

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DL101
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Name of Service:	Naíonra na Crannóige
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Address of Service:	An Chrannóg, Strath na Corcra, Dóirebeaga, Leitir Ceanainn, Co. Donegal
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Eircode:	F92 X968
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Name of Registered Provider:	Ray Mac Pháidín
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	14/05/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	13	PM	No.
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Donegal Early Years Inspectorate, St. Conal's Campus, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal. F92 TD92
Inspection undertaken by:	N Toner
Title:	Early Years Inspector

Authority to Inspect

The Tusla Early Years Inspectorate carries out inspections of Early Years Services under Section 58(J) of the Child Care Act 1991 (as inserted by Section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013).

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Description of service

Naíonra Na Crannóige is a pre-school service located on the outskirts of Derrybeg, Co. Donegal. The service is registered to provide a sessional pre-school service for children aged between 2 and 6 years. The service operates Monday to Friday between the hours of 9:15am and 12:15pm for 38 weeks of the year. The premises consists of one pre-school room with adjoining sanitary accommodation for children, a separate toilet and a kitchen area. An enclosed, partially roofed outdoor play area is available on the premises. This is located at the front of the service and is directly accessible from the children's pre-school room.

Staffing

The service is staffed by 3 adults which includes the person in charge, one staff member, and one staff is employed under the Access and Inclusion Model scheme (AIM). The registered provider does not work directly in the service.

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 announced/unannounced and focused on the area of governance/ health, welfare and development of child/ safety. This inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 19, 23, 25, 26 and 28. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

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Inspection findings are documented in the inspection report which is first issued in draft format to the service with an opportunity to respond to any findings. Where statutory requirements are identified as not being met, the registered provider must demonstrate how they have rectified the non-compliance and will prevent any non-compliance from re occurring. The Corrective Action and Preventive Action plan (CAPA) will be used to inform decisions about compliance with regulatory requirements. Where the registered provider fails to meet the statutory requirements an escalation process may be commenced.

The inspectorate reserves the right to edit responses received for reasons including clarity, completeness and compliance with administrative and legal processes.

The contents of the report are compiled by the inspectorate body.

Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the person in charge, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

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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 has a designated person in charge and a named person who can deputise as needed.

(b)

On the day of inspection, the person in charge was onsite.

(c)

There was a clear management structure in the service, which identified the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and unpaid worker.

(2)

On the day of the inspection, the person in charge confirmed that there were 3 adults who worked in the service. This included one person in charge and two staff members, one of whom was employed under the Access and

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Inclusion Model scheme (AIM). Recruitment files in respect of the three adults were reviewed, and the following information was available:

- (a) Three Written and validated references was on file from previous employers.
- (b) Three Written and validated references was on file from other sources.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all three adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (2)(d) International police vetting was not required as no adults had resided outside of the state for a period of six consecutive months or more as an adult.
- (4) Three adults had attained major awards in Early childhood care and education at level 5 or above on the national framework of qualifications, or qualifications deemed by the Department of Children, Disability and Equality (DCDE) to meet the regulatory requirement

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) There were 2 staff working directly with 13 children when the inspector arrived unannounced to the service.
- (3) The minimum sessional service staffing ratio was adhered to with 2 adults working directly with 13 children.

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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
- (b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.

Compliance Information

The following measures were observed to ensure that each child's learning, development, and well-being was facilitated within the daily life of the service.

Basic Needs

Following morning play, children lined up to use the toilet. Staff provided support only when requested, encouraging individual independence. Two adults closely supervised the handwashing routine, ensuring all children preformed proper hand hygiene before returning to the tables for lunch. Children's toilets were located directly off the playroom for easy access by children. Children were observed by staff while hand washing. Lunchtime was a structured as a social and enjoyable experience. Staff provide the children with the ingredients for their lunch including bread, wraps, ham, cheese and an assortment of fruit. Children prepared their own healthy lunches (ham/cheese wraps or sandwiches and fruit assortments). The room was equipped with appropriately sized child tables and chairs. Drinking bottles are kept within children's reach, ensuring unrestricted access to hydration throughout the day. The indoor layout operates within a single, open-plan room, ensuring that all children always remain safe and visible to the supervising adults.

Supporting relationships around children.

A detailed daily schedule of activities is in place but remains flexible, allowing staff to adapt the routine to match the children's needs and interests. Each child has an activity book documenting their learning, arts, crafts, and daily activities. Staff interacted positively, respectfully, and warmly with children. They actively played games, supported imaginative play, and consistently promoted the children's independent skills. On the day of inspection, children confidently performed assigned roles, including handing out plates, clearing tables, and reading out the daily weather chart during circle time. Circle time included educational singing in Irish, focusing on numbers, weather, and a clean-up song to assist with transitions. The service used a dedicated childcare mobile application

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alongside comprehensive morning and evening verbal handovers. Children's activity books are regularly shared with parents to illustrate individual artwork, weekly themes, and community excursions. Children's sense of identity is supported by a dedicated "Family Wall" featuring photographs of their families, alongside a birthday calendar display using individual balloons for each child. Children's current artwork, including themed butterfly crafts, was prominently displayed around the room.

Physical and material environment

On arrival to the service, children were observed actively engaged in structured and child-led interest areas, demonstrating a variety of activities to choose from. The service is delivered entirely through the Irish language cultivating a rich cultural experience. Learning environments featured local community elements, including a local football team flag and photographs documenting local community outings. The walls in the service feature educational, child-centred displays including interactive alphabet charts, seasons, days of the week, an atlas, and a solar system poster. Materials and equipment are varied, age-appropriate, and easily accessible. This included plastic animals, blocks, musical instruments, a large dollhouse with accompanying figures, and dual sensory stations for sand and water play. The playroom was well-resourced, featuring a variety of materials designed to support multiple developmental areas. This included Imaginative and Sensory Play, defined interest areas such as "home corner" was equipped with play cookers, utensils, food items, and dolls. Construction and problem-solving materials were readily available, including blocks of assorted sizes and textures, puzzles and games. To support creative and messy play, specific zones were dedicated to hands-on exploration and artistic expression. These areas were well-stocked with arts and crafts materials, including paint, paper, scissors, and various shapes and colours. On the day of inspection, service was found to be clean, brightly decorated, and maintained to a high standard.

The outdoor area consists of a large concrete surface, partially sheltered with a canopy to enable all-weather outdoor play. Suitable outdoor clothing and wellington boots are provided to facilitate messy play. A dedicated storage shed houses a wide variety of ride-on toys, including push-bikes, tractors, and scooters, which children used to practice balance and coordination. The outdoor space features a covered sandpit, flower beds with sprouting plants, child-sized picnic benches for social interaction/rest, and a painted ground hopscotch grid. Two staff members maintained close, continuous supervision of the outdoor area.

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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 service was secure on the inspectors unannounced arrival to the service.
- The outdoor perimeter was secured with wooden fencing on the entrance and a locked wooden gate.
- Cleaning products were stored out of reach of the preschool.
- Windows had restrictors in place to protect children from injury.

Infection Control:

- The service was observed to be clean with up-to-date cleaning schedules in place.
- Warm water, liquid soap, and paper towels were provided for effective hand hygiene.
- There is evidence of the policy on infection control being implemented.

Fire Safety:

- On the day evacuation doors remained clear ensuring safe egress from the service in an emergency

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 staff members had up to date first aid responder training (FAR).

(2) (a) (b) A suitably equipped first aid box was available for the children.

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Part VI - Safety

Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures

- (1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of-
- (a) any fire drill that takes place in the premises, and
 - (b) the number, type and maintenance record of fire fighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire shall be displayed in a conspicuous position in the premises.

Compliance Information

- (1)(a) A record of fire drills as conducted was maintained in the service. It was noted that the last monthly fire drill was conducted on 30th of April 2026.
- (b) The maintenance record for the firefighting equipment indicated that an annual service was conducted in April 2026. The maintenance record for the smoke alarm system indicated that a service was last conducted on 13th May 2026 and is serviced quarterly.
- (4) A notice of the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire was wall mounted in all playrooms. A fire assembly point was positioned on the grounds at the side of the building.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service demonstrated adequate insurance for (22) children in a sessional service from 28th November 2025 to 27th November 2026.