

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015MN030
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Name of Service:	Inis Óg Childcare Ltd
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Address of Service:	The Glebe, Inniskeen, Co. Monaghan
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Eircode:	A91 XT51
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Name of Registered Provider:	Fiona Mc Ardle
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	03/04/2024
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Date 2 of Inspection:	04/04/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	67	PM	44
Day 2	AM	71	PM	No.

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate Child Wellbeing Centre, Castleblayney Co. Monaghan
Inspection undertaken by:	M. Flood & S. Skinnader
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	Not Applicable
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Description of service

Inis Óg Childcare Ltd is a privately run childcare service that has been in operation since 2013. The service provides sessional, part-time, and full day care to pre-school children from 0 – 6 years of age. The service operates from 07:30hrs to 18:15hrs each weekday and is registered to cater for a maximum of 130 preschool children.

The service is in a purpose-built building in the village of Inniskeen, Co. Monaghan. There is off road parking for drop offs and pick-ups outside the premises.

There are 6 care rooms in operation, namely The Woddler Room, Toddler Rooms 1 & 2 and Pre-school Rooms 1, 2, 3 & 4. The service has an outdoor play area which extends the length of the building at the rear and side of the premises. Ancillary accommodation consists of 3 separate sleep rooms, office space, storage areas, and kitchen and staff areas.

Staffing

There were thirty-eight staff working in the service. Thirty-two staff were employed to work directly with the preschool children which included the registered provider and the designated person in charge. Five additional staff were employed for; administrative, catering and maintenance duties and a contracted music teacher who attends the service on a regular basis. One student was also present in the service on a course placement.

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. As a result, the scope of the inspection included The Woddler Room, Toddler Rooms 1 & 2 and Preschool Room 1.

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 person in charge, staff and children who were present on the days 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 can 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,

(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 named deputy person to deputise as required. Both were on the premises when the inspectors arrived on the premises and were present throughout the inspection.

(2) Thirty-eight staff files were reviewed which included the registered provider, 31 childcare staff, 1 contracted music teacher who attends the service on a regular basis and 4 ancillary staff engaged in administration, cleaning, catering and maintenance duties. One student was also present in the service on a work placement:

(a)& (b) There were 2 written references available for 37 members of staff and 1 student. With the exception detailed in the non-compliance section below, the remaining written references were all validated.

(c) Documentary evidence of a processed Garda vetting disclosure was available for each member of staff and student in the service including the registered provider. However, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. Please refer to the information outlined under regulation 23 of this report.

(d) International police vetting was available for the 6 out of 7 members of staff who had resided outside the Irish jurisdiction for a period of 6 months or more as an adult.

(4) Documentary evidence was available to confirm that all staff who work directly with the preschool children held at least the minimum required level 5 childcare qualification on the National Framework of Childcare Qualifications or a qualification deemed equivalent.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a) &(b) The following non-compliances were recorded in respect of references:

- One staff member did not have one written reference validated.
- One student did not have 2 written references validated.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(a) &(b)

References have been validated for both staff member and student.

Management will ensure all references are correctly validated prior to commencement of work.

Supporting documentation submitted

Written confirmation that all references have been validated

Summary Comment

The registered provider submitted details of the corrective and preventative actions taken in the service to address the non-compliances. Based on this information the non-compliances under Regulation 9 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 always 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 preschool children attending the service.

(2) On the days of inspection there were 5 preschool rooms in operation namely the Woddler Room, Toddler Rooms 1 & 2 and Preschool Rooms 1 and 3. Preschool Room 2 was in operation for the children attending the school aged service and Preschool Room 4 was used as a sleep room for the children attending Toddler Room 2. The following adult to child ratios were observed when the Inspectors arrived unannounced to the service.

On day 1 of Inspection 03/04/2024

- **The Woddler Room:**

There were 10 preschool children aged 1-2 years with 4 members of staff.

- **Toddler Room 1:**

There were 18 preschool children aged 2-3 years with 3 members of staff.

- **Toddler Room 2:**

There were 6 preschool children aged 2 years – 2 years and 5 months with 2 members of staff.

- **Preschool Room 1**

There were 17 preschool children aged 3 - 5 years with 3 members of staff.

- **Preschool Room 3**

There were 16 children aged 4 - 5 years with 4 members of staff. One student who was supernumerary was also present.

On day 2 of Inspection 04/04/2024 the following adult:child ratios were observed:

- **The Woddler Room:**
There were 14 preschool children aged 1-2 years with 4 members of staff.
- **Toddler Room 1:**
There were 17 preschool children aged 2-3 years with 4 members of staff.
- **Toddler Room 2:**
There were 7 preschool children aged 2 years - 2 years and 5 months with 2 members of staff.
- **Preschool Room 1**
There were 17 preschool children aged 3 - 5 years with 3 members of staff.
- **Preschool Room 3**
There were 16 children aged 4 - 5 years with 4 members of staff. One student who was supernumerary was also present.

(8)(a) Following a review of the available documentation e.g., staff rotas and children's attendance records the information demonstrated that the registered provider ensured that there were at least 2 adults on the premises at all times.

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:

- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.

Compliance Information

The following records were reviewed and included:

(h) Documentary evidence was available of the daily attendance of each child in the service and included the arrival and departure times of each child. All information was recorded on a tablet-based recording system.

(i) Up to date daily/ weekly staff rosters were available in the service and were reflective of the staff present in the service.

(k) Details of all accidents and incidents that occurred in the service were completed electronically on the tablet-based communication system that connects information sharing between parents and the childcare staff. When discussed all staff were familiar with the process and the information reviewed was complete.

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

There were 5 rooms in operation on the day of the inspection for the children attending the early years' service namely, The Woddler Room, Toddler Rooms 1 & 2 and Preschool Rooms 1 & 3. Preschool Room 4 was used as a sleep area for the children attending Toddler Room 1 and Preschool Room 2 was being used for children attending the school aged service.

(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:

- Healthy eating was promoted in the service as was evident by the dinner and snacks provided by the resident catering staff in the service. Food and snacks were provided at regular intervals throughout the day. Breakfast plus the morning and afternoon snacks consisted of a selection of fresh fruit and yoghurts. Dinner provided on the 1st day of inspection was observed to consist of chicken curry with vegetables and rice and on the 2nd day was observed to consist of beef stew with potatoes and vegetables. The evening tea consisted of cheese bagels on the 1st day and potato wedges and beans on the 2nd day. Additional portions were provided if the children requested. Staff assisted the children as necessary with their dinner

in the Waddler and Toddler Rooms and independence with feeding was promoted where appropriate in the other care rooms.

- Potable drinking water was available for the children to access as required in all rooms.
- Nappies were changed regularly and in a timely manner with pleasant interactions observed between children and staff. Attention was given to personal care in the Toddler Room 2 with faces and hands cleaned after lunch and snacks and bibs used. The children were also encouraged to be independent in carrying their bowels and cup over to the sink after use.
- The children who were toilet trained were encouraged to be independent with toileting. Discreet supervision was also provided by staff as required. Gentle handwashing reminders were also given to the children after toileting.
- All children from the care rooms had a change of environment to the outdoor play area and were dressed appropriately for going outside. The older children rotated between the various outdoor sections and interest areas.
- Individual child-led sleep needs were facilitated in the service as the staff followed the children's routines and were generally observed to follow the children cues of tiredness. A sheet indicating the children's sleep preferences was on display in Toddler Room 2.

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)(b)

- A suitable comfortable rest area was available in each of the care rooms, with soft mats and cushions.
- A number of individual day beds suitable for children aged over 2 years were available.

- Three separate sleep rooms were available in the service:

Sleep Room 1 is located off the Woddler Room and contained 5 standard cots. Sleep Room 2 was located off Toddler Room 2 and contained 6 standard cots. Sleep room 3 was located off the hallway and contained 5 standard cots. All cots were suitable for children under 2 years of age.

(3)(a) A large spacious outdoor area was available on the premises and is subdivided into a variety of areas of interest:

Area 1: was an enclosed area off the Waddler Room. This area had an artificial grass surface and had a variety of toys and equipment available including a low-level slide, 5 rockers, an age-appropriate basketball hoop. Additional toys were also rotated from the inside playroom.

Area 2: was an enclosed area directly off Preschool Room 2 and is called “The big yard”. This area was accessed by all the children attending the service on a rotational basis. The surfaces included concrete paths and artificial grass. A variety of play equipment was available in the area including a climbing frame, ride on pieces such as trikes, bikes and balance bikes, and a log cabin that contained additional equipment such as a kitchen with supporting toys, soft mats, hoops, balls, hoppers, and soft mats.

Area 3: had an artificial grass surface and was used for playing football with footballs and goal posts available.

Area 4: directly outside Preschool Room 4 and was called the “Secret Garden”. This area had a variety of surfaces including a concrete area that contained large water trays and tyres, a loose stone area with rough surface and trees with wind chimes, planted boots and several painted wheel braces. A secured basketball hoop was also present.

Area 5: was identified as “the construction area”. The area contained loose stones and gravel for construction and messy play, which was resourced with toys, large blocks, wooden tree stump’s for stepping or sitting on and a mud kitchen with real world equipment.

Area 6: was called the Tunnel area and contained artificial grass raised areas for rolling and tunnels for climbing through. This area was not in use on the day of the inspection as it was reported to be ‘waterlogged’.

The variety of play equipment and experiences available promoted many areas of development and the children were observed to happily engage in games and play.

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

It was observed that the registered provider has taken the following measures to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of the pre-school children attending the service including:

General Safety:

- The external doors were appropriately secured to prevent children from exiting the service unsupervised.
- All emergency exits were clear and unobstructed.
- The staff were observed to accompany the children to the front door at collection time.
- Documentary evidence of daily risk assessments was evident in the service.
- Cleaning equipment was stored out of reach of the children.
- The kitchen area was inaccessible to the preschool children.
- All blind cords in the service were restricted or inaccessible to the children.
- Protective covers were observed on the radiators in the service.

Infection Control:

- There was a constant supply of thermostatically controlled warm water, liquid soap and single use paper towels in the service to support hand washing. Effective hand washing practices were observed during the inspection e.g. after toileting and nappy changing, after outdoor play and prior to mealtimes.
- Good environmental cleaning practices were observed during the inspection, with tables being wiped down prior to lunch, snack times and after activities. Fridges in the rooms were in a clean and hygienic condition. Sleep beds were observed being washed down after sleep in Preschool Room 4.
- Pedal operated waste bins were observed in use and were appropriately maintained on the day of the inspection.
- The service has a procedure in place for the appropriate storage of soothers. Staff were familiar with the process and detailed that all soothers are stored in individual, labelled containers.
- Mouthed toy boxes were available in the care rooms and were observed in use for the removal of toys used by the children.
- In the Toddler Room 2, disposable cotton pads were used for cleaning faces and hands.

Safe Sleep:

- The staff were observed to carry out safe sleep practices in accordance with the services safe sleep policy. Documentary evidence was available of the observations made during each 10-minute physical sleep check and documented appropriately. A staff member was observed to remain in each sleep room to monitor the children as the slept and in accordance with best practice guidelines.

Non-Compliance Information

The Inspectorate is not assured that adequate steps have been taken to ensure the health, safety and welfare of the pre-school children attending the service based on the following observations made during the inspection:

General Safety:

- Garda vetting was available for 38 staff members including the registered provider and 1 student. However, 14 of these vetting disclosures was not dated within the previous three years in adherence to with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.
- In the construction section of the outdoor play area, a number of areas had 'underlay' exposed which is a potential trip hazard.
- The nappy changing unit in Toddler Room 2 was not suitable for use as it stated it was only suitable for children up to 12 months. This is a safety hazard.

Infection Control:

- The nappy changing mat observed in use in Toddler Room 1 was unsuitable for use as it was cracked and torn and had foam exposed. This does not allow for effective cleaning practices and is therefore an infection control risk.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

- Updated renewals of Garda Vetting have been carried out on the 14 staff members who had just recently expired.
Management now has a new file system in place to keep track of all Garda Vetting to ensure they are renewed every 3 years.
- New underlay has been laid and made secure. All trip hazards have been resolved.
Staff have been reminded of the importance of carrying out their outdoor risk assessments and report any potential risks immediately to management at the May staff meeting.

- A new nappy changing unit has been ordered for the Toddler 2 room that meets the age requirement within that room.

All new equipment will be checked to ensure they comply with the regulations and meet the requirements of the age that is within the room.

Infection Control:

- The changing mat has been replaced.

Staff have been reminded of the importance of carrying out their sanitary risk assessments and report any issues to management at the May staff meeting.

Supporting documentation submitted

- Documentary evidence of renewed Garda vetting disclosures for 14 staff members.
- Photographic evidence of new changing mat and receipt of purchase of nappy changing unit.
- Photographic evidence of outdoor construction area.

Summary Comment

The registered provider submitted details of the corrective and preventative actions taken in the service to address the non-compliances. Based on this information the non-compliances under Regulation 23 have been addressed.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-

- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

Non-Compliance Information

- In the sleep room off the hallway, a section of the wall had large brown stains and the plaster was cracked in places and had 'bubbles' evident. A cot was located next to this area.
- One of the sinks in the Woddler Room sanitary area was partially blocked. The water was observed collecting in the sink and was very slow to drain.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. The wall has been repaired by being sanded down and painted.

Management have contacted the builder who will investigate the cause and resurface the wall when the service is closed in the summer holidays. This poses no safety concern to the children.

2. The sink has been unclogged and the water is now draining correctly.

Sinks will now be checked daily as part of room risk assessment to ensure free flowing drainage.

Supporting documentation submitted

- Photographic evidence

Summary Comment

The registered provider submitted details of the corrective and preventative actions taken in the service to address the non-compliances. Based on this information the non-compliances under Regulation 29 have been addressed.