

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015TY079
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Tir na NÓg
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Ballintoher, Nenagh, Co Tipperary
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<b>Eircode:</b>	E45 TW13
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Kathleen McKenna
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<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	02/10/2025
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	10	PM	-
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	North Tipperary Civic Offices, Limerick Road, Nenagh, Co Tipperary, E45A099
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	L McGeeney
<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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	N/A
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### Description of service

This sessional service was established in 2001 to provide care and education to children aged between 2 and 6 years old. The service operates Monday – Friday, 9am – 12pm for 38 weeks of the year. Places are funded under the Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme (ECCE) for eligible children.

The service is operated from rooms on the ground floor of the registered providers residence, a two-storey detached premises, in a rural area near the town of Nenagh in North Tipperary. The service comprised of an entrance hall, two activity rooms and sanitary accommodation area. There is a ‘play barn’ accessible from the enclosed outdoor play area which provides sheltered outdoor play space that can be used in all weathers.

### Staffing

The registered provider works directly with the children each day, with the support of one member of staff, employed under the access and inclusion model (AIM). Both staff hold recognised qualifications in early childhood care and education.

### 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.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9(1)(2)(4), 11(1)(3)(8), 15(1)(3), 16(1)(93), 19(1)(b), 23, 24(1)(3), 25(1)(2) and 28.

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 person in charge on the day of inspection.

(b) The person in charge was present in the service for the duration of the inspection.

(2) Following a review of previous inspection information, information available on inspection and discussion with the person in charge it was determined that of the two staff employed in the service, one staff member had been employed since the previous inspection in November 2023. Both staff files were reviewed as part of the inspection process.

(a) Two written and validated references were available for each staff member working in the service.

(b) Where past employer references were not available, there were references from sources such as previous schools and colleges.

(c) Garda vetting was available on file for each staff member working in the service. Garda vetting had been renewed, in compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Police vetting documentation was not required as none of the staff had lived outside of the state for a period of longer than six months.

(4) Staff employed to work with the pre-school children held recognised qualifications in early childhood care and education at levels 5 or 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

### 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.*

*(8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-*

*(c) a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that, where the person in charge operates the service single-handedly, a second person familiar with the operation of the service and in a position to provide assistance to the person in charge in operating the service is, at all times, within close distance of the service and available to attend the service to assist the person in charge in the event of an emergency.*

#### Compliance Information

(1) There were 2 staff working directly with 10 children aged between 3 and 5 years old on the day of inspection.

(3) The adult to child ratio was maintained at 1:5 on the day of inspection which was greater than the minimum requirement of 1:11.

(8)(c) There were two staff present in the service while it was in operation. In the event of there being only one member of staff present, a second person was available to call on to provide assistance in an emergency.

### 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) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-*

- (c) an authorised person.*

#### Compliance Information

(1) The 10 completed registration forms in relation to the 10 children enrolled in the service were assessed as part of the inspection process. The registration forms contained all of the required information required under parts (a) – (i) of this regulation.

(3)(c) The registration forms were available on the premises for inspection by an authorised person.

### 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 shall be open to inspection whether on the premises or elsewhere, by an authorised person.*

#### Compliance Information

(1) The information that was required to be kept in writing as detailed under parts (a) – (k) of this regulation were available in the service.

(3) The records were available on the premises for inspection by an authorised person.

### 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-

(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

(1)(b) The following practices was observed on the day of inspection which supported the health, welfare and development of the children.

The children enjoyed freedom of choice and freedom of movement throughout the morning. The staff were observed to be adaptable and responsive to the children's engagement and interests. For example, a planned activity was put aside for another time as the children became immersed in making cards using sticky foam shapes and mark making materials.

The staff took advantage of 'teachable moments' to support the children's learning, problem solving and self-regulation. For example, the staff responded to problems identified by the children by asking them 'can we fix it?' and helping them find the solution, for example using paper towels to dry the wet balance bike. Staff also helped the children to distinguish between big problems and little problems and discussed with them what type of responses were helpful and what responses did not help. This message was reinforced through a rhyme recited by the children and staff about thinking through a problem to find a fix for it.

The children were supported to become independent with self-care skills such as dressing for the outdoors, using the toilet, washing their hands, tidying up after themselves, caring for their belongings, opening and closing their bags and lunch boxes and writing their names on their work. Staff were available to provide assistance where it was needed but waited and let each child try each task first before giving further instruction or help or asking them if they could do it themselves or needed help.

The language spoken in the service was English with an introduction to the Irish language by the repeated use of Irish words used such as 'líne,' 'cóta' and 'bosca lóin'.

### 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:

Access to the service was through a door at the back of the premises which led directly into the entrance hall. This door was kept secured when the children were in the service. There was a bell to alert the staff to parents or visitors seeking entry to the service. The staff could see who was seeking access to the premises through the glass panel in the top half of the door before opening the door to them.

The entrance door opened into an enclosed yard that was fenced and gated. The yard was used by the children for outdoor play. The gates were secured when the children were outside to prevent them gaining unsupervised access to the roadway in front of the premises.

##### Infection control:

The service had an infection control policy. There was hot and cold running water, liquid soap and paper hand towels provided at the wash hand basin in the sanitary accommodation area to support the children with hygienic hand washing during the day.

##### Administration of medication:

The service had a policy regarding the administration of medication stating that medication was not administered to children attending the service. An exception would be made if a child required emergency medication for anaphylaxis or other ongoing medical condition.

##### Fire safety:

Fire escape routes were kept clear of obstruction.

### 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*

### Compliance Information

(1) Staff were responsible for recording the arrival and departure times of the children on a daily basis. A weekly attendance register was available for this purpose.

(3)(a) Staff met any visitors to the service at the entrance door before allowing them admission of appropriate.

## 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 held current certification as a first aid responder (FAR) valid until June 2027.

(2)(a) A suitably equipped first aid box was available on a shelf in the main room.

(b) The first aid box was available if required by a child attending the service.

### Part VI - Safety

#### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

#### Compliance Information

The service had current insurance cover for a sessional service catering for up to 11 children at any one time, valid until 27 March 2026.