procedures and were changed in between each nappy change. Changing mats were also sanitised in between use.
- Within the nappy changing areas, clearly labelled, individual storage was provided for the children's toiletries.
- The care rooms were naturally ventilated through open windows.
- Refrigerators were used to store perishable foods.

Administration of Medication:

- The administration of medication was not observed during the inspection. However, the medication that had been prescribed for some of the children was noted to have been labelled, was appropriately stored out of the children's reach and was in-date.

Safe Sleep:

- An online application was used by staff members to record the frequent physical checks that were carried out on sleeping children. Said records reflected observations of the children's breathing, position and skin colour. The inspector was advised that these checks were undertaken at 10-minute intervals.
- Children under the age of two years were accommodated to sleep in standard cots in a designated sleep room, while children aged over two years had access to a supply of stackable beds and linen.
- While occupied by sleeping children, the air temperature of the Toddler sleep room was recorded at 19.9°C, which fell with the required range of 16°C to 20°C for safe sleep practice.

Fire Safety:

- There were no fire safety issues noted.

Outings:

- Not applicable, as outings were not conducted.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

1. The following observed practices in relation to handwashing increased the risk of cross infection:
 - In the Toddler room, the children's hands were not washed after having their nappies changed and the adults did not wash their hands in between nappy changes. This issue was found in another care room at the previous inspection on 10 February 2022. The CAPA response submitted following said inspection outlined that staff members had been informed about the required procedure for nappy changing and hand washing frequency, that they would receive further training on the nappy changing procedure and that management and supervisors would monitor staff more frequently to ensure that the correct procedure was applied. However, this did not prevent the issue from reoccurring.
 - The children did not wash their hands before the hot meal was served in the Toddler room.
 - Two of the children who attended Naíonra 1 did not wash their hands after using the sanitary facility adjoining the sheltered outdoor area and were not reminded to do so by the adults present.
2. A cover was unavailable to protect the large sand pit in the Toddler outdoor play area, while it was not in use. This increased the potential for animals and rodents to access and contaminate the sandpit, which was regularly used by the children.

3. A malodour was evident in the sanitary facilities adjoining Naíonra 3 and an accumulation of dust was noted on the mechanical vent. This may lead to the spread of infection.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control:

1. Staff members have been informed about handwashing again and notices have been placed in the rooms. Management will continue to supervise and remind staff of the correct procedure.
2. A tarpaulin cover has been purchased but not yet installed, the area is temporarily closed for children due to some logs needing replacement. Once the cover is installed, staff will ensure that the area is covered when not in use.
3. The sanitary facilities in Naíonra 3 were cleaned and disinfected. Mechanical vents have also been cleaned and added to the weekly cleaning sheets. Cleaning will continue.

Supporting documentation submitted

Infection Control:

1. Photographs of the handwashing notices on display in the Toddler nappy changing area and in the care room. A screen shot of the message sent to all staff members in relation to same.
2. A photograph of the tarpaulin cover.
3. The statement from the registered provider is accepted as evidence.

Summary Comment

The stated corrective and preventive actions have addressed the non-compliances identified under regulation 23.