

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015MO090		
Name of Service:	Comharchumann Naíonra Béal an Átha Teo		
Address of Service:	Greenhills Childcare Centre, Greenhills Estate, Ballina, Co. Mayo		
Eircode:	F26 T267		
Name of Registered Provider:	Christine Noone		
Service type:	Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	31/05/2023		
No of pre-school children:	AM	18	PM -
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Year's Inspectorate, 2 nd 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
---------------------------------	----------------

Description of service

Comharchumann Naíonra Béal an Átha Teo is a sessional service located in a residential area in Ballina, Co Mayo. The service is registered to cater for children aged from 2 years and 8 months to 5 years of age. Morning sessions from 9:00-12:00 hours and afternoon sessions from 12:30-15:30 hours are provided in the service. There are two large playrooms in the premises which was purpose built to provide childcare services. One playroom is located on the ground floor and there is a second playroom located on the first floor that is not currently in use. The premises has a large lobby, office, kitchen and sanitary accommodation. The children have access from the ground floor playroom to an enclosed outdoor play area.

Staffing

There are four staff currently working in the service including the registered provider who works directly with the children. One of the staff members is employed under the Access and Inclusion Model.

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 inspections may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 15, 16, 21, 23, 27 and 28. 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 registered provider, 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.

(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 and there was a named adult to deputise in her absence.
- (b) The designated person in charge and deputy were available on the premise throughout the inspection.

(2) (a),(b),(c),(d) & (4)

The registered provider advised that there were no new staff to the service since the last inspection on the 19 May 2021. The vetting documentation and qualifications for the four staff members working in the service had been reviewed previously and found to have met the regulatory requirements.

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) When the inspector arrived unannounced to the service there was 4 staff working directly with 18 children attending sessional services.
- (3) The registered provider ensured that the minimum ratio for a sessional service of 1 adult to each 11 children aged from 2 years and 6 months to 6 years was adhered to with 4 adults working directly with 18 children on the day of the inspection. A review of a sample of attendance records found that the minimum ratios were adhered to during the time periods sampled.

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-

- (a) a parent or guardian of a pre-school child but only in respect of the record relating to that child,*
- (b) an employee who is authorised in that behalf by the registered provider, and*
- (c) an authorised person.*

Compliance Information

(1) (a) to (i)

21 of the children's records were selected for review by the inspector from the children currently enrolled in the service. Each of the records was found to be compliant and contained the required details as laid out under the regulation.

(3) (c)

The required information detailed in paragraph (1) was made available for inspection by the inspector on request.

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.*

(3) A record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection on the premises, and the documents and records referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall be open to inspection whether on the premises or elsewhere, by an authorised person.

Compliance Information

- (1) The registered provider ensured written records were kept of the following information in the service:
- (a) The name, position, qualifications and experience of each staff member.
 - (b) Information on the type of service type and ages of children that the service is registered to provide services to.
 - (c) The adult: child ratios provided in the service.
 - (d) The service’s type of care or programme.
 - (e) The facilities available in the service.

- (f) The service's hours of opening and fees.
- (g) The service's policies, procedures and statements as required under Regulation 10 that were kept in a service policy folder.
- (h) Details of the daily attendance of each pre-school child recorded daily in an attendance book.
- (i) Details of the staff daily working hours recorded in an attendance book.
- (j) A record book to record any medication administered to a child while attending the service to include signed parental consent.
- (k) An accident/incident book with details of any accident, injury or incident involving children attending the service with the last incident dated on the 24 May 2023.

(3)
Some of the records referred to in paragraph (1) were on display in the service with the remaining records made available to the inspector by the registered provider on request.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

The furniture in the playroom was suitable for children’s use with tables waist high to the children and chairs appropriate for their age and developmental stages provided. The tables were arranged to accommodate group work and mealtimes. Adult sized chairs were provided for the staff to sit on. There was soft seating in rest areas to allow children to rest/relax. Open storage systems were used to allow children to select and replace toys and play equipment that was labelled in Irish for example “uirlisí oibre” or “work tools” reflecting the Naíonra ethos of the service.

There was a broad selection of age and developmentally appropriate equipment available indoors and outdoors in the service for children to play with. Messy play was facilitated in a large outdoor playhouse known as the “sand shed” with sand, mud kitchens and plastic utensils in addition to a large outdoor sandbox and water table.

Outdoor play equipment to promote the development of gross motor skills included a crawling tunnel, climbing system in the canopy covered section of the area with impact absorbent ground cover, football and low-level soccer net and various ride on toys. Indoors, the toys were laid out in well-equipped designated interest areas including a dress up area with viewing mirror, construction area, transport area, puppet theatre and home/kitchen area. An office area held a desk, repurposed telephones and computer keyboard. A large selection of equipment to help support fine motor skill development and hand eye coordination was provided through tabletop activities including dressing frames, linking and threading activities, jigsaw puzzles and pegboards.

A sensory den outdoors offered a quiet, dark, enclosed space for children to relax and have time to regulate their sensory systems.

The “bord dúlra” (nature table) and planting boxes in the outdoor area provided opportunities to develop an interest in nature for the children. Art and craft equipment was available both indoors with art easels, paints, paper and numerous craft items and, outdoors with the chalk boards erected on boundary walls.

The equipment and toys were cleaned regularly, maintained in a satisfactory condition and checked on a daily basis by the staff for signs of wear and tear.

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 main entrance door to the service was secured on the inspector's arrival and remained secured during the inspection to prevent children from leaving unnoticed and persons from entering without authorisation. The outdoor area had high boundary walls and gates with securing mechanisms to control access to the space. The oil tanks and waste bins were sectioned off from the outdoor play area and inaccessible to children. Cleaning products were stored in a secure area of the sanitary unit and in a storage area in the kitchen that the children could not access. A stair gate was in place at the door of the kitchen to prevent children from entering the space. The toys and equipment were in satisfactory condition and suitable for the age and developmental stage of the children using them during the inspection. A stairgate was in place at the bottom of the stairs in the lobby area restricting access to the first-floor area that was not in use at the time of the inspection. Daily risk checklists were completed each day following checks carried out by the staff of areas of the service.

Infection Control:

The staff prompted the children to wash their hands at appropriate times, for example, following using the toilet and before lunchtime during the inspection. Hand washing facilities with warm water were provided with liquid soap and paper towels for children to wash and dry their hands with. Foot pedal operated bins were provided for the dispose of waste. The staff cleaned down surfaces frequently, for example, the tables after use at mealtime. Records of the cleaning/disinfection processes carried out by the staff in the service were kept and available for inspection. Boxes of tissues were available at a low level for the children to clean their noses with. The children's snacks from home were stored in the refrigerator provided in the playroom on arrival to the service. The staff opened the windows in the playroom to ventilate the room. Daily risk checklists were in place for various areas of the service and completed by the staff.

Administration of Medication:

The staff advised the inspector that at that time no children required to have medication administered whilst in attendance in the service. A medication record book was available to record medication administration to a child should it be required.

Fire Safety:

The emergency exit routes were found to be free from obstruction on the day.

Outing:

The registered provider advised the inspector that outings are not undertaken out by the service at present.

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

Adequate adult to child ratios were in place in the service for supervision of the children on the day of the inspection. The staff supervised the children mainly by sight and children when using the toilet alone were within earshot of the staff if they needed assistance.

The staff positioned themselves strategically in different areas of the outdoor space to allow direct vision of the children when playing outside in accordance with the service’s outdoor play policy. At lunchtime the staff sat with the children to supervise them when they were eating.

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 for a maximum of 22 children at any one time availing of sessional services with an expiry date of the 27 March 2024 was on display in the service.