

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier: TU2015FL286

Name of Service: Tir na Nóg Hartstown

Address of Service: 6 Oakview Lawn, Dublin 15

Eircode: D15 C590

Name of Registered Provider: Veronica Baker

Service type: Full Day, Part Time

Date of Inspection: 04/09/2025

No of pre-school children:	AM	26	PM	19

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate: Early Years Inspectorate Area 1
2nd Floor, Unit 4/5
The Nexus Building
Blanchardstown Corporate Park
Ballycoolin
Dublin 15 | D15 CF9K

Inspection undertaken by: T. Nelson

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

Description of service

Tir na Nóg Hartstown is a full and part-time day-care service located in a residential area of Dublin 15 and is registered to provide early childhood care and education to a maximum of 30 children aged 2 to 6 years old, Monday to Friday from 7.30am to 6.00pm. The service also provides school age childcare and is one of two services operated locally by the registered provider.

Tir na Nóg Hartstown operates from a converted residential dwelling and has two care rooms, the Explorers Room on the ground floor and Rainbow Room on the first floor, both catering for children from 2 to 5 years old. There are sanitary facilities located on each floor, and further sanitary facilities are available for staff. A fully enclosed outdoor area is located to rear of the premises.

Staffing

The registered provider employs seven staff to work in the service, including two persons in charge, and five staff who work directly with the children. There were six staff present on the day of the inspection including the two persons in charge. The registered provider does not work in the service but was present on the afternoon of 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; safety; premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulation 16(1)(h)(i)(j)(k) – Record in relation to Preschool Service.

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 registered provider, 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) The registered provider ensured that:

- (a) The service had a designated person in charge and named person to deputise as required.
- (b) A review of the roster showed either the person in charge or the deputy person in charge were rostered to be present during the operational hours of the service.
- (c) There was a clear structure in place outlining staff roles, and this was displayed in the hallway.

(2) The staff roster was reviewed and discussed with the service manager where it was established there are currently seven staff employed in the service. The full files of two staff who were new to the service since the last inspection on the 13 September 2023 were reviewed along with Garda Vetting disclosures for three staff members whose files were reviewed on the last inspection.

The registered provider had completed the following checks:

- (a) One validated written reference was available from a recent past employer.
 - (b) Three validated written references were available from a source other than a past employer.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all five files reviewed. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
 - (d) One adult who had lived in a state other than Ireland for six months or more as an adult had international police vetting from that state available for inspection.
- (3) Documentary evidence available showed that the checks outlined in (2) had been carried out prior to any of the adults having contact with the children in the service.
- (4) The two new staff 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 or a qualification deemed eligible by the Department of Children, Disability and Equality.

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) On the day of inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the service to meet their care needs.
- There were four staff available to 26 children present on the morning of the inspection when the inspector arrived unannounced to the service at 9.30am.
 - An additional two staff arrived at 10.00am to provide cover throughout the day and support with the provision of meals and other care needs.
- (2) The adult to child ratios were maintained correctly throughout the inspection. Staff were available to provide cover to allow ratios to be maintained while staff went on lunch breaks.
- (8) The review of the staff roster provided for a minimum of two adults to be on the premises during the service operational hours.

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;
- (b) details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services;
- (c) details of the adult:child ratios in the service;
- (d) the type of care or programme provided in the service;
- (e) the facilities available;
- (f) the opening hours and fees;
- (g) the policies, procedures and statements the service is required to maintain in accordance with Regulation 10;
- (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;
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.

Compliance Information

- (1) The registered provider ensured a record of the following was maintained:
- (a) Details of the name, position, qualifications, and experience of all staff were maintained within the staff files and displayed in the hallway.
 - (b) The service Tusla certificate detailed the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services. This was displayed in the hallway.
 - (c) The general information document outlined the adult: child ratios.
 - (d) The general information document outlined the type of care provided.
 - (e) The general information document outlined the facilities available within the service.
 - (f) The general information document outlined the opening hours and fees of the service.
 - (g) The registered provider maintained all the policies required in accordance with Regulation 10.
 - (h) Attendance records detailing the daily arrival and departure of the children were maintained.
 - (i) A record was maintained of the staff roster which was reflective of the staff present on the day.
 - (j) Following a review of a sample of eight records, the registered provider ensured a full record in writing was maintained for the administration of medication.
 - (k) Following a review of a sample of eight records, the registered provider ensured a full record in writing was maintained for accidents and incidents.

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

- (1)
- (b) The following suitable care practices were observed:
 - There were drinks of water and fruit freely accessible to the children in the care rooms.
 - Discussion with staff and a review of the daily routine and the practice on the day showed children were given regular meals with breakfast on arrival, a meal of beans on toast at 11.15am, a fruit snack at 1.00pm, a hot dinner at 3.00pm and a light snack before home time.

- Nappy changing was scheduled on a regular basis or as needed and was observed to be a respectful experience for the children.
- Staff report that no children currently sleep in the service, but there was a comfortable space in each of the care rooms for children to take a break from activities and rest.
- Children who were new to the service were settled in on a phased basis according to their need. A child who was unsettled was comforted and their phased transition was arranged for an hour on the day of the inspection to meet their need for comfort.
- There was a daily routine displayed in the care rooms, and this was reflective of the practice on the day. The children were observed to be familiar with the routine.
- All of the children were observed to access the outdoor play area on the day of the inspection.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) The following care practice was observed not to meet the needs of children:

- (b) The interaction strategies used by a staff member were observed to be negative and demonstrated an unrealistic expectation of the stage of behaviour development of the children in the care room. This was not in line with the service policy on Behaviour Management. Children require positive, strengths-based interaction strategies modelled by staff to facilitate them to develop their own appropriate age and stage-based behaviour strategies.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1) (b) A training and mentoring programme was implemented by management in agreement with the staff member. This is ongoing with monitoring of progress.

Supporting documentation submitted

Documentary evidence to support the above actions was reviewed.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions taken by the registered provider are sufficient to address the non-compliance under Regulation 19.

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 service ensured there was adequate and suitable furniture and equipment available, for example:

- The furniture and equipment in the rooms was observed to be adequate for the number of children in the rooms, it was appropriate for the age range and stage of development of the children in the rooms, and was safe, well maintained, durable and easy to clean.
- The toys and equipment were laid out on low level shelving, visible to the children, and were grouped in themed areas of interest such as home areas, mark making, construction, sensory, and library areas.
- Each of the themed interest areas were resourced with a range of props and materials accessible to the children.
- The outdoor environment was resourced with an outdoor kitchen with a range of props and a selection of ride on toys suitable for gross motor development.

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

The following measures were observed to be in place to safeguard children:

General Safety:

- The main entrance to the premises was secured on arrival to the premises by a magnetic door lock system, with the door release switch up high out of reach of children. Entry was managed and monitored by staff.
- Cleaning products were stored up high out of reach of children.
- Blind cords were secured, and openable windows were fitted with restrictors.
- The staircase was covered in a non-slip flooring and there was a low handrail for children.

Infection Control:

- Thermostatically controlled warm water, liquid soap and hygienically dispensed paper towels were available at all sinks used by the staff and children.
- The children were encouraged to handwash before meals and after outdoor play.
- The flooring in the sanitary areas allowed for effective cleaning.
- Care stations with wipes and tissues in the care rooms supported children's personal hygiene and children were encouraged to clean their nose and dispose of the tissue appropriately.

Administration of Medication:

- A bottle of fever reducing medication was available in the service and was stored appropriately.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

1. The disposal of nappies was not in line with appropriate infection control and potentially increased the risk of infection. The following was observed:
 - The bin in the nappy change area was not lined with a bag or bin liner.
 - Staff were observed not to use a nappy bin, but to carry the nappy through the service and place in the bin outside. Although it is acknowledged the nappy was placed in a nappy bag, the repeated handling of this bag increased the potential risk of cross contamination.

Fire Safety:

2. The fire evacuation route from the outdoor area by the side of the premises to the assembly point at the front of the premises was observed to be partially obstructed. This can restrict the safe evacuation of children from the premises in the case of an emergency.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control:

1. Staff were updated on appropriate practice in a staff meeting and the service reviewed and updated their nappy changing policy. Management report they will carry out spot checks during nappy changing time on a biweekly basis, to ensure good practice is maintained.

Fire Safety:

2. The service reports the bins have been moved from the side of the creche, to the front of the building, where they are not obstructing the evacuation route, and will ensure that during the monthly fire drills the fire officer will also check that exits and evacuation routes are unobstructed.

Supporting documentation submitted

Infection Control:

1. Documentary evidence to support the above actions was reviewed.

Fire Safety:

2. No evidence submitted.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions taken by the registered provider are sufficient to address the non-compliances under Regulation 23.

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) A review of the roster demonstrated that a person trained in First Aid Responder training was available at all times to the children attending the pre-school.

(2) The registered provider ensured that:

(a) A suitably equipped first aid box was stored in each care room.

(b) The first aid box was easily accessible and readily available, and staff were aware of its location

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) The following records were maintained:
- (a) A record of fire drills was available on the premises with evidence showing that fire drills were carried out on a monthly basis, with the most recent carried out in the 10 July 2025.
 - (b) An up-to-date maintenance record was available for the Fire extinguishers and smoke alarms in the premises. The fire extinguishers were serviced on 24 June 2025, and the smoke alarms were maintained on the 26 June 2025.
- (4) A procedure to be followed in the event of a fire was on display in each of the care rooms