

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DS047
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Name of Service:	Naíonra Montessori Cluain Dolcain
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Address of Service:	St. Joseph's Pipe Band Hall, Old Nangor Road, Clondalkin, Dublin 22
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Eircode:	D22 V2V9
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Name of Registered Provider:	Louise Nic Giolla Chomhghaill
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	10/03/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	18	PM	12
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Floor 7 Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, St. John's Road West, Kilmainham, Dublin 8
Inspection undertaken by:	H Sutherland
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	Not applicable
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Description of service

Naíonra Montessori Cluain Dolcain is a privately owned early years service located in a rural area in Dublin 22. The premises comprises of one care room, sanitary facilities and an outdoor area to the side of the building. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme and offers two daily sessions delivered through the Irish language Monday to Friday. Sessions run from 8.30am to 11.30pm and 12pm to 3pm, catering to children age 2 to 6 years.

Staffing

There are currently four adults employed to work in the service including the registered provider. Additionally, the service has an adult appointed to provide relief cover. On the day of the inspection there were three adults present working directly with the children. The registered provider was not present and the deputy person in charge facilitated 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 child and safety. 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 -

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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.

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.*

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(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 service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.
 - (b) The deputy person in charge was present when the inspector arrived unannounced at the service. A review of the staff roster showed that a designated person was on the premises at all times during the opening hours of the service.
 - (c) The service had a clear management structure and staff were aware of their roles.
- (2) Following a discussion with the person in charge, it was confirmed that one adult commenced employment in the service since Regulation 9 was last inspected on 9 June 2025. Documentation required under Regulation 9 (2), (3) and (4) was reviewed in respect of the adult as detailed below.
- (a) One written and verified reference was available from a past employer.
 - (c) Garda vetting was available for the adult. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, which requires services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (4) Documentation was available to show that the adult who worked directly with children attending the service held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications.

Non-Compliance Information

- (2)
- (a) (b) There was no second written and verified reference available for the adult.
- (3) Documentation reviewed showed that the procedures specified above under Regulation 9(2) had not been carried out prior to the adult commencing employment in the service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider submitted a second written and verified reference for the staff member and stated staff will only be employed when they have two written and verified references.

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Supporting documentation submitted

Reference submitted

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventative actions taken by the registered provider have been deemed appropriate in addressing the non-compliance. The effectiveness of the actions will be assessed on the next inspection.

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) On the day of inspection, there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children to meet their needs.
- (3) The minimum adult-to-child ratio was maintained for the duration of the inspection. There were 3 adults working directly with 18 children in the morning, and 3 adults working directly with 12 children in the afternoon.

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-*
- (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 inspector observed appropriate and suitable care practices in place in the service as follows:

Children's snacks were provided by their parents/guardians, and drinking water was available to children during both sessions. Children were observed independently accessing their water when they required a drink. Children and staff sat together during snack time and engaged in relaxed, positive conversations. Staff supported children's personal care needs, including tending to children's nose cleaning in a respectful and attentive manner. Children

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used the toilet independently, and staff remained close by and available if a child required support. Toilet training was observed to be a positive and child friendly experience, with staff using a puppet to introduce and discuss toileting routines.

Play was child led and the daily routine supported children's wellbeing and participation. Children were greeted warmly on arrival and staff discussed the procedures for children settling into the service, noting this process was guided by the child's needs and carried out in partnership with the parents/guardians. A rest area was available, and children were observed using the space to take a break from activities and read the books provided.

Transitions were well managed, promoting continuity in learning throughout the inspection. Staff took time to recognise children's achievements and provided affirmative and encouraging feedback.

Children were given the time and space to engage in self-directed play and during this time were observed engaging in imaginative conversations with one another. Stories were read to the children, and those not participating were warmly invited to join, bringing the group together. Communication with children was through both the Irish and English languages, and staff responded promptly when children became upset or required support with a conflict. Opportunities for outdoor play were provided during both sessions, during which children were dressed appropriately. Children were supported to develop independence through the daily routine, such as managing their own snack bag, putting on their coats and tidying away toys and materials after play.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

(1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-

- (a) having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day, and
- (b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.

Compliance Information

(1)

- (a) The registered provider ensured that adequate and suitable facilities were available for the children to play indoors and outdoors.
- (b) There were adequate and suitable facilities for the children to rest during the day. The indoor environment had a designated rest area with a bench and child size armchairs.

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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

- The furniture and equipment in the pre-school room were observed to be adequate for the number of children attending the service.
- Low-level tables and chairs were available, allowing children to sit comfortably during meals and while participating in tabletop activities.
- Toys and equipment were available to support various forms of play including, imaginative, construction, physical and manipulative play. These were arranged on low-level shelving ensuring ease of access.
- The equipment was observed to be clean and well maintained.

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 entrance door to the service was adequately secured to prevent unauthorised persons from entering and to ensure children could not exit unsupervised.
- Cleaning agents were stored out of children's reach.
- No heavy furniture was observed at a height that could pose a tipping risk to children.

Infection Control:

- Children's tables were sanitised before their snack.
- There was thermostatically controlled water and liquid soap available at the sinks in both of the children's toilets to facilitate handwashing.

Administration of Medication:

- Medications were stored in their original packaging and kept out of children's reach.

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- Staff adequately detailed the procedures for administering medication, including obtaining parental consent and ensuring a second staff member was present to witness the administration.

Fire Safety:

- Staff adequately detailed the procedure to safely evacuate children from the service in the event of a fire.
- The designated fire escape routes were free from obstruction on the day of inspection.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. During discussions with the inspector, it was identified that not all staff were fully aware of the signs and symptoms to recognise if a child with a serious allergy required emergency medical attention. This practice poses a risk to the child's safety. This issue was also identified as non-compliant during the previous inspection on 9 June 2025, the corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider did not prevent the non-compliance from recurring.
2. A wire from a stereo in the preschool room was not securely fixed to the wall, creating a potential hazard and posing a risk to children's safety.

Infection Control:

3. Children were not provided with the opportunity to wash their hands before snack time. Although handwashing facilities were available, children were given hand sanitiser instead of being supported to wash their hands with soap and water. This practice increases the risk of infection spreading.
4. Paper towels were not stored hygienically in the children's bathrooms. While paper towel dispensers were available, the paper towels were observed to be stored on a soiled ledge beside the sink, creating a risk of cross-contamination.
5. There were no lidded, pedal-operated bins available in the children's bathrooms. All three bins in this area are required to be lidded and pedal-operated; however, two of the bins had no lids, and the third, although lidded was heavily soiled and required hand contact to dispose of waste. This presents a risk of the spread of infection.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

The registered provider stated the following corrective and preventive actions were taken:

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1. Staff have the administration of medication records available on the wall in the kitchen and will attend training with the local County Childcare Committee to ensure they understand the requirements for supporting children who may need emergency medication.
2. The wire has been secured to the wall and going forward unsafe items will be fixed immediately.

Infection Control:

3. There is a new system in place to support handwashing. Children will now be brought in pairs to wash their hands with a staff member. In addition, there is a rota in place to remind staff.
4. The paper towels are now stored in the paper towel dispenser and staff will check the bathrooms regularly to ensure they are fully stocked.
5. Two new bins have been purchased and the bins will be kept clean and replaced when needed.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. No evidence submitted
2. Photograph submitted

Infection Control:

3. No evidence submitted
4. Photograph submitted
5. Photograph submitted

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventative actions taken by the registered provider have been deemed appropriate in addressing the non-compliances. The effectiveness of the actions will be assessed on the next inspection.