

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015MO095
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Naíonra Tir na Nog
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Faiche An Aonaigh, Springfield, Castlebar, Co. Mayo
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<b>Eircode:</b>	F23 RC84
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Laura O'Malley, Samantha Geraghty
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<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	27/11/2025
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	31	PM	No.
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate, Quality and Regulation Directorate, Child and Family Agency. 2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor St Mary's HQ, Castlebar, Co Mayo. F23HP58
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	B Lavin
<b>Title:</b>	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).

### Description of service

Naíonra Tir Nog is a community-based preschool located in the grounds of a primary school in Castlebar, Co Mayo. The Naíonra provides a sessional service to children aged from 2 to 6 years of age between the hours of 08:45 and 11:45 Monday to Friday. The service operates from a dedicated prefabricated building with 2 playrooms and sanitary facilities. There is a large, enclosed play area to the rear of the service.

### Staffing

There are 7 staff employed to work in the service including the registered provider who works directly with the 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 and the health, welfare and development of child. 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 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.

(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 person who was able to deputise as required.
- (b) During the period of inspection, the registered provider and the person in charge were on the premises and facilitated the inspection.
- (2) Following a review of the service files and discussion with the registered provider, it was confirmed that there were 7 members of staff employed in the service.
- (a) There were 10 of the required 14 written and appropriately validated references available from their most recent employer.
- (b) There were 4 written and appropriately validated references available from a source other than recent employer for 3 adults working in the service.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for all the staff working in the service. The service adhered to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew garda vetting every 3 years.
- (d) Police vetting disclosures were available for the 1 adult working in the service who had lived outside the jurisdiction for a period of over 6 months.
- (4) The 7 adults working directly with the children had attained major awards in Early childhood care and education at level 5 or above on the national framework of qualifications, or qualifications deemed by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) to meet the regulatory requirement.

### 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) There were 5 adults working directly with children on the day of inspection.

The minimum adult to child ratios were provided on the morning of inspection in accordance with the required ratios considering the ages of the children and the length of time each child spent in the service as outlined below:

- Seomra 1: Three adults cared for 16 children attending on a sessional basis aged 3 to 4 years.
- Seomra 2: Two adults cared for 15 children attending on a sessional basis aged 2 to 4 years.

(3) The registered provider ensured that the minimum ratio of adults to children specified was maintained.

### 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*

#### Compliance Information

##### Basic Needs

- Drinking water was available to all children in individual beakers throughout the day.
- Children were observed eating their snack provided by the parents/guardians which consisted of fruit, yogurt, cheese, crackers, chopped vegetables, wraps and sandwiches. Children were supported during mealtimes with opening food items when needed. Independence was encouraged with self-help skills.
- Children sat at tables and chairs which were appropriate for their height and/or stage of development.
- The staff were observed sitting at the child's level and chatted in a respectful manner.

- The privacy and dignity of each child was respected during toileting.
- Rest facilities were available in the care rooms and children were observed spending time in this area for periods of rest throughout the day.
- Both playrooms had direct access to the outdoor play area. This area has recently been renovated to include a soft astro all weather play surface. The children also have access to a local public playground accessed via a foot bridge.
- The adults working with the children were sensitive and responsive in promoting positive behaviours and supported children to find positive solutions to sharing toys, equipment and turn taking.
- Children had plenty of opportunities to move themselves, to practice and improve their emerging skills, such as co-ordination and balance.
- Children had the opportunity to engage in sensory play within the care rooms. Children were observed to play with play dough, paint, sand and water to enhance their fine motor skills with scooping and pouring.

### Supporting relationships

- The service supported the children in forming and sustaining positive relationships with staff.
- The staff were actively involved in children's play, where appropriate initiating games and joining in when invited to by children.
- The staff behaved in a way that created a positive atmosphere, having frequent social conversations, joint laughter, showing affection and group story time.
- The staff listened to the voice of the child as they communicated their needs, thoughts and experiences both verbally and non-verbally, by reading children's cues, gestures and body language.
- Soft tones were used with the children, along with the child's individual name, getting down to their level and making eye contact.
- The atmosphere in the learning environment was encouraging and unhurried.
- Staff guided and supported children who needed more help. Staff used positive strategies to support children's inclusion, for example using personal greetings, news of the day, looking at family photographs, choice board, visual routines chart, timers and giving appropriate encouragement.
- Staff communicated with parents and guardians by sharing knowledge and observations of the child's interests, strengths, developmental and care needs, approaches to learning, changes in their life and any other concerns at drop off and collection times, by phone and by text.

- The staff were observed helping children to find solutions, supporting them and talking to the children in a variety of ways- discussing, modelling and initiating games and activities.
- Small group play opportunities were encouraged and facilitated within the care room. This provided staff with opportunities to get to know the children better, quieter play time and a sensory rich experience.
- The service operated a buddy system within the playroom where the children have an assigned buddy for tabletop activities. This system rotated regularly and helped build friendships within the room.

### 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 had evidence that 4 staff had current paediatric First Aid Responder training completed.

(2)(a) The registered provider had ensured that the service was equipped with first aid boxes.

(b) The first aid boxes were available to children when required.

### Part VI - Safety

#### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

#### Compliance Information

The service's insurance with an expiry date of 31/08/2026, was for a sessional service, for a maximum number of 53 children. The insurance covered the following,

public liability,

personal accident,

insurance against fire and theft,

buildings,

outings undertaken as part of the service provision.