

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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Name of Registered Provider:	Louise Nic Giolla Chomhghaill
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	09/06/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	19	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 year's 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 aged between 2.5 to 6 years.

Staffing

The registered provider works directly with the children in the service and employs four staff, two of which are employed under the access and inclusion model (AIM). Additionally, the service has an appointed emergency cover person. On the day of inspection three staff members and a student were 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.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under the following regulations:

9(1)(2)(3)(4) Management and Recruitment

11(1), (3), Staffing Levels

19(1)(a) Health, welfare and development of child

23 Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

25 First Aid

26 Fire Safety Measures

28 Insurance

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

09 June 2025

An immediate action notice (IAN) was issued to the registered provider on the day of inspection in relation to a significant risk identified under Regulation 23 Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child and Regulation 25 First aid. Further details are available in the body of the report. A response was received from the registered provider on 11 June 2025 which mitigated the risk identified under Regulation 23. The actions outlined in the response regarding Regulation 25 has not yet been implemented. The registered provider has advised that the actions required to mitigate the risk will be addressed by the 23 June 2025.

Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the deputy 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.

(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 two named persons to deputise if required.
 - (b) The two of the persons appointed to deputise were on the premises for the duration of the inspection.
 - (c) There was a clear management structure in place in the service. Staff were aware of their roles and responsibilities and advised the inspector who was available to deputise as required.

(2)

Conversation with the deputy person in charge confirmed that there are five adults currently employed in the service including the registered provider. Two adults were new to the service since Regulation 9 was last inspected on 18 January 2022. The service also has an appointed emergency cover person. In addition, there was a student present on the day of inspection.

The following records were available for the six adults.

- (a) Seven written references were available from past employers and were appropriately verified.
- (b) Five written references were available from a reputable source other than a past employer and were appropriately verified.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for six adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda Vetting every three years.

(4) There was documentary evidence available demonstrating that five of the adults held at least a major award in Early childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework. One adult who did not have the required qualification had a letter of eligibility to practice from the Department of Children, Disability and Equality (DCDE).

Non-Compliance Information

- (2)
 - (b) References had not been sought from any source known to the student. This regulation was non-compliant on the previous three inspections in 2017, 2020 and 2022. The preventive actions submitted following these inspections have not prevented the non-compliance from recurring.
 - (d) Documentation was unavailable to establish whether two staff members had lived outside the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months as an adult.
- (3) Documentation reviewed evidence that the procedures specified above under 9(2)(b) and (d) had not been carried out prior to the two adults and student commencing employment and work experience in the service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (2)
 - (b) The registered provider will seek references and all paperwork prior to students starting their work experience and ensure that everything is in place. A new file for students has been put in place with a list of all required paperwork.
 - (d) The staff have provided their CVs and they were placed in the file.
- (3) The registered provider will ensure that all paperwork for each staff member is in the file and up to date by keeping a list of all paperwork needed at the front of the file.

Supporting documentation submitted

CVs submitted for two staff members.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 9 has been adequately addressed and will be subject to review 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 care needs. There were three adults available to nineteen children in the morning and three adults available to twelve children in the afternoon.
- (3) The required adult to child ratio was maintained for the duration of the inspection.

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

The atmosphere at lunchtime was relaxed and pleasant with positive social interactions observed among staff and children. Lunch was provided daily by the parents and was observed to contain a variety of healthy options that supported a well-balanced diet. Children's drinking water was available and accessible during the inspection. A

child size sofa and armchairs were available for children, providing a comfortable space where they could relax and take a break from activities. Children were supported to be confident and independent in the development of their self-help and self-care skills for example, tidying up following play, packing away lunch boxes, hand washing and using the toilet independently. All children had the opportunity to engage in outdoor play during the inspection.

Staff interacted with children in a warm, patient manner using soft tones and friendly body language. Children's feelings were acknowledged and staff were observed to respond respectfully and consistently throughout the morning. Minor disputes between children were managed in a positive calm manner. The service uses a group messaging app to communicate news and updates with parents and families. Additionally, parents and families have the opportunity to have informal and formal meetings with staff members. Staff advised that the service hosts an open day in June to welcome new children and their families and discussed how this supports the children's transition to the service and gives parents an insight into what the service has to offer.

The indoor environment had some designated interest areas including a home corner and a library area. Resources such as puzzles, blocks, small world and mark making materials were freely available to the children and stored in a way that allowed children to independently find and return items of interest with ease. In addition, the care room had a variety of Montessori equipment available supporting developmental areas such as, practical life, cognitive development, sensorial, language and maths. Children were observed to comfortably move around the care room without any obstructions and child size tables and chairs allowed groups of children to explore materials together. The service had a variety of printed books capturing key learning moments through photographic images. These books were printed monthly and made accessible to children to allow them to revisit and reflect on their learning. The outdoor area had materials available such as a slide, a mud kitchen, large cars, a garage and interactive materials on the wall. Additional materials were stored in the shed and staff advised that they take them out daily.

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 entrances and exits were secured to prevent unauthorised access or children leaving unsupervised.
- Electrical cables were safely attached to the wall.

- Toys and equipment were observed to be safe and in good condition for the children using them.

Infection Control:

- Children's tables were wiped down before lunch.
- Staff supported children to wash their hands following outdoor play and toileting.

Administration of Medication:

- Staff demonstrated an awareness of the steps to take to give medicine safely if required.

Fire Safety:

- Emergency exits were observed to be unobstructed throughout the inspection.
- Staff demonstrated knowledge of the procedure to safely evacuate children from the service in the event of a fire.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

An Immediate action notice was issued under general safety for the following areas of non-compliance:

1. During the inspection, it was identified that staff knowledge regarding the current medication requirements for a child with a serious medical condition was inconsistent. It was evident following discussions with the inspector that two staff members were not aware of the current medication requirements of a child with a serious medical condition. The inspector was advised by a third staff member that there was a change in requirements, however there was no update on the child's care plan or any documentation from the parents stating that a change to the child's care plan was required.
2. Medication for a child with a serious medical condition was observed to be out of date. Two auto adrenaline injectors stored within the service had passed their expiry date.
3. Medication was not stored safely in the service. A child's prescribed medication was observed to be stored inside the child's bag on the floor in an area that was accessible to other children. During lunch the child was observed retrieving medication from their bag and handing it to a staff member.
4. Appropriate measures were not taken to ensure the safety of a child who staff reported had a medical condition that could require emergency intervention. There was insufficient evidence in the child's care plan to support appropriate care. The plan lacked essential details, including the specific allergy and associated symptoms or signs to watch out for. In addition, the service did not have signed consent from the parent to administer the medication.

Inadequate practices regarding the management of medication presents a serious risk to the health and safety of the children attending the service. These practices were at variance with the services administration of medication policy.

Infection Control:

1. There were no single use paper towels available for children to dry their hands following hand washing. Children were observed using a shared cloth hand towel following handwashing.
2. Children's hands were not washed before lunch.
3. The waste disposal bins in the sanitary area did not support effective waste management. One of the bins did not have a lid and the second bin required hand contact to dispose of waste.

Ineffective hygiene practices pose a significant risk of cross contamination and illness to a child.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. A reminder of each child's medication will be put into the roll book and monthly meetings will be held to remind the team of the medication required for each child, how to administer the medication and the procedure to follow in the event of an emergency.
2. The service will note the expiry date of medication in the roll book and will know when the medication expires and needs to be replaced. The notebook will be used each day and all team members have access to it to ensure they know about each child.
3. Parents will hand the medication to the staff at the door and it will be stored safely and returned to the childminder at home time.
4. A new care plan was provided for the child and the parent signed the consent form and all consent forms will be checked to ensure they are signed and up to date.

Infection Control:

1. Hand towels arrived the day after the inspection. The registered provider will ensure there is always a supply and place the order on time.
2. Handwashing was put on the timetable so as not to forget to wash hands before lunch.
3. New bins were provided for the bathroom. The bathroom equipment will be checked as part of cleaning schedule to make sure they are in working order.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Record submitted

Infection Control:

Receipts submitted

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 23 has been adequately addressed and will be subject to review on the next inspection.

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

(2)

(a) A suitably equipped first aid box was available and stored safely in an easily accessible and prominent position in the care room.

(b) The first aid box was observed to be available to the children attending the service.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) An Immediate Action Notice was issued as there was no adult available to the children with up to date first aid training. This posed a risk of significant harm to the children. The actions outlined in the response from the registered provider regarding Regulation 25 has not yet been implemented. The registered provider has advised that the actions required to mitigate the risk will be addressed by the 23 June 2025.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Two staff members attended First Aid Responder training and have completed the training. The registered provider will keep a record of renewal dates and the training provider will notify the service when renewal is approaching.

Supporting documentation submitted

Certificates submitted

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 25 has been adequately addressed and will be subject to review on the next inspection.

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.
- (2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-
- (c) an authorised person.
- (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 written record was available detailing fire drills that had taken place in the service. The record showed that the last fire drill took place on 22 May 2025 and 23 May 2025. In addition, there was evidence to show that practice fire drills are carried out during the morning and afternoon sessions.
 - (b) The number, type and maintenance record of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises was up to date. Fire extinguishers and smoke alarms were serviced on 02 December 2024.
- (2) The records referred to in paragraph one were open to inspection by an authorised person.
- (4) The procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were displayed in a prominent position in the care room.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service had adequate insurance for the number of children in attendance. The insurance certificate was valid until 27 March 2026.