

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015KE066
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Name of Service:	Tír na Nóg
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Address of Service:	Monread Avenue, Naas, Co. Kildare
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Eircode:	W91 XK33
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Name of Registered Provider:	Fiona Cleary
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	03/10/2023
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No of pre-school children:	AM	79	PM	44
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate Suite 7, Vista Primary Care Centre Child and Family Agency Ballymore Eustace Road Naas Co. Kildare, W91X38W
Inspection undertaken by:	F.Maher, T. Duignan
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

N/A

Description of service

Tír na Nóg is a private childcare service located in the Monread area of Naas town Co. Kildare. A full day care service is provided to children aged between 0-6 years old and opening hours are Monday to Friday from 07:30am-18:30pm. Part time care is offered, and sessional care and education is available for 38 weeks of the pre-school year. The service is registered to provide school aged care.

The service operates from two purpose-built premises in a small retail park. The main building has seven pre-school rooms, a dedicated sleep room, a kitchen and an office. The second building is located within close walking distance of the main premises and has three pre-school rooms dedicated to children attending the sessional Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme. A large outdoor play area, including covered play areas are located to the rear of the premises.

A public carpark is located in the retail park to the front of the premises.

Staffing

There were thirty-one staff members employed in the service, this included the registered provider. Twenty five people were present in the service on the day of inspection, this included the registered provider, deputy person in charge, sixteen staff members working directly with the children, one support staff member, three relief staff members, two kitchen staff and one early year's specialist from the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) who was present for a period of time during the morning.

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.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under,

Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance.

As a result, the scope of the inspection included Baby, Tweenies, Morning pre-school and Senior pre-school 1 rooms.

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 inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, 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

(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),(b)

There was a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.

The records of thirty-one staff members employed and/or present in the service, including the registered provider, were reviewed.

(2)(a),(b)

Sixty-two written and verified past employer references or references from a reputable source, in the absence of a past employer, were available in respect of thirty-one records reviewed.

(c)

Garda Vetting disclosures were available for 31 employed staff members including the registered provider.

(d)
Police vetting was available for eight staff members who had lived in a state other than the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months.

(3)
The procedures specified in paragraph (2) had been completed prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(4)
Twenty-eight members of staff employed and who work directly with the children whose records were reviewed held a major award at Level 5 or higher in Early Childhood Care and Education on the National Qualifications Framework. 7 staff member was in possession of a letter of qualification recognition issued by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY).

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)
There were 79 children attending the service being supervised directly by 16 staff members during the inspection. Three staff members were also available to provide relief as required to the pre-school rooms throughout the day.

(2)

The minimum ratio of adults to children was adhered to during the day as specified in column (3) of Part 1 of Schedule 6.

(8)(a)

There were at least two adults on the premises at all times for the duration of the inspection, this was verified by the staff roster.

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.

(3) A registered provider of a full day care service, a part-time day care service or a childminding service, other than such a service to which paragraph (2) applies, shall ensure that-

(a) a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the pre-school children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises, or

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

The pre-school rooms inspected had a variety of age-appropriate toys and learning equipment available at an accessible height to facilitate a child-led learning environment. The rooms were planned with clearly defined areas of interest including home corners, construction areas, libraries, messy/sensorial play, small world, dress up and comfortable rest areas. Play and learning materials included puzzles, jigsaws, interconnecting manipulative equipment, some natural and wooden toys and equipment, paint, paper, art and craft materials, books, sand and water trays, animals, blocks, cars, dolls, and an assortment of props and open-ended equipment for the interest areas.

The outdoor play area to the rear of the premises was spacious and designed with play spaces that included a mud kitchen with a digging and planting area, an area with a wooden climbing frame, an area to play ball games,

covered areas for play during inclement weather and a large open area where children could use the ride on trikes and balance bicycles.

(b)
Comfortable rest areas with soft furnishings were available in each pre-school room inspected should a child wish to take a break from activities during the day and relax, read or avail of some quiet time.

Low level beds with appropriate bed linen were available should any child aged 2 years or above require a period of sleep when attending on a full or part time basis.

One cot room with eight standard cots was provided for any children less than two years of age requiring sleep in a cot on a need led basis. Three extra foldable cots were set up in Tweenies room to facilitate the sleep needs of the children attending this room in the early afternoon.

(3)(a)
All children attending the service availed of outdoor play both in the morning and afternoon on the day of inspection. The play area was suitable, safe and secure with high level boundary walls to the sides and rear. No hazards were observed in the area and daily risk assessments were completed for the play area.

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

Two cooks were employed, and food was freshly prepared in the service daily. A three-week menu plan was available to demonstrate that varied nutritious food was provided throughout the day.

The service had a healthy eating policy in place and the staff members encouraged healthy eating practices with the children. During conversation with staff members, they advised they were very observant of any food provided that had the potential risk of choking and immediately halved/mashed or cut food into smaller pieces.

The tables were set, and staff members were observed to sit with the children during mealtimes making it an enjoyable and social experience for the children and also to assist the children where needed.

The morning snack served included fresh fruit pieces and home-made buttered scones and the hot meal served was cottage pie with milk offered to drink. Children were offered seconds if they requested more food and an alternative healthy option was provided for one child who did not wish to have the hot meal served. The staff members in the Baby room stated that prepared infant formula milk was brought to the service by parents and

immediately placed in a fridge until needed. A bottle warmer was available to safely heat the formula milk to enable the children drink the milk safely.

Drinking water was freely available in the service and it was observed that cups and drinking water were also available in the outdoor area should children feel thirsty when playing.

The kitchen staff advised that specific diets for children were provided for, and all staff were aware of any food allergies any of the children may have. The kitchen staff also advised they maintain up to date training in Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP), safe food training and the kitchen is registered with the relevant authority and inspected frequently.

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 doors to the service were electronically secured and controlled by staff to prevent children from exiting the service unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the pre-school. The service met the necessary safety requirements in respect of the indoor environment, toys and equipment and safe storage of cleaning agents. The staff members completed indoor and outdoor risk assessments daily to promptly manage any risk(s) identified.

A procedure was in place to safely escort children when ascending and descending the stairs from the two pre-school rooms located on the first floor.

A risk assessed procedure was in place to manage the safe movement of the children from the building across from the main building to the outdoor play area located at the rear of the main building.

Infection Control:

Thermostatically controlled hot water, liquid hand soap and paper hand towel, hygienically dispensed from wall mounted units, were readily available for hygienic hand washing and drying. The staff members supervised children's handwashing and handwashing routines were well established and observed.

Nappy changing was carried out, as observed, in line with the nappy change policy of the service. Gloves, plastic aprons, and nappy sacks were available for hygienic nappy changing practices. Foot pedal operated bins were provided for the disposal of used tissues, nappies and paper towel.

Written cleaning schedules were maintained for all room environments which were observed to be maintained in a clean and hygienic condition. Contract cleaners clean the premises after hours.

Administration of Medication:

Medication was not given at the time of the inspection and during conversations with various staff members, they advised they were aware of the procedures to be followed to administer medicine safely to a child if required while attending the service.

Safe Sleep:

Staff advised the inspector that 10-minute sleep check observations were completed on all sleeping children and the colour, position and breathing pattern of sleeping children in their care was documented. The sleep room was ventilated by means of openable windows to control the environmental room temperature. The sleep room temperature was recorded at 17.2°Celsius at 11:25am, this was within the recommended temperature of 16-20°C for sleep room environments.

Fire Safety:

Regular monthly fire drills were carried out and records maintained. All fire exits were easily identifiable and unobstructed

Outing:

Outings do not take place from the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) no person other than-

(i) pre-school child attending the service,

(ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,

(iii) an employee, or

(iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and

(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (3)(b) is retained for a period of one year from the date to which it relates.

Compliance Information

(1)
The registered provider ensured that each child was checked in and out of the service. This was confirmed by the written attendance records maintained for the pre-school rooms inspected.

(3) (a),(b)
The registered provider ensured that any person entering the service was approved and a record in writing was maintained.

(4)
The registered provider confirmed that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (3)(b) is retained for a period of one year from the date to which it relates.

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)
Persons trained in first aid responder (FAR) were immediately available to the children attending the service.

(2)(a),(b)
The first aid boxes were suitably equipped and stored in conspicuous positions in the pre-school rooms inspected and in the storeroom off the main corridor in the service and immediately available for the children at all times.

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 firefighting 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 written record was available of fire drills which were completed monthly in the service, the last recorded fire drill took place 2 October 2023.

(b) A record was kept of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises. Firefighting equipment was last serviced August 2023, and the smoke/fire detection system was last serviced 15 September 2023.

(4)

Notices of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were conspicuously displayed in the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

There was evidence of current insurance cover valid until 27 March 2024. The insurance provided cover for 124 children.