

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2021CC004
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Name of Service:	Naíonra Toddle Inn and Afterschool
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Address of Service:	Gaelscoil Uí Drisceoil, Dún Cítíl, Gleann Maghair, Co Cork
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Eircode:	T45 YY19
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Name of Registered Provider:	Kelda Browne
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	08/01/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	41	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Administration Building, St Mary's Health Campus, Gurrabraher, Cork T23 X440.
Inspection undertaken by:	D Prendergast
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

Naíonra Toddle Inn and Afterschool is a sessional service, that is registered to accommodate children aged 2 to 6 years. This includes children eligible for the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme. Two daily sessions are currently provided; the first from 8.45am to 11.45am and the second between 9.00am and 12.00pm, over 38 weeks of the year. A combination of play based and Montessori pedagogy is implemented, through the medium of Irish. A registered school age service is also in operation.

Located in Glanmire, Co Cork, the service is provided from Gaelscoil Uí Drisceoil primary school. It comprises two care rooms, adjacent children's sanitary facilities, an office, staff toilet facilities, a staff kitchen and storage space. A large outdoor play area is accessible beside the building and is shared with the primary school children. The registered provider is a multiple service provider.

Staffing

At present, there are 11 adults attached to the setting, 9 of whom are involved in the direct care of the early years children. This includes the registered provider, who sometimes provides relief cover. One staff member works solely with school age children and another adult carries out maintenance work. Three students were also undertaking work placements.

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.

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, person in charge, 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) A named person in charge had been appointed, along with a deputy, who could deputise as needed.
- (b) The person in charge and the deputy were working at the service when the unannounced inspection commenced. The registered provider also attended the setting to facilitate the inspection. A review of the staff roster demonstrated that a person in charge was consistently present during the service's hours of operation.
- (2) Seven staff files which had not been reviewed previously were the focus of the inspection, along with those of three students, who were undertaking work placements. A qualification was also requested in respect of another adult, who, at the time of the previous inspection, had been working in the school age service.
- (a) There were 20 written and validated references required in total. Thirteen of these had been provided by past employers.
- (b) Seven of the 20 required written and validated references on file were from sources other than previous employers.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all 10 adults. However, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. Please refer to the information outlined under Regulation 23 of this report.
- (4) Records demonstrated that the five staff who worked directly with early years children had achieved a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education, as listed on the National Framework of Qualifications. In addition, a qualification was on file in respect of a staff member who was previously based in the school age service. It was also noted that the maintenance worker held a relevant childcare qualification.

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) The staffing levels were adequate in meeting the needs of the children.
- (3) The registered provider ensured that the requirements of the regulation were adhered to.
- There were 41 pre-school children, aged 3 to 4 ½ years, present between the 2 care rooms, on the morning of the inspection and 7 adults were responsible for their direct care and supervision. In addition, the person in charge and the registered provider were available to facilitate the inspection process. The two students present were not included in the adult to child ratios.

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

A sample of 10 registration forms were reviewed as part of the inspection process.

(1) The registration forms contained all of the required information, as listed from (a) to (i) of this regulation.

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)

Supporting relationships:

- The children appeared at ease during the calm and sociable mealtime routines that were facilitated by the adults. Singing and chatting were encouraged and the children were offered help to open food packaging and lunch boxes.
- Appropriate adult assistance was ensured in relation to the children's self-care. For example, when accessing and using the sanitary facilities, children were provided with verbal reminders. The adults also offered helpful guidance when supporting children to participate in daily activities and structured games.
- During free play, the children in both care rooms were observed to be focused and engaged in various tasks, such as construction play, jigsaw making, drawing and working with play dough.
- The service employed a variety of communication methods, in working in partnership with parents and guardians. For example, the use of a digital application allowed for the sharing of photographs, weekly updates, child observations and learning stories, with provision for parents to interact and provide feedback. The registered provider advised that parent teacher meetings were held annually and that in-person meetings were also facilitated, as the need arose. In addition, daily informal discussion was accommodated at arrival and collection times. Email and phone calls were also utilised.

- During discussion with the registered provider and the person in charge, the inspector was informed that, in order to ensure regular communication among staff, formal monthly meetings were accommodated. Written minutes were available to this effect. In conjunction with these meetings, daily discussion and room meetings also took place and staff one-to-ones were facilitated approximately once per term. Email and a messaging application were also used by staff to share information and ideas.

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 care rooms were adequately equipped with suitably sized tables and chairs, for the children’s use during seated activities and mealtime routines.
- Wall hangings within the care rooms reflected the children who attended and created a welcoming environment. These included the children’s artwork, family photographs and birthday displays.
- Low set, open shelving and low-level furniture allowed the children to freely access a broad range of developmentally appropriate materials. For example:
 - Interest items such as play tools, train sets and wooden blocks, accommodated construction play.
 - Home corners included play kitchens, dolls and dress up clothes, which encouraged imaginary play.
 - Chalkboards, paper, paint and a variety of other art and craft materials promoted mark making, sensory exploration and creativity.
 - Jigsaws, threading materials, connectable shapes and magnet tiles, supported the development of fine motor skills. The range of Montessori materials available also helped children to extend their fine motor development, as well as their practical life skills.
 - Other interest items such as musical instruments, books, a shop checkout and a furnished doll’s house, promoted language development and imaginary play.
- Outdoors, the play environment consisted of a number of enclosed spaces, each offering different experiences. For example, the playground area was equipped with climbing frames, seesaws and slides, which promoted gross motor development. A large area was available for active games and movement and a smaller space provided wall mounted blackboards, mud kitchens and seating, for tabletop activities.

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 access door to the building was secured through fob key entry. This practice minimised the risk of unauthorised persons gaining access to the care rooms.
- Outdoors, the play environments were secured through a combination of high-level fencing and gates.
- The risk of children accessing any potentially harmful items stored in low-level cupboards, was reduced through the use of restrictive opening devices.
- The blind cords in the care rooms were secured by tension devices.
- The first aid boxes were maintained out of reach of the children.

Infection control:

- Suitable handwashing and drying facilities were available in the children's sanitary area, including warm running water, liquid soap, disposable paper towels and a lidded, pedal-operated bin. The children were observed to wash their hands before eating and after using the toilet.
- Refrigerators were provided and utilised for the storage of perishable foods.
- Tables used for snack time were sanitised before use and the overall premises was maintained in a clean and hygienic condition.

Administration of medication:

- Prescribed medication that was held at the setting was found to be inaccessible to children, was in-date and had been appropriately labelled.

Fire safety:

- The emergency fire exits were unobstructed.
- Wall mounted storage was provided for firefighting equipment.

Non-Compliance Information

General safety:

While it was acknowledged that the required updated Garda vetting had been obtained for four staff members, the Garda vetting disclosure available for one of the students who worked at the service, was not dated within the

previous three years, in adherence to the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

The written reply outlined that the student in question was not present in the service on the day of inspection and was asked to not return for their final day of placement. They are no longer attached to the service.

As the service's current system for ensuring that all staff vetting is up to date has proved successful, this system has been extended to include students on placement. The relevant college has been contacted to ascertain why the student's vetting was not updated before being placed at the service and they are currently investigating this matter.

Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of the student vetting schedule and a copy of the email sent to the relevant college in relation to the out of date Garda vetting.

Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider was assessed and deemed to meet regulatory compliance with Regulation 23.

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.

Compliance Information

(1) First Aid Responder (FAR) certification was on file for four of the adults who worked at the setting and at least one of these adults was rostered to work at the service during the hours of operation.

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) Documentation in relation to completed monthly fire drills was presented for review. It was noted that the most recent fire drill was undertaken on 17 December 2025.
 - (b) Maintenance records demonstrated that the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarm system were both checked by a fire safety company on 10 October 2025.
- (4) Fire evacuation notices were clearly displayed in the care rooms.