

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC343		
Name of Service:	Réaltaí Óga Pre-School		
Address of Service:	Community Hall, River Street, Cloyne, Co Cork		
Eircode:	P25 TK70		
Name of Registered Provider:	Claire O' Donoghue		
Service type:	Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	24/02/2025		
No of pre-school children:	AM	20	PM N/A
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).			
Conditions if applicable	N/A		

Description of service

Réaltaí Óga Pre-School is a play based, sessional service, that is registered to accommodate children aged 2 to 6 years. Two daily sessional services are currently provided, in conjunction with the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme. An afternoon session was not in operation at the time of inspection.

Located in the village of Cloyne, in Co Cork, the service operates from a community hall, with two operational care rooms. Child and staff sanitary facilities are available, along with a designated outdoor play space. The children also have the use of the large hall area, for indoor active play and activities.

Staffing

There are five adults employed at the setting, all of whom are involved in the direct care of the children who attend. This includes the registered provider, a relief staff member and one adult employed under the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) support scheme. All five of the adults hold a relevant award in Early Childhood Care and Education.

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 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.*

(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 the service was the registered provider, who had also nominated a designated deputy, to deputise in her absence. The names of the person in charge and the deputy were available in writing.
 - (b) The registered provider facilitated the duration of the inspection process. The staff roster indicated that the registered provider, or the deputy was consistently present during the hours of operation.
- (2) Recruitment records in respect of the five adults attached to the service were reviewed.
- (a) Ten written and validated references were required in total. Five references had been provided by past employers and two of these references had been validated.
 - (b) An additional three references were from sources other than previous employers.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all five staff. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
 - (d) The required police vetting was available for 1 adult, who had lived in another jurisdiction for 6 consecutive months or longer, while over the age of 18 years.
- (4) The records provided demonstrated that each of the five adults held a recognised award in Early Childhood Care and Education.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a)(b)

A second written and validated reference was unavailable for two of the adults.

Records of validation were unavailable for six references in respect of three adults.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(a)(b)

The reply from the registered provider stated that the references for the staff have been updated and validated. As a preventive measure, during the recruitment process, the policies and procedures in place at the service will be followed.

Supporting documentation submitted

An excerpt from the service's policies and procedures, along with the required written references and validations.

Summary Comment

The corrective action implemented by the registered provider has addressed the non-compliance identified under Regulation 9.

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 all times during the period of inspection, it was observed that there was an adequate number of adults working directly with the children in attendance.

(3) The adult child ratios met the regulatory requirements of a sessional category service. The Butterfly room was attended by 12 children, aged 4 to 5 years and there were 2 adults available to these children. Eight children, aged 3 to 3 ½ years were present in the Caterpillar room and 2 adults were working directly with these children.

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:

(i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;

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

Compliance Information

(1)

(i) Weekly staff rosters were presented for review and included the required information.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(j)

1. Signed parental consent had not been obtained for staff to administer the medications that may be required by two of the children, who attended the setting. This was at variance with the service's medication management policy, which stated that "Parents/guardians must fill in the medicine consent form of the service, authorising the administration of medicine to their child." It was acknowledged that written parental consent was in place for staff to administer medication to another child.
2. Staff members were unclear in relation to documenting the administration of medication, should it be required. During discussion, one staff member was unsure where to record the administration of medication and the inspector was advised by a second adult that provision to record the administration of medication was unavailable. The inspector subsequently found that a template, entitled record of medicine given, was available within the medication management policy. However, this confusion posed a risk that medication administered to a child may not be appropriately recorded.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)(j)

1. The written reply stated that signed medication consent forms have been completed. These forms relate to the two children in question. A form has been added to the service's registration forms, which includes the five R's of administering medication and a consent form, to be signed by the parent. Going forward,

this form will need to be completed for all children who have been prescribed medication, that may be required to be administered on the premises.

2. Following staff training, staff are now aware where to locate the administration of medication record and are aware of the five R's, in relation to the administration of medication. The administration of medication record is now clearly visible above the desk in the Caterpillar classroom. The right child, right medication, right dose, right route and right time are documented. The record is signed by a witness and the person who administers the medication.

Supporting documentation submitted

1. Copies of the written parental consent forms, in relation to the relevant medications.
2. A copy of a completed administration of medication record.

Summary Comment

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

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:

- A snack time was facilitated in each care room during the sessional service. The children's reusable water bottles were within easy reach throughout the morning, should they be in need of additional fluids.
- The children had access to either adjoining or adjacent sanitary facilities, which they were supported to use in an independent manner. Nappy changing facilities were in place for any child who required same.

- In each care room, children who wished to rest or relax during the sessional period had access to a cosy area. These spaces were suitably furnished with vinyl sofas and cushions and were positioned next to a range of books.
- The layout of the care rooms supported the children’s freedom of movement, as they initiated their chosen activities and participated in the daily routine. Outdoor play was also accommodated during the morning.

Supporting relationships:

- The time designated for eating and drinking was observed to be a relaxed and social part of the daily routine; children chatted freely with their peers and appeared to enjoy their food. The adults joined the children at the tables and promptly offered appropriate assistance.
- Care room environments were observed to be warm, active and engaging, as the children participated in free play and confidently followed routine activities.
- Children were encouraged to carry out self-care tasks, such as putting on and zipping up their coats and were acknowledged for their efforts.
- A digital application was predominantly used to share information with the children’s parents. Through videos and photographs, which were accompanied by detailed descriptions, parents were provided with an insight into their children’s learning, exploration and participation. The registered provider informed the inspector that parent teacher meetings, phone calls and informal discussion at arrival and collection times, were also utilised to work in partnership with parents.
- During the morning, staff were observed to communicate frequently with one another in relation to the care of the children. More formal meetings took place on a monthly basis and minutes from these meetings were available for review.
- The registered provider reported that the service was currently engaged in the Better Start Quality Development Service.

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 door that provided access to the community hall was found to be secure on the inspector's arrival and was secure when not in use. The risk of unauthorised access and that of a child exiting unsupervised, were therefore reduced.
- A combination of walls and wooden fencing enclosed the outdoor play space.
- Cleaning products were either stored at a height that was inaccessible by children, or were maintained in cupboards, which had restrictive opening devices installed.
- There were no trailing electrical cables or flexes accessible to the children.
- The service's fire extinguishers were securely wall mounted.
- All of the examined play equipment was in good condition and was free from pinch points.

Infection control:

- A supply of warm water, liquid soap, a foot pedal-operated bin and paper towels, were available at the two wash hand basins adjoining the Caterpillar room. Handwashing by the children was supported and encouraged prior to eating.
- Refrigerated storage was provided for the children's perishable snacks.
- The care rooms appeared clean and well maintained. It was observed that tables were sanitised after snack time.
- A supply of single use aprons and disposable gloves were available for nappy changing procedures.

Administration of medication:

- Medication was not observed to be administered to any of the children during the period of inspection.
- It was noted that all medication held at the setting was in-date.

Fire safety:

- Fire exits were free from obstruction and fire exit signage was illuminated.

Non-Compliance Information

General safety:

1. Safe storage of medication was not ensured, which increased the risk of a child accidentally ingesting this medication:
 - In the Butterfly room, medication was kept in a child's bag, which was observed to be stored on the floor of the care room. It was acknowledged that once alerted to this by the inspector, an adult moved the bag to an area that was out of the children's reach.
 - An inhaler, which belonged to a child in the Caterpillar room, was also stored in their bag. The bag was accessible on a low-level wall hook, in the main entrance area and children were observed to enter this area when putting their lunch boxes back into their bags.

These practices were at variance with the service's medication management policy, which outlined that "All medication is stored in line with manufacturer's instructions out of reach of the children."

Infection control:

2. Three of the wash hand basins were not equipped with warm running water as follows:
 - The water temperature at the wash hand basin in the staff sanitary facility was recorded at 10.2°C.
 - Respective water temperature readings of 10.4°C and 10.5°C were taken at the two wash hand basins, in the Butterfly room sanitary facility. Cold water temperatures may impede effective handwashing.
3. A foot pedal operated, airtight, leak proof bin was unavailable for the hygienic disposal of nappies. A lined, swing lid bin was in use, which increased the risk of cross infection.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General safety:

1. In her written reply, the registered provider stated that each day, all bags containing medication are moved to a high-level, out of reach of the children. Staff are now more vigilant. To reinforce this practice, a sign with large print, has been placed above the hooks where the bags are stored. A review of the safeguarding of children has also been completed.

Infection control:

2. The service now has a procedure in place, before the session begins, which will ensure that the switch for the hot water is turned on. The manager and the deputy manager go through the opening checks every morning, to ensure that the procedure has been completed correctly.

3. A foot pedal operated, airtight bin is now in place in the nappy changing area. As a preventive measure, staff will keep up to date with the health, safety and welfare policies and regulations and will ensure that all bins in the preschool are pedal operated, airtight bins.

Supporting documentation submitted

General safety:

1. A copy of the sign.

Infection control:

2. A copy of the service's opening procedure.
3. A copy of the receipt for the pedal bin.

Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider was assessed and deemed to meet regulatory compliance with 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.

Compliance Information

(1) Evidence was available to demonstrate that two of the adults held current First Aid Responder (FAR) certification and that at least one of these adults was rostered to work at the service, during the hours of operation.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The insurance certificate indicated that sufficient cover was in place for the provision of a sessional service and the policy was valid until 27 March 2025.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-
(e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.

Compliance Information

(e) There were four children's toilets and four adjacent wash hand basins available at the setting. Two nappy changing units were provided within the staff sanitary facility, which also included one staff toilet and one wash hand basin.