

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015MN001
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Name of Service:	Aghabog Early Years
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Address of Service:	Carn Resource Centre, Latnamard, Smithborough, Co. Monaghan
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Eircode:	H18 YW40
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Name of Registered Provider:	Caoimhe Norris
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	28/03/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	15	PM	7
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	No.18 The Grange Plantation Walk Monaghan
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Inspection undertaken by:	S. Skinnader
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Title:	Early Years Inspector
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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

Aghabog Early Years has been operating as a community-based childcare service since 1999. The service provides a full day care service to pre-school children aged 2 – 6 years. The service operates from 08:00 – 18:00hrs each weekday and caters for a maximum of 30 pre-school children.

The service is conducted from a room in the local resource centre in the rural area of Aghabog Co. Monaghan. The service currently has 1 care room, sanitary facilities and a kitchen area. The children have access to an outdoor area to the rear of the premises.

Staffing

There are 7 staff employed in the service. Five members of staff work directly with the preschool children, 1 is employed as the cook and 1 as caretaker who also works with the school age children.

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.

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 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*

(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) The service had a designated person in charge and a system in place to designate a named deputy person to deputise as required. The person in charge was on the premises when the inspector arrived unannounced to the service.

There were 7 staff files reviewed at inspection.

(2)(a) & (b)

- There were 2 written and validated references from a past employer or an alternative source available for 5 members of staff.
- One staff member had 1 written and validated reference.
- One staff had a second written reference.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all 7 staff members and the service adhered to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Not applicable as following a review of the staff files presented on the day of inspection, international police vetting was not required for any of the staff members as they had not resided outside the Irish jurisdiction for a period of greater than 6 months as an adult.

(4) Four of the 5 staff who worked directly with the children had a childcare qualification at a minimum Level 5.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a) and (b)

- One staff member required a second written reference.
- One staff member required their second reference to be validated.

(4) One staff member who worked directly with the preschool children did not have documentary evidence of having a minimum Level 5 childcare qualification.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(a) and (b) A second reference received from the staff member and both staff members references are validated. Staff references to be kept updated and need to provide 2 when starting employment.

(4) Staff member has provided proof of qualifications.

New staff cannot start working with children until they provide all proof of qualification.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copies of validated references and qualification.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the registered provider's response and supporting documentation. The non-compliances have been addressed.

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) During the inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service in the Preschool Room.

(2) When the inspector arrived unannounced to the service there was 1 room in operation the Preschool Room. The following adult: child ratios were observed:

- Three staff in the preschool room with 15 children aged 3 - 5 years.

(8) On review of documentation the registered provider ensured that there are at least 2 adults on the premises at all times.

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,

Compliance Information

There was one care room in operation on the day of the inspection - the Preschool Room.

(1)(a) The following examples demonstrate how the registered provider ensured that children's learning, development, and well-being was facilitated in the service:

Basic Needs:

- All children were toilet trained and were encouraged to be independent with toileting. Discreet supervision was also provided by staff as required.
- The children had free movement in the care room and also had a change of environment to the outside area and played games in the large community hall in the building.
- The children were dressed appropriately to go outside.
- Morning and afternoon lunches were brought in by the children and stored appropriately in the room fridge. Dinners were provided by the service cook for those staying on a part-time full day care basis and on the day of inspection consisted of fish fingers, waffles and beans. Extra dinners were available for any child who requested more. Drinks were freely available.

Supporting relationships:

- There was a key worker system in operation.
- Communication between the parents and staff was informal at drop off and pick-up. The staff also confirmed that an electronic application (app) was used to communicate and to share information with parents. Emails and a phone messaging app were also reported in use.
- The staff members in the service were observed to interact with the children in a warm and supportive manner. Soft tones, positive and respectful language were observed in interactions between the children.

Staff were observed interacting with the children at their level to help prevent the escalation of any minor issues. for example when 2 children wanted to be "Mr.Wolf" in a game.

- Transitions between activities were smooth and the lights were switched on and off quickly in the big hall to get the children's attention.

Physical and Material Environment

- A variety of age-appropriate toys and equipment were available in the care room on low level shelving which promoted independence and facilitated choice for the children.
- There were resourced defined interest areas such as the home corner, role play area, a construction/work bench area, doctors kit, large wooden dolls house, books and push and pull toys.
- The covered area outside the back door of the room contained the messy area with sand, water trays, art supplies and painting easel.

Programme Of Activities.

- A weekly plan dated 24/3/25 was on display on the wall and artwork on display corresponded with Mother Day Themes with cards, love heart chalk art.
- Evidence of daily, long and short-term planning were on display outside and the "voice of the child" and "interests" were also recorded. Scrapbooks were available for each child as the year progressed containing observations and samples of artwork, so that parents could see some of the activities that the children engaged in during their day.

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-

(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.

Compliance Information

(1)(a) There was a plastic covered sofa with cushions in the care room reading area. There were also some plastic covered cushions and 2 cushioned seats in the room for the children to relax on or take a rest from activities if they so wished.

(3)(a) There was an outdoor area directly outside the door of the service with a number of different sections. Directly outside the care room was a covered area with wooden sides. It had a tarmacked surface and contained messy play items such as the trays for water/ sand play and painting easels. Ride on toys were also stored here. Directly outside this area was a large, tarmacked area which was fully gated and fenced and contained picnic benches.

A third enclosed area contained a large wooden play frame with swings and slide. This had a safety surface and areas with rubber matting at the end of the slide and under the swing. There was a shed for toy storage, picnic bench and some water shoots. The safety surface had a road marked out on it where the children could ride the toys.

A 4th section located behind area 3 was a grass play area which contained, tyres for balancing, planting boxes, a seating area on a bark surface, a grass covered mound with tunnel and a concrete pathway.

Off the safety surface area 3 there were large wooden houses with blackboard walls and a kitchen area and a wooden shed with rubber crumb toys and toy digging equipment.

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.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. There were sharp unprotected corners on the tables in the large hall and on the white and brown shelving units in the care room. These are a potential injury hazard.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

Corner guards have been attached to all corners of units and tables.

Extra corner guards have been purchased and if any are removed or fall off the can be replaced immediately.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Photographic evidence.

Summary Comment

The registered provider's response is accepted. The non-compliance has been addressed.

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

The children were always supervised by 2/3 staff members while in the large community hall. Any children who climbed on the chairs or ran and slid across the floor were reminded to be careful and to keep away from the stacked chairs.

In the outdoor are children were supervised by sight at all times. One child who was heading towards the swings on a ride on toy was directed away from the swings by a staff member so as “not to get hit by a swing”.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

A certificate of insurance was available stating insurance was available for up to 30 preschool children and was dated to the 27/3/26.