

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier: TU2015CE112

Name of Service: Páistí Beaga Creche & Montessori

Address of Service: Newline Road, Quin, Co. Clare

Eircode: V95 PN82

Name of Registered Provider: John Hennessey, Patricia Hennessey

Service type: Full Day, Part Time, Sessional

Date(s) of Inspection: 28/04/2025

No of pre-school children:	AM	41	PM	32
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate Tusla Child and Family Agency Primary Care Centre Station Road Ennis County Clare.
Inspection undertaken by:	J Hayes & A McCarthy
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 | Not applicable

Description of service

Páistí Beaga Creche & Montessori is a privately operated, full day care service, located in the rural village, of Quin, in County Clare. This childcare facility was established in 2004 and provides full day-care, part-time and sessional care to children aged six months to six years Monday to Friday 08:00 to 17:30. An additional school aged childcare service is provided each afternoon and during school holidays. The programme of care and education is provided within two two-storey buildings, one of which was a purpose-built structure. There are three care rooms in one building and four care rooms in the second building. An enclosed play area is located between both buildings.

Staffing

On the 28 April 2025 the registered provider, the assistant manager and nine adults worked directly with the children. The registered provider provided a dual administration and relief cover in the care rooms when required. The files demonstrated that all the adults held records of engagement in continuous professional development.

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.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations
Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment (1)(a)(b), (2)(a)(b)(c)(d) and (4)
Regulation 11 - Staffing levels (1) (2) (8)(a)
Regulation 16- Record in relation to pre-school service (1)(a)(h)(i)(j)
Regulation 19 - Health, welfare and development of child (1)(a)
Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child
Regulation 25 - First aid (1) (2)(a)(b)
Regulation 28 – Insurance
Regulation 29 – Premises (e)

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 registered provider, assistant manager, 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 was the person in charge and a person was available to deputise in their absence.

(b)

The registered provider and a named person to deputise were available at all times during the inspection.

(2)

Eighteen files were available in respect of the two registered providers and the adults employed by the service. The findings included the following:

(a)

Twenty three written and validated references from past employers in respect of adults working in the service were available.

- (b)
Eleven written and validated references were available in respect of adults working in the service from a source other than a past employer.
- (c)
Garda vetting disclosures were available in respect of the two registered providers and sixteen adults employed by the service. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d)
International police vetting was provided for the six adults working in the service who had lived in another state for a period longer than six months.
- (4)
All adults working directly with the children held Early Childhood Care and Education qualifications at Level 5 and 6 on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a)(b) A second reference from a past employer or reputable source was not available in respect of two adults employed in the service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(a)(b) The registered provider has furnished the reference for both the staff members. The registered provider has also submitted 2nd reference for one of the staff which was found from other file after the inspection. Staff Recruitment checklist form is now in place, and it is used for each staff member. A detailed telephone reference check form is in place and template of the same is attached.

Supporting documentation submitted

(2)(a)(b)References in respect of two adults were submitted.

Summary Comment

The actions taken and the supporting documentation submitted, address the non-compliance under Regulation 9(2)(a)(b).

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)
During the inspection an adequate number of adults worked directly with the children in attendance.
- (2)
On the 28 April 2025 the ratio of adults caring for children was maintained. Ten adults cared for the forty one children in the morning and the thirty two children in the afternoon.
- (8)(a)
The staff roster demonstrated that more than two adults were available in the service at all times.

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;*
- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (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)

A record in writing was available in relation to the following information for the service:

(h)

Details of attendance for each pre-school child on a daily basis were maintained.

(i)

A staff roster was available detailing the adults rostered hours.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)

A record in writing was not available in relation to the following information for the service:

(a)

The previous employment history records were not available in respect of two adults employed in the service.

(j)

Signed parental consent was not provided on seven of twelve forms inspected, which detailed medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)

(a) Staff Recruitment checklist form is now in place, and it is used for each staff member.

(j) Medicine consent form has been created, and it is now part of our registration form. So any new children starting with the service will have that filled. Also, the children currently attending the service has been given this form and it will be filed with their registration form.

Supporting documentation submitted

(1)

(a) The previous employment records were submitted in respect of the two adults.

(j) Updated medicine consent form templates submitted.

Summary Comment

The actions taken and the documentation submitted indicate that the non-compliances under regulation 16

(1)(a)(j) have been addressed.

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)

The children's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the service through the provision of appropriate activities, interactions, materials, and equipment, having regard to the age and stage of development of the children. Seven care rooms were in operation during the inspection.

Basic Needs of Children:

The adults treated the children in a kind and caring manner and positive behavioural strategies were used during interactions. The adults conversed with the children in a sensitive and respectful manner, used soft tones of voice, engaged with the children at their level and responded promptly to their cues for assistance and comfort.

The children were encouraged to be independent in play and learning, whilst caring for their belongings and using the toilet. The adults supervised and treated the children in a sensitive manner during nappy changes and whilst the children used the toilet. Nappies were changed as required on an individual need's basis. The children were encouraged and supported to manage their own personal care appropriate to their age and level of development. The children's sleep was attended to on an individual basis and an alternative area and activities were offered for children who did not wish to sleep. The children were encouraged to feed themselves and promoted to be independent. Appropriate crockery and feeding utensils were provided for the children at meal times and these periods were observed to be relaxed and unhurried. The children in each room were offered a range of developmentally challenging play and learning activities and the children were observed to be fully engaged and included in all activities. The children transitioned from the indoor to the outdoor area for play based activities.

A key person approach was observed in each care room, the staff demonstrated an appropriate level of knowledge of the children's preferences, interests, and individual capabilities. The adults followed the children's

lead in the care rooms and the children were supported in individual and group play. The rooms accommodated visual routine displays demonstrating photographic illustrations to support and include all children in the programme of care. The children were notified and consulted in advance of changes in the activities. The transitions in the programme of care were completed cohesively in a calm manner in the care rooms. The adults offered praise and encouragement, and children were respected and supported in their choice of individual and group engagement in activities.

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 secure keypad operated system was in place at the entrance to the service to monitor the safe entry and exit of the children to and from the childcare facility.
- The outdoor area was secured with a high level wall, fencing and secure gate to protect the children within. The children were supervised at all times during the inspection.
- The arrival and departure from the service was recorded for each child in attendance.
- Medication and cleaning agents were stored in a secured area out of reach of the children.

Infection Control:

- The sanitary facilities were equipped with running water, liquid soap, hand paper towels and bins.
- The children washed their hands at appropriate intervals after activities, using the toilet and before mealtime.
- The nappy changing procedures were completed in accordance with the service's infection control procedure. A procedure was displayed in the nappy changing facility.
- The children's perishable food items and infant formula were stored correctly in a refrigerator.

Safe Sleep:

- The designated sleep rooms accommodated standard sized cots and low-level beds for the children to sleep.
- The sleep rooms were maintained within the recommended temperature range.
- The children's sleep observations were recorded by the adults every ten minutes. These observations included the children's colour, position and breathing.
- The adults demonstrated an awareness of the service's safe sleep policy.

Fire Safety:

- The fire exit routes and passageways were clear from obstruction.
- The fire exits routes and fire assembly point was readily identified with signage.
- The adults demonstrated an awareness of conducting fire drills to prepare the service to respond in the event of fire.

Outing:

The registered provider confirmed that outings are conducted by the service. Evidence of an outings checklist and completed risk assessments for outings was available.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Three balance bikes that were used by the children during outdoor play had exposed sharp metal at the handles as the rubber protective coverings were not in place. This posed a risk of injury to a child.

Infection Control:

2. Eight wipeable cot mattresses were not provided in the standard sized cots in the sleep rooms. This posed a potential risk of cross infection.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. Three bikes with worn out rubber protective coverings were removed from the facility, and they have been replaced by 6 new bikes.

Weekly checks will be carried out on outdoor play equipment.

Infection Control:

2. Mattresses have been replaced with wipeable waterproof mattresses to prevent risk of cross infection.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. Photographic evidence of six new bikes and the invoice for their purchase was submitted.

Infection Control:

2. Order confirmation for the purchase of waterproof cot mattresses was submitted.

Summary Comment

The actions taken and the evidence submitted indicate that the non-compliances under Regulation 23 have been addressed.

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)

Two adults working in the service had a record of up to date First Aid Responder (FAR) training.

(2)(a)

Suitably equipped first aid boxes were provided in the service.

(b)

The first aid boxes were available for use by the adults in the event of an emergency

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

Up to date insurance cover was available for seventy-five children attending on a full day care basis. The policy is valid until the 27 March 2026.

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) Sufficient adults and children's toilets and wash hand basins were available in the service

Non-Compliance Information

(e) There were insufficient nappy changing facilities for the number of children attending. On the 28 April 2025 one nappy changing unit was provided for the fourteen children in nappies that attended on that day. One nappy changing unit is required for every eleven children who require nappy changing.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(e) An additional nappy changing unit has been ordered and will be installed in the existing nappy changing room.

Supporting documentation submitted

(e) An invoice for the purchase of the nappy changing unit was submitted.

Summary Comment

The actions taken will address the non compliance under Regulation 29(e).