

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015TY133
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Name of Service:	Montessori Naionra
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Address of Service:	Butlers Charteris Hall, Church St, Cahir, Co Tipperary
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Name of Registered Provider:	Catherine Lynch
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	09/03/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	11	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	13 Market Square Mallow Cork P51DD5Y
Inspection undertaken by:	B Fraher
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	N/A
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Description of service

Montessori Naionra is a private early years sessional service located in a detached heritage building in the town of Cahir. This service offers two sessional services through both the use of the English and Irish language and operates from 9:00 to 12:00 and from 12:30 to 15:30, Monday to Friday 38 weeks of the year. The service accommodates children who are 2 to 6 years of age. The building consists of one classroom, two children's toilets, one adult toilet, a kitchen area and an entrance area. The service has an enclosed outdoor play space also.

Staffing

The service currently employs one staff member and the registered provider who is service based. A total of two adults were working directly with the children on the day of inspection.

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 Regulation 9: Management and recruitment, Regulation 10: Policies, procedures of a preschool service, Regulation 11: Staffing levels, Regulation 15: Record

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of a preschool child, Regulation 19: Health, welfare and development of a preschool child, Regulation 23: Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child, Regulation 25 First aid, Regulation 26 Fire safety measures, and Regulation 28: Insurance however on inspection additional non-compliances which posed a risk were identified under Regulation 29: Premises . 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 children, registered provider and staff 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 registered provider was the designated person in charge on the day of inspection and there was a named deputy in the service that could deputise as required.
 - (b) The person in charge and the deputy were on duty at the service when the inspector arrived. The staff roster indicated that both the person in charge and the deputy were on duty at all times during the hours of operation.
 - (c) There was clear evidence on inspection of the management structure in place and the specific roles of each staff member.

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(2) The recruitment records in relation to one adult, who was employed in the service and working directly with the children and the registered provider were the subject of inspection.

(a) Of the four required references, one was from a previous employer with the required record of validation on file.

(b) Of the four required references, three were from another source other than a previous employer with a record of validation on file.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained and were on file for each of the two adults. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(4) There was evidence that one adult who required childcare qualifications held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Framework of Qualifications. A second adult had a Letter of Eligibility to Practice from the Department of Children, Disability and Equality.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(d) Police vetting was unavailable for one adult who lived outside of the state for longer than six consecutive months.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The following response was received from the registered provider:

Corrective and Preventive Action

The service has gathered all documents required and is making an application for police vetting and will forward the evidence of the application to the inspectorate when it is submitted.

Supporting documentation submitted

An email has been submitted to support the response.

Summary Comment

Evidence of an application for one of the staff for police vetting was reviewed however, a copy of the complete police vetting has not been submitted for one of the staff to the inspector to date. The registered provider is required to furnish the required documentation to the Inspectorate upon receipt. The noncompliance in relation to Regulation 9 (2) (d) remains outstanding.

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Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.

Compliance Information

The following policies were reviewed:

- Policy on infection control
- Policy on healthy eating

The policies contained the information required to guide staff in their care practices for the children.

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) At the time of inspection, there were the adequate number of adults required, responsible for the direct care and supervision of the children in attendance at all times.
- (3) The service exceeded the minimum ratio required as per regulation in the care room. The 11 children attending the service were supervised directly by 2 adults.

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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.*

Compliance Information

(1) The service has 26 early years children registered between the 2 sessional services and a sample of 10 records were inspected. They were found to contain the required information as listed (a) through to (i).

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:

- Snacks were provided by the parents and were observed to be healthy and nutritious. Examples of snacks were yogurts, crackers, rice cakes, fruit and sandwiches.

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- The inspector noted that two children were sitting longer at the snack table than the other children, who had finished snack and were given sufficient time to eat without being rushed.
- The children were observed to access the sanitary area independently with the staff available to assist if required.
- Outdoor play was promoted and while outdoors, the children were noted to be dressed appropriately for the weather in coats and hats.
- A designated cosy area was available, which encouraged the children to relax and opt out of scheduled activities, as necessary.
- The layout of the care room supported the children to move freely within their environment and to engage in their chosen tasks.

Supporting relationships:

- Staff members were heard praising and encouraging children's efforts. An example included when children worked together to build a jigsaw and complete puzzles and the staff member praised the children for helping each other.
- Children's identity and belonging within the class group was fostered through celebration of life events such as birthdays. As was evidenced through the birthday celebration for one child on the day of inspection. The display of a birthday and family wall supported connections between individual children, their peer group and staff members.
- All children were observed to be actively encouraged by staff to participate in activities. Materials were available which accommodated each child's individual interests. Examples included a toy kitchen, dress up costumes, magnifying glasses, artwork, moulding dough and puzzles.
- The staff promoted positive behaviour among the children encouraging them to use the words please and thank you.
- Staff were observed to sit during group activity with the children singing in both English and Irish, practicing marching for the St. Patricks day parade and promoting conversation for example discussing Mother's Day, which supported positive relationships with the children and language development.
- Learning and activities in the service were documented in learning journals which were personal to each child and shared between home and preschool. Photographic evidence of group activities was evident on the wall. These provided children with an opportunity to reflect on past experiences and fostered a sense of belonging in the service.

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- Parents or guardians were communicated with at pick up and drop off and offered twice yearly parent teacher meetings. Parents and guardians were given a copy of the policies at enrolment.

Non-Compliance Information

Drinking water was not made available to the children throughout the morning. While the children were observed drinking from their individual water bottles during the mid-morning snack these were stored away in the children's bags before and after mid-morning snack. This posed a risk that child would not get enough drinking water to meet their needs.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The following response was received from the registered provider:

Corrective and Preventive Action

A hydration station is available to the children at all times and staff will ask children regularly if they require a drink. All new staff will be trained on doing this in the future.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence of a hydration station received.

Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider was deemed to meet regulatory compliance under Regulation 19 (a).

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 windows in the care rooms were out of reach and were adequately secured to ensure the safety of the children.
- Cleaning agents were stored out of reach of the children.
- The toys and play equipment assessed were in good condition.
- The first aid box was stored out of reach of the children.

Infection control:

- Lidded pedal bins were in use for the disposal of waste in the sanitary area and the care room.

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- Tables were cleaned with suitable disinfectant after play and before snack time.

Fire safety:

- The fire exit door was free from obstruction on inspection.
- Fire extinguishers were wall mounted.

Outing:

- No outings were conducted on the day of inspection. The registered provider informed the inspector that a yearly outing occurred to the castle in Cahir but no outing had occurred in this school year. As discussed with the registered provider a risk assessment will be completed prior to the outing where risks will be identified and strategies will be put in place to mitigate against them.

Non-Compliance Information

General safety:

1. The main entrance door remained unsecured while the service was in operation, allowing the public access to the staff storage area and staff toilet. It is acknowledged that the care room is locked. On discussion with the registered provider, the door remains open to allow parents access to knock on the care room door and have access to the sanitary facilities. This unrestricted access to the building may cause a risk of unauthorised access to the service. This was evident on the last inspection 9 June 2023, where both doors were unsecured and the registered provider stated the deputy will be responsible for ensuring the premises is secure. The corrective actions submitted following this inspection failed to prevent recurrence of this non-compliance.

Infection control:

2. Contrary to the service's infection control policy perishable food was not stored in the fridge in the service. At snack time the inspector observed children removing perishable food from their bags which poses a risk of food spoilage.
3. Handwashing practices were inadequate to control the spread of infection. Children did not wash their hands before eating their snack or after outdoor play.
4. Children's school bags were stored stacked along the ground which increased the risk of cross contamination.

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Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The following response was received from the registered provider in CAPA and email format:

Corrective & Preventive Action

General safety:

1. The outside door will remain closed. Checking of this will be part of the daily risk assessment. The outer and inner door will not be key locked. A wireless motion sensor will be fitted to both doors. These are planned to be installed on the 1 May 2026.

Infection control:

2. Children put their lunch boxes in the fridge in the morning and retrieve them for snack. A policy is in place to ensure this and will be shared with new staff on induction.
3. The handwashing policy was reviewed and staff were reminded to follow the handwashing policy before snack and after outdoor play. All new staff will be informed of this. Visual aids were put in place.
4. Bags are kept on hooks. Staff will support children to retrieve them. Staff will be reminded to hang all the bags on hooks. New staff will be trained on this.

Supporting documentation submitted

General safety:

1. Photographic evidence of the door secured received.

Infection control:

2. Photographic evidence of food in the refrigerator and of a policy received.
3. Photographic evidence of the policy received.
4. Photographic evidence received of bags on hooks.

Summary Comment

The corrective action submitted by the registered provider has addressed the non-compliance identified under Regulation 23.

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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)

Up to date records of First Aid Response (FAR) certification were in place for one of the adults working in the service.

(2)

(a) There was one sufficiently stocked first aid box available in the service, which was safely stored out of reach of children.

(b) The first aid supplies were always accessible, should they be required.

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.

(2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-

(c) an authorised person.

(4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire shall be displayed in a conspicuous position in the premises.

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Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) Fire drill records were reviewed. Evidence was available to show fire drills were practiced and recorded on a monthly basis. Records showed that the last fire drill was completed 9 February 2026.
- (b) Written records were available of the servicing of the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarms. The firefighting certificate was dated 16 January 2025, and the smoke alarm certificate was dated 3 September 2025.
- (2)
- (c) The records referred to in paragraph (1) were available on the premises for review by the inspector.
- (4) The services fire evacuation procedure was displayed on the wall.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service has certification to confirm insurance cover for a total of 22 children at any one time in the sessional service. Insurance cover expires on the 27 March 2026.

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.

Non-Compliance Information

No warm running water was available at the wash hand basins in the adult and children's sanitary facilities. The water temperatures were recorded between 9.1°C and 9.2°C. Cold water may impede effective handwashing. It is acknowledged that the registered provider had arranged a plumber to come to fix this.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The following response was received by the registered provider:

Corrective and Preventive Action

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The heater was fixed the afternoon of inspection. Warm water is now available. The service will ensure repairs will be carried out by a plumber if required in the future.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence of a boiler received.

Summary Comment

The corrective action submitted by the registered provider has addressed the non-compliance identified under Regulation 29 (e).