

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DL030		
Name of Service:	Craobhin Áis Cúram Páistí		
Address of Service:	Currin, An Tearmann, Co. Donegal		
Eircode:	F92 TY09		
Name of Registered Provider:	Michael McBride		
Service type:	Full Day		
Date(s) of Inspection:	13/03/2025		
No of pre-school children:	AM	38	PM 31
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Donegal Early Years Inspectorate, St. Conal's Campus, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal. F92 TD92		
Inspection undertaken by:	S Killeen and L McGlynn		
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

Craoibhin Áis Cúram Páistí is a not-for-profit childcare service which is registered to operate from 8.00am-6.00pm each weekday however due to service demand, is currently operating from 8.00am to 5.30pm. The service offers full day, part time and sessional preschool care to children aged 0-6 years. The service is also registered to provide school age care.

The service is situated within a purpose-built community and enterprise centre in a rural area near the village of Termon in County Donegal. The service occupies part of the ground floor section of the centre which contains two playrooms, a third care room is located at the other side of the building. There is a sleep room, kitchen and relevant ancillary facilities on the premises. Two playrooms have a small outdoor play area immediately off the rooms and a more expansive play area along one side of the building. Children also have access to an indoor sports hall within the centre.

Staffing

A total of 16 adults are employed to work in the service, 11 of which were present on the day of inspection. This included nine adults working directly with children, one office manager and one member of kitchen staff. An additional three childcare staff, two kitchen staff are employed in the service but were not present during inspection. There was an additional two adults working in the service on educational placement, one of which was present on the day of inspection. The registered provider is not on the premises on a daily basis, there is a named person in charge and a named deputy.

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. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 21,22,23 and 28; however, on inspection additional non-compliances which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 19 and 29. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

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

An Immediate Action Notice was issued to the registered provider on 14 March 2025 in relation to risk identified under regulation 23. Two external doors were not appropriately secured to prevent children from exiting the service unsupervised. The registered provider responded by return with information on corrective actions that had been taken to address the risks.

Following the inspection, a referral was made to the Chief Fire Officer in relation to the unsecured exits and the corrective action taken.

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
- (c) there is a clear management structure in the service that identifies the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and unpaid worker.

(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 service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.
 - (b) The person in charge was on the premises when the inspectors arrived unannounced at the service on the day of inspection. A review of the roster demonstrated that the person in charge or named deputy were on the premises during the hours of operation.
 - (c) There was a management structure in operation in the service confirmed by the person in charge. Staff report to the manager who in turn reports to a board of management. Staff demonstrated an understanding of their role within the service and lines of authority as described by the person in charge.

(2) The person in charge confirmed that there were 16 adults working in the service and 2 additional adults on educational placement. The employment records for all 18 adults working in the service were reviewed on this inspection.

- (a) (b) Two references from past employers or a source other than a past employer in cases where there no past employers were on file for 15 adults. One past employer reference was on file for two adults.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for 18 adults. However, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. Please refer to the information outlined under regulation 23 of this report.
- (d) International police vetting was on file for two adults.

(4) Relevant documentation evidencing a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Qualifications Framework was on file for 12 adults.

Non-Compliance Information

(2) (a) (b)

1. There were no references on file for one adult.
 2. There were no second reference on file for two adults.
- (d) There was no record of employment on file for three adults and gaps in the employment history of a fourth adult therefore the requirement for international police vetting could not be determined.
- (4) Evidence of completion of a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Qualifications Framework was not available for two adults employed to work directly with the children.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2) (a) (b)

1. References were sought but one adult is off on long term sick with no return date.
 2. References received.
- (d) CV's were updated straight away. Management will ensure CV'S are updated with no gaps in employment.
- (4) Qualifications received. Copy of qualifications or Qualification recognition letter will be sought before commencing work experience or employment.

Supporting documentation submitted

References, records of employment and letters were submitted.

Summary Comment

The non-compliances identified on inspection under (2) (a) (b) and (4) will remain non-complaint for the following reasons.

(2) (a) (b) 1. There were no evidence of references submitted for one adult.

2. The response was accepted for one adult but not accepted for the second as the reference submitted was from a source other than a past employer and the adult has a number of past employers listed on their employment record.

(4) The evidence submitted with the CAPA did not adequately demonstrate that the two adults had completed a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above.

The evidence submitted with the CAPA response adequately addresses the non-compliance identified under (2) (d).

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.

Compliance Information

(1) On the day of inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the preschool children attending the service.

(2) On the morning of inspection there were 39 children being cared for by 10 adults in three care rooms.

In Naíonra mór room, two adults cared for 15 children aged 3-4 years.

In the creche room, four adults cared for 19 children. There were three children aged 0-1 year, four children aged 1-2 years, and 12 children aged 2-3 years. One additional adult worked in the room on educational placement.

In the Naíonra beaga room, one adult cared for five children aged 2-3 years.

In the afternoon, seven adults cared 31 children in two care rooms.

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

Non-Compliance Information

(1) (a) The individual sleep needs of children in the creche room aged 1- 2 years were not met. Some children were notably tired at 11.00am and were observed to wait up to two hours before being placed to sleep. The children were observed rubbing their eyes, crying and disengaging from play activities. The structure and routine of the day in this room indicated that children ate their dinner and had their nappies changed prior to being placed to sleep. This process did not allow for children to be placed to sleep when they were tired and in need of rest.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1) (a) We immediately reviewed the current daily schedule to ensure flexibility around the children's individual sleep cues. We modified the routine to allow children to be placed for sleep as soon as they show signs of tiredness rather than waiting on set times. We implemented a child-centred approach to sleep. Staff will be trained to recognise early signs of tiredness (e.g. eye rubbing, crying, disengagement) and respond promptly by offering rest or sleep. We will keep records of each child's sleep and rest times and monitor individual needs and adjust accordingly. We will engage with parents/guardians about the importance of responding to children's sleep cues and incorporate any specific sleep routines or preferences shared by parents into daily practices. We have embedded flexibility into daily routines for all children, especially those with varying sleep needs. We will promote a culture of responsiveness where staff prioritize individual children's cues over fixed schedules and conduct periodic training on child development and individual needs related to rest and sleep.

Supporting documentation submitted

No documentation submitted.

Summary Comment

The information given by the registered provider adequately addresses the on-compliance identified on inspection. The practice will be reviewed on the next 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

There was adequate and suitable play equipment and materials available on the premises for the number of children attending the service. All play items and equipment were observed to be well maintained, durable and suitable for the age and stage of development of the children attending. The two care rooms caring for older children contained a sufficient number of child sized tables and chairs for tabletop play and eating. Suitable highchairs were provided for younger children. Play items were arranged in a manner that was easily accessible to children on low level shelving. The rooms had distinct areas of interest including kitchen, construction, small world, doll and baby care areas. The area used by younger children aged 0-1 year was equipped with suitable soft toys, cause and effect items and equipment to support pre-walking children. Areas with soft furnishings were available in each of the rooms for children to use when resting and reading.

There were three outdoor play areas with a variety of age-appropriate outdoor equipment such as swings, slides climbing facilities.

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

Children attending the service were provided a morning snack, dinner and evening snack which was served in the care room. A morning snack of toast and grapes, pineapple and banana were served along with milk and water to drink in individual beakers. Main meal was served at 12.14pm and consisted of mince stew with vegetables and potatoes and natural yogurt with a drop of vanilla. The timing of meals and snacks were at regular intervals and a

rolling two-week menu plan was available to view. The services healthy eating policy was reviewed and observed to be in line with the service practices. Appropriate seating was provided for children of different ages with highchairs available in the baby toddler room and low-level tables and chairs in the preschool room.

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 front entrance door of the pre-school building was secured on arrival to the service and remained secured throughout the inspection. The outdoor areas contained high level boundary walls and fencing. The layout of the outdoor areas provided a high level of visibility in all areas where children played.
- Cleaning products and equipment were securely stored to be inaccessible to the pre-school children. The kitchen area which on-site were inaccessible to the children.
- Window blind cords were secured to the wall using a tie-down or tension device.

Infection Control:

- Thermostatically controlled warm water, liquid soap and paper towels were available in each of the children's sanitary accommodation to support good hand washing practices. Children were observed washing their hands at appropriate intervals throughout the day including after using the toilet and before eating.
- Up to date cleaning schedules outlining appropriate cleaning methods and the various areas to be cleaned within the playrooms and sanitary and nappy changing accommodation were available.
- Ventilation in each of the rooms was provided by openable windows. Ventilation in the sanitary accommodation and nappy changing areas was by way of openable windows

Administration of Medication:

- Records were maintained on the administration of both antifebrile and prescription medication. Consent forms for the administration of medication was completed prior to medication being administered to children and the forms contained details on the medication, the dosage required and the timing of each dose. The records were noted to be maintained accurately and up to date. Each child in the baby/toddler room had their own bottle of antifebrile medication labelled and stored in appropriate area.

Safe Sleep:

- There was one large sleep room in the service containing eight standard cots to facilitate the sleep needs of younger children. Children were observed in the sleep room at various times throughout the inspection and the air temperature was noted to be maintained within the required 16-20°C while children were present. Staff were observed recording the sleep room temperatures at various intervals throughout the day.
- There were low level beds available for older children to sleep on in the creche room.

Fire Safety:

- All exit routes were free from obstruction.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. An Immediate Action Notice was issued to the registered provider on 14 March 2025 in relation to a risk identified under regulation 23. Two external doors were not appropriately secured to prevent children from exiting the service unsupervised. The registered provider responded by return with information on corrective actions that had been taken to address the risks. Following the inspection, a referral was made to the Chief Fire Officer in relation to the unsecured exits and the corrective action taken.
2. Garda vetting was available for eighteen staff members. However, five of these vetting disclosures were not dated within the previous three years in adherence to with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.
3. There were trailing cables adjacent to one cot in the sleep room which posed a risk of injury to children.
4. There was a kettle stored on the worktop in the creche room which was used to reheat children's feeding bottles. Boiling kettles pose a safety risk to children and should be stored in an area that is inaccessible.

Infection Control:

5. Children's soothers were not managed in a clean, hygienic condition to prevent the risk of infection. One child was observed to drop their soother on the floor and a staff member proceeded to lift the soother and return it to the child without sterilising.
6. Children in the creche room were served their morning snack directly on to the table and not on appropriate crockery point an infection control risk.
7. Nappies were not disposed of in a foot pedal operated, sealed, leak proof bins to prevent the risk of cross infection.
8. The nappy changing procedures observed in the service did not support effective infection control practices as follows:

- The same protective apron was worn for all nappy changes carried out by one staff member.
 - Staff members returned children to the care room and placed children to sleep while wearing the protective apron and gloves following nappy changing.
 - Staff did not routinely wash their hands after changing a child's nappy.
9. The waterproof covering on couches in the creche and Naionra beaga room's was torn, exposing the inner foam which rendered the fabric difficult to clean appropriately.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. Following the inspection, we took immediate action to secure both doors. Our caretaker made two security gates in order to prevent the children from exiting the building. A risk assessment will be carried out on a daily basis to ensure all doors are secured for child safety. Staff will be trained on proper procedures for securing doors and recognizing potential security issues.
2. Garda vetting for the five staff members has been received. Record the date of each staff member's most recent Garda vetting and set automated reminders for renewal.
3. The trailing cables were moved. Organized training sessions for staff and caregivers to emphasize the importance of proper cable management and compliance with safety protocols. Scheduled routine checks to ensure cables are properly secured, in good condition, and compliant with safety standards. Encouraged staff to report any hazards or non-compliance issues promptly, enabling swift corrective action.
4. The kettle was removed. The kettle will be kept out of creche room.

Infection Control:

5. A staff meeting was held outlining how soothers should be handled, cleaned and sterilized regularly. Conducted comprehensive training sessions to reinforce the importance of sterilizing dummies and other feeding equipment, emphasizing the potential health risks associated with non-sterile items.
6. Snack will be served on individual plates for each child. Immediate action was taken and kitchen staff were asked to serve all snacks on individual plates for all children. Conducted training sessions emphasizing proper serving procedures, including the importance of using appropriate serving utensils and plates instead of placing snacks directly on the table.

7. A pedal foot bin has been installed at each nappy changing facility. Peddle nappy bin was purchased for both nappy changing areas. Ensure we have adequate peddle bins at all times.
8. A strict nappy changing policy and procedure was implemented. Staff meeting was held and all staff updated on the new nappy changing policy. Ensure all staff are updated on new nappy policy and adhere to all policies.
9. Couches were removed from rooms immediately. Conduct regular audits of existing couches to identify and address any issues promptly.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographs, policies and documentation was submitted to evidence compliance.

Summary Comment

The actions taken by the registered provider address eight of the nine non-compliances identified. The findings documented at point 2 remain non-compliant as the registered provider's response did not provide adequate evidence to demonstrate that the non-compliance had been rectified.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

Insurance cover was available in the service for a total of 70 children in daily attendance in a full day care service. Insurance was valid from 26 November 2024 to 25 November 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.

Non-Compliance Information

- (e) On the day of the inspection, there was an inadequate number of nappy changing units for the number of children attending. The regulatory requirement specifies one nappy-changing unit and one wash hand basin for every 11 children in nappies. On the day of inspection, there were 16 children in attendance who were not yet toilet trained and one nappy-changing unit.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (e) A second changing unit was installed. We will regularly review the facility capacity and adjust as needed. We will ensure facilities are safe, hygienic, and conveniently located. Staff will be trained on compliance requirements and monitor their adherence. Management will maintain ongoing oversight to prevent future shortages.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence was submitted.

Summary Comment

The information has been accepted in addressing the non-compliance. The practice will be subject to review on the next inspection.