

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LH066
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Name of Service:	Naíonra Oiriall
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Address of Service:	10 The Forge, Dunleer, Co. Louth
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Eircode:	A92 Y9V3
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Name of Registered Provider:	Aoife Monaghan
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	02/12/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	8	PM	0
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate 180-189 Lakeshore Drive Airside Business Park Swords, Co Dublin
Inspection undertaken by:	M. McDonnell
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 Oiriail is a privately owned sessional service based in the registered provider's own home in Co. Louth. The service is registered to provide care to children aged 2-6 years old. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme and provides learning through the Irish language. The service is located on the ground floor of the home and there are sanitary facilities available for children. An outdoor area is located to the rear of the service and is directly accessible from the care room.

Staffing

The registered provider works solely with the children. There is an emergency contact person available in the vicinity of 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 and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under Regulation 9 Management & Recruitment, Regulation 11 Staffing Levels, Regulation 16 Records in relation to a Preschool service, Regulation 19 Health, Welfare & Development of Child, Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child, Regulation 27 Supervision and Regulation 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.

Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider 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 was the designated person in charge of the service, and a there was an emergency contact available.

(b) Following discussion with the registered provider it was confirmed that when the preschool service was in operation the designated person in charge was on the premises.

(2) The files of the registered provider and the emergency contact person were reviewed on inspection.

(a)(b) There were two references available for the registered provider and there were two written and validated references available for the emergency contact.

(c) A Garda vetting disclosure was available for the emergency contact person and the registered provider. However, the service did not demonstrate compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice

requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years following a review of previous employment in the service. This is examined in Regulation 23.

(d) A review of the documentation concerning employment history demonstrated that international police vetting was not required for the registered provider or the emergency contact.

(4) Documentary evidence was available to confirm that the registered provider held an appropriate childcare qualification at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications. The registered provider stated the emergency contact was available to provide support in an emergency and does not work directly with the children.

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) On the day of inspection there was an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.

(3) On the inspector's arrival, the adult child ratio was observed to be correct and remained so throughout the inspection. The registered provider provided care to eight children aged 3 to 4 years old.

(8)(c) The registered provider, who operates the service single-handedly, had details of an emergency contact who was near the service.

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

- (a) A review of documents in the service demonstrated that there was information regarding the details of the registered provider and the emergency contact.
- (b) –(f) Documents available in the service provided details of the age profile, ratios, type of care, facilities, opening hours of the service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services.
- (g) The policies, procedures and statements that the service is required to maintain in accordance with Regulation 10 were available.
- (h) The inspector observed that the attendance records, were reflective of the children in attendance. The preventive action was in place following the last inspection as all attendances were marked with children’s arrival and departure times.
- (i) Details available demonstrated that the registered provider provided daily care to the children.

(j) The registered provider advised that medication had not been administered in the service.

(k) A record in writing was available to record accidents and incidents within the service. The registered provider advised that there had been no incidents or accidents.

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

(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

Supporting relationships around children

On the inspector's arrival to the service, the children were integrating into their local community as they were on an outing to post their Santa letters. The registered provider had two parents to support them in this outing, and the children were observed enjoying the local playground prior to posting their letters. The children played on the various equipment with their peers and both the registered provider and the two parents were observed checking and interacting with all the children. On the walk to the post office the children chatted happily with the registered provider and parents and there was great excitement within the group as they carried their letters to the post office. The children were given a warm welcome in the post office and it was evident the children had enjoyed the experience. On the children's return to the service, they were given a choice of free play prior to practicing songs in Irish for their upcoming Christmas show. During tabletop activity, children were also supported in participating when they were ready. The activities observed on the day of inspection were reflective of the planning available and the monthly newsletter issued to parents.

Basic Needs

Children were able to use the sanitary facilities on an independent basis. Children's water was readily available to them and children took turns to get their own lunches and bags.

Physical and material environment

Large play equipment with supportive toys was easily available. Smaller equipment was easily accessible to the children in plastic containers stored at a low level. Children were observed taking out materials and toys on their own and playing with their peers. For example, a small group played with magnetic blocks, with other children playing with the shop and kitchen areas.

The children had access to an outdoor area at the rear of the service. There was a paved area alongside a raised grass area. There was a play structure available for play. There were also balls, and ride on toys available for the children.

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 service had a secure entrance to the service with a doorbell system and key locks in place. This prevented any unauthorised access to the service and exit from the service by children.
- The preventive action in relation to a free-standing television was maintained as it was secured to prevent injury to a child.
- The route through the service was clear to support safe evacuation.
- Hazardous liquids were not stored in low level units that were accessible to children.

Infection Control:

- Children were observed to wash their hands on their return from the outing.
- Hand soap, paper towels and warm water was available to the children.
- Children were observed to wipe their noses and wash their hands.
- A system was in place for the storage of perishable items, which children brought from home, to be stored in the fridge.

Outing:

- The inspector observed children's play in a local playground, their walk to the local post office and their return to the service. Throughout this time the registered provider completed head counts and worked with the parent helpers to support all the children on the walk. The children and staff members wore high visibility vests. Children were reminded of the rules, and a zebra crossing was used to support safety.
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Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. The service did not demonstrate compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. Following a review of employment in the service one updated vetting disclosure was required.
2. There was no restricted access to the kitchen area to prevent an injury to a child. The kitchen area was accessible to the children and on the day of inspection a warm kettle was within reach of children in this area.

Infection Control:

3. Children's play equipment was stored in the sanitary facilities creating a risk of cross contamination. The registered provider confirmed that puzzles and equipment, used by the children during the inspection, were from the sanitary facility storage area.

Outing:

4. The registered provider did not follow their own outings policy to minimise the risks to children. Whilst the registered provider discussed the risks on the outing completed, there was no written risk assessment available for this outing. There was also no written parental consent for the outing. Both were requirements of the service's outings policy.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The registered provider has stated that the Garda Vetting is in process, and the emergency contact person has been amended.
2. The registered provider stated that the kettle has been moved further back and that the kitchen entrance has been blocked.

Infection Control:

3. The registered provider stated that doors are to be fitted to the area, and this has been scheduled. In the meantime, there is a note to not use the items and the children's preferred items have been moved and are no longer in this area.

Outing:

- A written risk assessment for the trip was provided which included obtaining parental consent. This is placed in a prominent position in the service.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Photograph of the kitchen area blocked and kettle moved back.

Infection Control:

Photograph of note over equipment not in use.

Outing:

Photograph of risk assessment

Summary Comment

The actions and evidence submitted by the registered provider, in their corrective and preventive action plan, have addressed the non-compliance in relation to the kitchen area and the outings. The registered provider is awaiting updated Garda Vetting and is waiting for work on the storage area to be completed. As these are outstanding actions Regulation 23 remains non-compliant.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.

Compliance Information

Appropriate supervision was observed during the children’s outing to their local area. The registered provider enlisted the support of two parent helpers to support supervision of the eight children on the outing. Throughout the period the children were on the outing, parents and the registered provider were observed interacting with the children positively and providing gentle reminders on safe play and conduct. Whilst walking the registered provider took appropriate stops to ensure all children were in a group and that all children were accounted for. Adults positioned themselves throughout the small group of children to be able to supervise one or two children at a time.

Once back at the service the registered provider was observed supervising the children by sight and sound. The children stayed mainly in the interconnected living/dining area. If children went to the hall to get bags or equipment the registered provider was aware of where children were.

As the children had completed an outdoor activity, they chose to play indoors. However, one child wanted to access the outdoor area for a short period of time. The registered provider was able to maintain effective supervision of this child whilst the other children played indoors. The outdoor area was visible from 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 registered provider provided evidence that the service was adequately insured. The policy showed that the service was insured from 26 March 2025 to 27 March 2026.