

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WD093
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Name of Service:	Tír na nÓg
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Address of Service:	Siabh gCua Community Centre, Ballinamult, Tourneena, Waterford.
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Eircode:	E91 NY72
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Name of Registered Provider:	Regina Carroll
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	29/05/2023
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No of pre-school children:	AM	9	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Community Care Centre, HSE Building, Cork Road, Waterford City.
Inspection undertaken by:	M. Ryan
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

Tír na nÓg operates from a community hall in the rural village of Touraneena nestled between the Knockmealdown and Comeragh mountains in west county Waterford (approximately 20 kilometers from Dungarvan in Waterford and 19 Kilometers from Clonmel in Tipperary). The service opened in 1995 and has operated under the present registered provider since 2009.

The premises is a community building and is used by other community organisations. The service has the sole use of the room for the early years service, with separate sanitary accommodation and a large hall available to the children for physical play. A large green area on the adjoining school grounds is always available to the service, for outdoor play. The service offers one session for the Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme (ECCE). The early years service caters for children aged 2 years 8 months to 5 years of age from 09:00hrs to 12:00hrs, Monday to Friday.

Staffing

The registered provider operates the service single handedly and holds an award in Early Childhood Care and Education at level 6 on the National Qualifications Framework. A second person familiar with the operation of the service is identified and is available to attend in the event of an emergency.

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 inspections may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9,10,11,17,19,25,26, and 29.

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 co-operation of the registered provider 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
- (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.

Compliance Information

(1)

- (a) The registered provider was the designated person in charge and had a named person able to deputise.
- (b) The registered provider was on the premises when the early years inspector arrived and remained on site for the duration of the inspection.

(2)

There was no change in the registered provider or with any adult nominated to provide assistance in the event of an emergency since the last inspection. All vetting documentation was compliant on review at the last inspection.

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 service had all the policies, procedures and statements required under Schedule 5 of the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016. The policies and procedures were systematically organised into folders and were clear, relevant, and specific to Tir na nÓg. All the policies and procedures had been revised and updated in December 2022

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)

On the day of the inspection there were 9 children from 3 to 5 years of age being cared for by the registered provider. An emergency contact person was available on the premises to help out if required.

(3)

The staff: child ratio met the requirement for the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 17 – Information for parents

A registered provider shall ensure that a parent or guardian of a child proposing to attend the service is provided with the information referred to in subparagraphs (a) to (g) of Regulation 16(1).

Compliance Information

All information required under the Regulation 16(1) (a to g) for parents or guardians of children, proposing to attend the service was available for parents in a user-friendly handbook. The registered provider informed the inspector, that all parents or guardians were provided with this information on their child’s enrolment. There was evidence that all parents had signed to confirm that they had read and understood the contents of the parent handbook.

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

1)(a) Regulation 19 was assessed through direct observation, review of records and discussion with the registered provider. The following was observed in relation to the programme of care and activities for the children attending the service.

Tír na nÓg playgroup ran a child led play-based programme. The registered provider explained the importance of ‘play was a child’s work’ and that the ethos of the service was for children to develop at their own pace through play in a fun, safe and nurturing environment. This focus was referenced, in the service’s mission statement “our goal is to create a setting where the child’s natural desire to learn, is stimulated through meaningful playful experiences”.

The curricular themes were seasonal with a documented weekly plan that was flexible, depending on the children’s emerging interests. On the day, the theme was Summer, and aspects of this topic were reinforced in the conversations between the registered provider and the children.

On the day of the inspection children were outdoors for almost the duration of the inspection, in a large, grassed area that belonged to the school and adjacent to the early years service. The area had raised vegetable beds and large mature trees that provided ample shade from the mid-day sun. The children were observed to be happy and unrushed while eating their lunch at picnic tables provided by the school. After lunch the children broke up naturally into small groups of friends and were observed playing racket ball, making daisy chains and a group of boys were overheard discussing tractors and silage cutting. The relationship and interaction between the children and the registered provider were observed to be warm, relaxed and familiar.

The early years service had use of the facilities in the community centre such as, the large hall for physical play and was observed to have ample supplies of ball games and ride on toys stored in this hall. The kitchen in the community centre had undergone major refurbishment and the registered provider explained how baking and cooking had become a regular aspect of the programme since this use of this kitchen was available to them.

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 current First Aid Responder Training for children.

(2)

(a) There was a first aid box in the childcare room stored on a high shelf that was easily accessible.

(b) The first aid box was suitably equipped and available at all times.

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 firefighting 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) A record in writing of fire drills indicated that the last fire drill took place on the premises on the 17 May 2023.
 - (b) A record of the number, type and maintenance firefighting equipment and smoke alarms was maintained. It was recorded that fire equipment was last serviced in November 2022 and smoke alarms were last serviced on 27 September 2022.
- (4)
- The fire evacuation procedure for the service which contained details of the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in a conspicuous position in the new cloakroom/hall area of the service.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-

- (a) of sound and stable structure,*
- (b) safe and secure,*
- (c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated*
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*

Compliance Information

- (a) Since the last inspection the lobby was restructured to facilitate entry from the rear aspect of the building. A new PVC door and window were installed.
- (b) The premises was rewired and fire doors were installed.
- (c) A new wall mounted storage heater was installed in the lobby area.
- (d) The service was refloored throughout with a quality timber laminate and the childcare room and the new lobby were repainted.