

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015MN051
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Teach na bPaisti
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Teach na Daoine Family Resource Centre, 1 Oriel Way, Mullaghamatt, Monaghan, Co. Monaghan
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<b>Eircode:</b>	H18 D218
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Malachy Toal
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<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	26/06/2025
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	32	PM	16
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate, Hampton Court, Cootehill Road, Drumalee, Co Cavan. H12 YY84
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<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	S Mc Kenna and S Taaffe
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<b>Title:</b>	Early Years Inspectors
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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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not Applicable
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### Description of service

Teach na bPaisti is a community run non-profit service commenced in 2003, operating within the family resource centre in Monaghan town. The service is registered to cater for a maximum of 78 children aged 1 to 6 years, and provides full day care, part-time and sessional services. The service operates 47 weeks per year from 8:15am – 6pm Monday to Friday and participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme from 9am to 12 midday.

The service operates a total of 5 care rooms, one of which is used for the sole use of school aged children. The four rooms are named; Waddler/Toddler, Preschool 1, Preschool 2 and Preschool 3.

There are office areas, a kitchen area, sanitary accommodation and one sleep area located within the service. Designated outdoor areas are located off each care room, with two additional larger areas available for children's use. The service provides care for school aged children. Car parking is available to the side and front of the premises.

### Staffing

There are 30 staff employed in the service including the person in charge. There are 21 staff employed to work directly with preschool children which includes 4 staff on employment schemes, and three staff who are currently on long term statutory leave.

An additional 5 staff are employed on employment schemes and work as a school aged staff member, three cleaners and a kitchen assistant. Two staff are employed to work in the office, and two staff are employed to work in the kitchen. The registered provider does not work 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 and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

On the day of inspection, the service had five rooms in operation, two of which had school aged children only in attendance. This inspection did not include these two care rooms.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulation 19 Health, Welfare & Development of Child and Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child in the Waddler/Toddler room, Preschool 2 room and Preschool 3 room.

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 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
- (c) there is a clear management structure in the service that identifies the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and unpaid worker.

(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 service had a designated person in charge who was the service manager and two named persons in charge to deputise in their absence.

(b) Following discussion with the person in charge, it was confirmed that when the preschool service was in operation the designated person in charge or the named deputy persons in charge were on the premises.

(c) A management structure was in place, which was clearly identifiable through a staff display board, review of the staff roster and discussion with the staff team.

(2) The staff files for 30 staff were reviewed.

(a) A total of 33 written and validated references from a previous employer were on file.

- (b) A total of 27 written and validated references from a reputable source were on file.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for 30 staff. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years for all employed staff.
- (d) A review of the employment history for the 30 staff demonstrated that 19 staff had lived outside the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months. The required police vetting for the 19 staff was available on file.
- (4) Documentary evidence was available to confirm that 19 staff employed to work with children, held an appropriate childcare qualification at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications, or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent. A qualification for 11 staff was not required as 1 staff worked with school aged children only, 2 office-based staff, 3 cleaners, 2 kitchen-based staff and 3 staff were employed in a supervised training capacity on employment schemes.

### 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) On the day of inspection there was an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.
- (2) The adult to child ratios were correct in the service when the inspectors arrived unannounced and remained so throughout the inspection. The following adult to child ratios were observed;
- Four adults cared for 10 children aged 1 years 10 months to 3 years in the Waddler/Toddler room who attended on a part time basis. In the afternoon two adults cared for 6 children aged 3 years and over.

Three adults cared for 12 children aged 3 years 8 months to 4 years 11 months in Preschool 2. In the afternoon three adults cared for 10 children aged 3 years and over.

Three adults cared for 10 children aged 3 years 1 months to 5 years in Preschool 3. This room was closed in the afternoon.

In addition to the above, the service manager was available to cover in the care rooms if needed.

(8) A discussion with the person in charge, and review of the staff rosters demonstrated that there are at least 2 adults on the premises while the full day care service is in operation.

### 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

The care rooms providing care to preschool children on the day of inspection and reviewed in line with Regulation 19 (1) (a) and (b) were the Waddler/Toddler, Preschool 2 and Preschool 3 care rooms.

#### Basic Needs

The children's appearances and care needs were provided for with bibs at meal times for younger children, aprons for messy play, sun cream and sunhats for outdoor play in sunny weather and storage of spare clothing if required. Older children were encouraged to be independent while using the toilets. The toilets are located off a hallway outside of the care rooms, where adults were observed to supervise the children at all times while in this area. The younger children had their nappies changed in line with their routine in the designated nappy changing areas.

The children that availed of a sleep on the day of inspection were placed to sleep in the sleep room after dinner time. Rest areas of benches with padded cushioning was provided in the care rooms for children to rest if needed. All the care rooms availed of outdoor play at various times during the inspection. The children were observed to play in designated outdoor areas or to go on a walk on a section of the local greenway. The doors between the

indoor and outdoor areas were observed to be left open to facilitate free flow play for children who may not have wanted to play outside.

### **Supporting Relationships**

The atmosphere in all the care rooms was welcoming with warm tones and interactions observed between staff and children. The children displayed a sense of familiarity with the staff who cared for them. Staff advised the inspectors that opportunities for siblings to play together occurs on occasions in the late afternoon in the outdoor play areas.

The staff were observed to promote positive behaviour and interactions and give praise where children had offered to help others with tasks. No disagreements were observed between the children. The staff were observed to engage positively with children down at their level during play and meal times.

The staff and management were observed to demonstrate sensitivity, warmth and positive regard for children and their families, through respecting parental wishes while also taking into consideration the children's individual choices.

Communication with parents/carers is in person at arrival and collection times. Staff were observed to engage with parents/carers upon collection time on the day of inspection.

Strong team work was evident within the care rooms, the staff communicated clearly with each other ensuring transitions were smooth. The staff team advised the inspectors that there is an open-door policy in place between staff and management, and they are supported in their role and provided with adequate time to carry out tasks such as curriculum planning. Policy updates or changes are relayed to staff on a regular basis, and staff discussed the importance of these policies in practice to the inspectors on the day.

### **Physical And Material Environment**

The indoor care rooms were comfortable, pleasant and laid out to suit the needs of the children in attendance.

There were displays on the room walls to include the children's birthdays, family photos and children's art work.

There were clearly defined interest areas in the Waddler/Toddler Room and in the Preschool rooms to include; creative areas, small world toys, rest and book area, dress up clothing alongside well-resourced home corners, age-appropriate table top connecting, stacking and building toys as well as jigsaws were provided. Sensory play materials were available in the Waddler/Toddler Room and the Preschool rooms such as water play, sand play and tuff tray with lentils and pasta. Materials were freely available and accessible to children on low level shelves and boxes at children's level, nurturing independence to retrieve and self-care to return. The tables and chairs provided for the children use were suitable for their care needs. The youngest child in the Waddler/ Toddler Room who could not yet sit unsupported was placed in a highchair at mealtimes and the remaining children in this care

room sat on chairs with sides and splayed legs to support them to sit stably while push-along toys were provided to support the children’s gross motor development.

The children attending the Waddler/Toddler Room were observed engaging in sensorial play at the well-resourced sand table and engaging in active play including the use of ride-on toys in the hard surfaced outdoor play area off the care room during the inspection.

The children attending Preschool 2 room were observed using open-ended materials including large carpet tubes and playing at the water table outdoors and using sponges and cloths to clean surfaces in an enthusiastic and engaged manner during the inspection.

In the Preschool 3 room children were observed to enjoy outdoor play and were observed to play in the water tray, colouring pictures with highlighter markers, doing exercises on soft mats and building with large connecting toys.

There is outdoor play spaces located directly off each care room, materials and play resources available to the children included sand trays, water trays, tables and chairs, small world toys, construction toys, art materials and ride on toys. The staff were observed to take out resources from the care rooms to the outdoor area to enhance the children’s play opportunities while in the outdoors.

In addition to the above there are two large outdoor spaces, one of which had a ground surface of grass with tyres, trees, goal posts, sand tray, rocking toys and a wooden bench provided. The second outdoor area had a patio surface with planting area, chalkboards and ride on toys and footballs for children’s use.

### 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 service provides all meals to the children in attendance. A three-week menu is in place and is displayed weekly in the entrance hall.

Cereal is served up to 9:30am daily. On the day of inspection, a snack of fresh fruit was available at approx.

10:30am, with a hot meal of sausage stew, beans and a choice of pasta or mashed potato served between 12 -

12:30pm. Two afternoon snacks, the first of which was crackerbread cheese and fruits was served at 2:30pm, and a further snack of noodles was provided at 3:45pm for children in attendance.

The hot meals listed on the 3-week menus, while taking into consideration the age of children, provided for suitable, nutritious and a varied choice for the children. Meals were adjusted to suit the children's preferences where required.

The children's drink bottles were available and accessible in the care rooms throughout the day and were taken outside during outdoor play time and on walks.

The service cook advised the inspector that additional food items are available in the kitchen should a child have insufficient amounts for their age, and the time spent in the service on a particular day, or other options are provided where children may dislike a particular food. The children can also avail of food or drinks outside of scheduled meal times if their routine or needs require this.

### 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 registered provider ensured all reasonable measures were put in place to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of children attending such as:

- The premises were appropriately secured to prevent a child from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the premises. A keycode gate openable only by staff was at the entrance to the front outdoor play area, and the main door into the childcare service was accessible only by staff use of swipe cards.
- A visitor log was maintained, and the inspectors were requested to sign in and out upon arrival and departure.
- The outdoor play areas were observed to be secure and free from hazards.
- The children were observed to be appropriately supervised both indoors and in the outdoor play areas on the day of inspection.
- The play equipment and materials used by the children were observed to be maintained in good repair.
- Risk assessments were in place, with records available for review which were completed up to date.
- The kitchen is located away from the care rooms and was inaccessible to the children.

- Blind cords, where fitted, were adequately secured.
- Floor coverings were presented in good repair.
- Storage areas were observed to be inaccessible to children.
- Cleaning agents were stored out of reach of children.
- Fire exits were observed to remain free from obstruction throughout the inspection.

### Infection Control:

The inspectors observed the following infection control measures in practice within the service:

- Warm running water, hand soap, pedal operated bins and disposable paper towels were provided at each wash hand basin. Handwashing was observed before snack and meal times and following nappy and toilet times.
- Nappy changing procedures were carried out in line with the services policy.
- Sanitary areas were ventilated through openable windows and mechanical ventilation units.
- Tables were observed to be cleaned before and after snacks and meal times.
- Cleaning schedules were available for review and completed up to date. The service was maintained and presented in a clean and hygienic manner throughout.
- Toys and resources used by the children were well maintained and presented in a clean manner.
- The service implemented effective soother management procedures, with a portable steriliser available for use and all individually labelled soothers were stored in personalised containers when not in use. Mouthed toys were observed being segregated after use and the inspector was informed that these items were washed in warm soapy water on a daily basis.

### Safe Sleep:

- Children aged under 2 years attended the service on a part time basis, the inspectors were advised no child aged under 2 years currently sleeps during their time in the service. Foldable cots are in storage that can be set up if required in the designated sleep room located between Preschool 2 and Preschool 3.
- Stackable beds were provided for children aged over 2 years.
- Individual bed linen was provided for each child and laundered at least weekly in the service.
- Sleep records were available for review which detailed each sleeping child's breathing pattern, skin colour and sleep position at 10-minute intervals.
- A temperature log was maintained of the sleep room with temperatures recorded within the safe sleep temperature for children aged over 2 years of 18 to 22°C. Staff outlined procedures that would be taken where the sleep room temperature is above the safe sleep temperatures.

- Staff and the service manager advised the inspectors that while children were present in the sleep room on stackable beds that they are supervised at all times by staff, which was observed in practice on the day of inspection.

### 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) The registered provider ensured that a person who held in-date First Aid Response (FAR) training was at all times immediately available to the children attending the pre-school service. Seven staff held in-date FAR training certificates.
- (2) (a) & (b) Suitably equipped first aid boxes were available in each of the care rooms, with surplus materials available in the manager's office.

### 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) (a) A record of fire drills that take place was available, with the most recent dated fire drill recorded on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2025.
- (b) The annual maintenance certificate for the fire extinguishers was dated 27 November 2024 and smoke alarms were dated 14 August 2024.
- (4) The fire evacuation procedures were displayed on notices on walls throughout the service, which contained details in relation to the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

## Compliance Information

The registered provider had insurance cover in place for up to 80 pre-school children attending the service on a full day care basis. The policy showed that the service had insurance in place from 28 March 2025 to 27 March 2026.