

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015KY094				
Name of Service:	Naíonra An Chaisleáin				
Address of Service:	12 Bothar Martramane, Castlegregory, Co. Kerry				
Eircode:	V92 KW96				
Name of Registered Provider:	Mary Whelan				
Service type:	Sessional				
Date(s) of Inspection:	03/06/2025				
No of pre-school children:	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>AM</td> <td>11</td> <td>PM</td> <td>08</td> </tr> </table>	AM	11	PM	08
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Áras an Phobail, Deans Lane, Tralee, Co. Kerry.				
Inspection undertaken by:	N. Reidy				
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	N/A
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Description of service

Naíonra an Chaisleáin is a community based early years service that provides a sessional pre-school service to children aged from 2 years to 6 years. The service is currently catering for children aged 3 years to 5 years. The session provided operated between the hours of 09:20 am and 12:50 pm Monday to Friday.

Staffing

There are 2 staff attached to the service that includes the registered provider. Both adults work directly with the children 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 unannounced and focused on the area of governance/ health, welfare and development of child/ safety/ premises and facilities. The inspections 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-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 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.*

(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 registered provider had a designated person in charge and the registered provider is the named deputy.
(b) When the unannounced inspection commenced, both adults were on the premises to facilitate the inspection process. At all times during the period when the Pre-school service is being carried on, the registered provider and the deputy in charge are on the premises.
- (2)
The registered provider confirmed to the inspector that 2 adults were employed in the service.
The recruitment records in respect of these 2 adults were the subject of the inspection.
(a)
Three written references and validations were on file from a past employer.
(b)
One written reference and validation was on file from a source other than a past employer.
(c)
Garda vetting was on file for each of the 2 adults.
The service had demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
(d)
Not applicable, the adults did not reside outside of the jurisdiction for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months.
(4) The adults working directly with the children had attained Quality Qualifications Ireland (QQI) in childcare training at Level 5 and above. The qualification certifications were on file.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.

Compliance Information

For the purposes of the inspection the policy on Healthy Eating was inspected.
The policy specified the way the service ensured that the food and drink provided to the children attending the service is nutritious and complies with the dietary requirements of the child.

The policy met with the requirement of Regulation 10.

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.*
- (8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-*
- (c) a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that, where the person in charge operates the service single-handedly, a second person familiar with the operation of the service and in a position to provide assistance to the person in charge in operating the service is, at all times, within close distance of the service and available to attend the service to assist the person in charge in the event of an emergency.*

Compliance Information

(1)

Throughout the period of inspection, the registered provider did ensure that there was an adequate number of adults caring for the children attending the service.

(3)

There were 2 adults caring for 11 children aged between 3 years to 5 years attending the service on a sessional basis. The adult child ratio was correct and maintained.

(8)(c) Not applicable as the service does not operate single-handedly.

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 children independently used the downstairs toilet, the staff provided assistance in a discreet and timely manner to children who required it.
- Care was given by the staff to tie the aprons the children used for painting activities observed during inspection.
- The children were encouraged and supported to manage their own personal care appropriate to their individual level of independence. This was evidenced for example when children were putting on their shoes, taking off the aprons used for painting and hanging them on the rail provided after washing their hands, when washing their hands prior to the mealtime and after using the toilet.
- Children were encouraged and supported to develop self-help skills for example by the provision of individual cubbies in the hallway area, facilitating access and independence as was evidenced at the snack time when children got their individual bags and brought them to the table.
- There was a helper system used to distribute the children's perishable food from the fridge in the playroom. The lunches were distributed in an unhurried manner, under the guidance and encouragement of the staff.
- Each of the children had enough time to eat and enjoy their food without being rushed in any way.
- The atmosphere at the mealtime was relaxed. The staff sat with the children, conversations ensued between the staff and the children, each child was given the opportunity to speak of what they had in their individual lunch boxes.
- The children spoke about learning their numbers and about watering "Kevin" the indoor pot plant displayed in the room, the plant was provided by a parent of a child attending the service.
- Children who had finished eating before others played with the sand in the open sand box and some read books.

Supporting Relationships

- The children were observed to play individually, in pairs and in small and in the large group. The children supported each other in the play activities for example with the sand play and with painting and colouring.
- The children were observed to seek the support from the staff when required. The staff were observed to sit with the children on the low chairs and on the floor to maintain eye level contact with them.

Physical and Material Environment

- The children had use of 2 playrooms during the session.
- There was well established and resourced interest areas and open low-level shelving in the playrooms to promote independent access by the children to the materials and equipment.
- The children moved about freely in the playrooms.
- The service displayed children's own artwork for example polar bears, the friendship tree, "our village" displaying each child's home, the playground, the football pitch, the Doctor's surgery and a selection of the children's family photographs at eye level to the children.
- The outdoor play area consisted of one spacious enclosed area that was located to the rear of the building. There was a partial soft matting surface with playhouses, ride on toys, work benches with tools, rocking horses, play tunnel and a selection of small vehicles. The area was not used during the inspection.

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

- The children attending the service brought food for the morning snack, the food was supplied by the parents/guardians.
- On the day of the inspection the food observed included crackers, cheese portions, yogurts and a selection of fruit and vegetables. The children had water to drink.
- The inspector was informed that potable drinking water was available in the service to re-fill the children's drinks bottles as was needed.
- The staff had a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to ensuring that the children had adequate, suitable, varies and nutritious food in line with the policy on healthy eating.

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 external door was secured to prevent children from leaving the service unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised access.
- The outdoor area was secured with block walls and a secure gate to prevent children gaining unsupervised access to the roadway and to prevent unauthorised access into the area.
- The medication observed in the service was clearly labelled with the child's name, it was in the original packaging and it was stored out of the reach of the children in a high-level cupboard in one playroom.

Infection Control:

- Hand washing took place prior to the snack time and after using the toilet.
- There was a supply of warm water at the wash hand basin, liquid hand soap and disposable paper hand towels available in the downstairs children's sanitary accommodation to facilitate effective hand washing to prevent the spread of infection.
- The tables were cleaned down prior to and after the morning snack and after painting activities.

Fire Safety:

- The staff had a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities to carry out fire drills in the setting each month. The staff explained the steps in conducting a fire drill and the inspector was furnished with photographs of a recent fire drill conducted in the service.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. There was a number of gaps present between the square matting in the outdoor play area posing of injury to children.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

Some of the worn matting in the outdoor area has been replaced with new outdoor mats. Some areas have been re-fitted where the gaps were, to minimise the risk of falling. The steps taken have improved the health and safety of the outdoor area. The new outdoor mats have lessened the possibility of gaps forming in the future as

they are more compacted. As a precaution, the outdoor area will be checked each morning to ensure the matting has not moved. A supply of sand will be available to place between any gaps in the matting as a backup measure.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Photographs of the repaired and section of new matting.

Summary Comment

The requirement has been met.

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.

Compliance Information

(1) The 2 staff had in date First Aid Responder (FAR) training, the certifications were furnished to the inspector.

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 service had maintained in writing a record of the following: -

- (a) A template to record each fire drill that had taken place in the service. The last recorded fire drill took place on 08.05.'25.
- (b) A record of the number, type, and maintenance checks of the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarm. The records on file demonstrated the last check for the smoke alarm was 20.01.'25 and for the firefighting equipment was 15/01/'25.

(4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire was displayed in the service.