

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015MO088
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Name of Service:	Naionra Dhun Chaochain
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Address of Service:	An tSeanscoil, Ceathrú Thaidhg, Béal an Átha, Béal an Átha, Co. Mayo
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Eircode:	F26 Y8P7
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Name of Registered Provider:	Micheal O'Seighin
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	13/12/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	11	PM	-
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, TUSLA, Child and Family Agency, 2nd Floor, St. Mary's HQ., Castlebar, Co. Mayo.
Inspection undertaken by:	M Farrell
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

Naionra Dhun Chaochain is a community-based, sessional service in a rural Gaeltacht area of Co Mayo. The service is registered to provide sessional services to children aged from two to six years of age, between 10:00 to 13:00 hours. The service is in a designated section of a community centre building. There is one large playroom and a smaller room that is used at present for storage of toys and play equipment. The children have access to a well-developed, enclosed outdoor play area to the rear of the building. The service has sanitary facilities and access to a kitchen on the premises.

Staffing

There are three adults employed to work directly with the children in the service and one of these adults is employed under the Access and Inclusion Model Scheme. One adult works in an administrative role in the building. A cleaner is employed to clean the service outside of service operation hours. There was an adult student on placement in the service at the time of the inspection. The registered provider is not involved in the day to day running 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/ safety/ premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under sections of regulations 9, 11, 15, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28 and 29. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

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 deputy 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.*

(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) There was a designated person in charge and a named deputy to deputise when required.
- (b) The deputy designated person in charge was present in the service during the inspection.
- (2) There were five adults in the service including administrative staff at the time of the inspection. The following vetting documents were available on file for the five adults:
- (a) Two written validated references from past employers particularly the most recent employer for three adults.
- (b) Two written validated references from sources other than past employers for one adult.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all five staff. However, the service did not always 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 not required for any of the five adults.
- (4) Evidence of the required qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education or equivalent was available for the three adults who worked directly with the preschool children.

Non-Compliance Information

- (2)(a) Two written validated references were required for one adult.
- Photographic identification was required for one adult.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The service advised in writing that:

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (2)(a) Two written validated references and photographic identification for one adult have been provided.
- Two written validated references and photographic identification will be requested and kept on file for all staff and replacement staff.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copies of two written validated references and photographic identification were submitted to the Inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The actions taken and evidence submitted by the service has been reviewed by the Early Years Inspectorate and been found to have satisfactorily addressed the non-compliance found on inspection.

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.*

Compliance Information

- (1) Throughout the inspection an adequate number of adults worked directly with the children attending the service. On the inspector's announced arrival to the service there were 2 adults working directly with 11 children.
- (3) The minimum ratio for sessional services providing care to children over 2 ½ years of 1 adult to each 11 children was adhered to with 2 adults working directly with 11 children during the inspection.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:

- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;*
- (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;*
- (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;*
- (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;*
- (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;*
- (f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;*
- (g) the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner;*
- (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;*
- (i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.*

(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-
(c) an authorised person.

Compliance Information

- (1) A sample of ten children's records were randomly selected for review by the inspector from the children currently enrolled in the service.
- (a) to (i)
- The ten records were found to be compliant with the details required under the regulation.
- (3) (c) The records were made available to the inspector in the service by the deputy person in charge.

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 entrance door to the service was secured to allow staff control entry to and exit from the service. There was a securing mechanism at a high level on the kitchen door to prevent children from accessing the area. The outdoor area was enclosed preventing children from leaving the area unnoticed. The toys and play equipment were in satisfactory condition and suitable for the age range of the children using them. Cleaning products were stored out of reach of the children in the kitchen and in a secured cupboard.

Infection Control:

The staff prompted the children to wash their hands at key times such as before and after lunch using prompts in Irish “nigh do lamha”. Children washed their hands with warm water and liquid soap drying them with the paper hand towel provided that was disposed of in foot pedal operated bins. The service was observed to be clean and staff cleaned down surfaces such as the tables following messy play and meal time. The staff kept records of cleaning undertaken in line with the service’s cleaning schedules “sceideal glantóireacht”. Children’s lunches (lón) were stored in a refrigerator in the service on the children’s arrival at the service.

Administration of Medication:

The staff informed the inspector that none of the children needed medicines to be administered to them when in the service. During conversation, the staff showed awareness of correct administration procedures if a child needed medication to be administered to them while in the service.

Fire Safety:

Emergency exit routes were found to be free from obstructions during the inspection.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

- Garda vetting was available for five adults. However, one of these vetting disclosures was not dated within the previous three years in adherence to the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice ‘EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting’.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The service advised in writing that:

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

- The garda vetting renewal for the adult is in an application process. In future garda vetting disclosures will be checked to ensure they are up to date.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

- Evidence of the outcome of the garda vetting renewal was submitted to the Inspectorate on the 21 January 2025.

Summary Comment

The non-compliance under Regulation 23 found on inspection has been addressed by the actions taken and evidence submitted by the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) no person other than-

(i) pre-school child attending the service,

(ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,

(iii) an employee, or

(iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and

(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.

Compliance Information

(1) The children were checked in and out of the service by staff members with written records of attendance kept.

(3) (a) The staff authorised the entry of the inspector to the premises following production and review of identification documents.

(b) The staff kept written records of visitors to the service.

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) Three staff had completed First Aid Response (FAR) training courses and had certificates on file with expiry dates ranging from the 27 November 2025 to 3 July 2026.

(2)

(a) A first aid box was safely stored in an easily accessible location in the second room used for storage.

(b) The first aid equipment was readily accessible to the staff if a child required first aid treatment in the service.

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) The staff kept records of the monthly fire drills (druil dóiteán) carried out in the service. The last fire drill was recorded as undertaken on the 25 November 2024.

(b) There was a record of the number, type and annual maintenance of the firefighting equipment showing that the firefighting equipment was last maintained on the 30 August 2024.

(4) An evacuation map with escape route and a notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in the large playroom.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) (b) The certificate available for inspection regarding the testing/maintenance of the smoke alarms showed that the system was last maintained on the 15 April 2021. Smoke alarms are required to be maintained on an annual basis.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The service advised in a written response that:

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1) (b) An electrician has been contacted to carry out testing/maintenance on the smoke alarm. The smoke alarm will be tested/maintained on an annual basis.

Supporting documentation submitted

No evidence was submitted.

Summary Comment

The actions submitted by the service have been reviewed by the Inspectorate. The non-compliance remains outstanding until evidence/certification that the testing/maintenance of the smoke alarm has been carried out is submitted to the Inspectorate by the service.

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 staff were observed to supervise the children primarily by sight throughout the inspection. The children were out of sight when using the toilet but within earshot of the staff if they needed help or assistance. Later in the session some children played outdoors while others wished to continue playing games indoors. One staff member stayed outdoors to supervise, and the other staff member supervised the group of children indoors. The staff were observed to link in with each and ensure that each child had a designated staff member supervising them. At mealtime the staff sat with the children while they were eating and supervised them closely.

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 covering the maximum number of children registered to attend sessional services in the premises was available for inspection valid until the 27 November 2025.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-
(e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.

Compliance Information

(e) Two toilets and two wash handbasins were provided for use by the children. Separate sanitary facilities were provided for the staff in the service. Liquid soap and paper hand towels were available for hand washing and drying with foot pedal operated bins provided for the disposal of waste in the sanitary units. The warm water for handwashing was recorded below 43°C on the day of the inspection.