

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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| 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: | 04/12/2023 |
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| No of pre-school children: | AM | 36 | PM | 8 |
|-----------------------------------|----|----|----|---|

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| Address of the Early Years Inspectorate: | Early Years Inspectorate Administration Building St Mary's Health Campus Gurranabraher Cork |
| 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).

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| Conditions if applicable | N/A |
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Description of service

Naíonra Toddle Inn and Afterschool is a privately owned sessional service, that has been in operation since 2021. It implements play based and Montessori pedagogy, through the medium of Irish and it is registered to cater for children aged two to six years. Three daily sessional services are facilitated under the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme; 8.45am to 11.45am, 9.00am to 12.00pm and 12.30pm to 3.30pm. A registered school age service is also provided from 1.30pm to 5.30pm, each Monday to Friday.

The service is located within Gaelscoil Uí Drisceoil primary school in Glanmire, Co. Cork. It consists of two operational care rooms, with adjacent children's sanitary facilities, an office, a staff kitchen, staff toilet facilities and storage space. There is a large outdoor play environment available beside the building, which includes several interest areas and is shared between the early years children and the primary school pupils.

Staffing

The service employs 11 adults, including the registered provider. One of the 11 staff members works only with school age children and at the time of inspection, a second adult was undertaking a work placement with the early years children in the morning and working with school age children in the afternoons. The registered provider and the remaining eight staff members, who are employed to work directly with the early years children, have each attained a relevant award 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 the 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) The registered provider had assigned a person in charge to oversee the operation of the service in the event of her absence and a deputy person in charge had also been appointed.
- (b) For the duration of the inspection, the person in charge was present. The registered provider arrived shortly after the inspection commenced to assist with the process.
- (2) Recruitment records in relation to all 11 staff members were assessed.
- (a) There were 15 written and validated references in place from past employers.
- (b) Seven of the written and validated references had been obtained from sources other than previous employers.
- (c) Evidence of Garda vetting from the National Vetting Bureau was on file in respect of all 11 adults.
- (d) Police vetting was deemed to be required for two of the adults and the relevant records were maintained, with suitable translations.
- (4) Written evidence regarding the attainment of a recognised award in Early Childhood Care and Education, as listed on the National Framework of Qualifications, was on file for nine staff members. Qualifications were not required for the adult who worked only with school age children or for the adult, who was undertaking a work placement with the early years children and working with school age 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) A sufficient number of adults were observed to work with the children who attended the service.

(3) The required adult to child ratios were adhered to. In the morning, the rooms were in operation as follows:

| Room Name and Age Range of Children | Number of Children Present | Number of Adults Present |
|--|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Seomra Féileacán (3 – 4 ½ years) | 17 | 3 |
| Seomra Bogha Báistí (2 years and 10 months – 4 ½ years) | 19 | 3 |

A student was not included in the adult child ratios.

In the afternoon, Seomra Féileacán was attended by eight children, aged three to four and a half years, who were cared for by one adult.

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:*
- (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.*

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (j) Two of the children who attended the service had been prescribed specific medication. While there had been no requirement to administer this medication to date, written parental consent was in place for staff to administer the medication, if needed.
 - (k) The accident and incident records for the current term were assessed. Each record was noted to contain sufficient detail regarding the accident or incident and included a parent signature.

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)

Basic needs:

- In Seomra Féileacán, the children were accommodated to have a snack break shortly after 10.30am. The adults ensured that this was a calm, unhurried time for children, who were observed to chat freely with their peers, as they enjoyed their food. Appropriate assistance was provided by staff members, for example, children were offered cutlery and were supported to open containers.
- Within each care room, the children's reusable water bottles were stored on low-level shelving in a fridge and could be easily retrieved by the children, as needed.
- As the children's sanitary facility was accessed separately from the care rooms, appropriate supervision of the children was ensured by staff members, while this area was in use. This practice was handled sensitively by the adults, who offered verbal reminders to the children.
- The children's need for rest and relaxation was met through the provision of suitable areas within the care rooms, where they could take time to read books and relax on sofas.
- The adults who worked at the setting were observed to be kind, attentive and engaging when interacting with the children in their care. For example, children were encouraged to share their news from the weekend, their efforts were readily acknowledged and adults ensured communication in relation to upcoming transitions within the daily routine.
- Protective aprons were supplied for the children's use during a painting activity.
- There was adequate space available in both rooms to accommodate a variety of structured and free play activities. Outdoor play and games were also accommodated, during which time the children wore suitable clothing, such as coats, hats and gloves.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 22 – Food and drink

A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

- The Healthy Eating policy in place was suitable for the sessional category of service offered.
- The children’s parents or guardians supplied food for the children’s snack breaks and it was confirmed that they had been provided with a copy of the service’s Healthy Eating policy at the beginning of the school year.
- The varied snacks available to the children reflected the promotion of healthy eating at the setting. Examples included sandwiches, crackers with hummus, bread rolls, rice cakes, yogurts, cheese and fruit such as oranges, bananas and chopped grapes, with water to drink.
- The registered provider advised that one of the children had food allergies and that the relevant details in relation to this had been communicated to all parents, before their children commenced attending the service. A nut free policy was also in place, as a precaution.
- It was reported that children were free to select a snack from their own lunch box if they became hungry outside of routine snack times.

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 outdoor play area, located at the entrance to the service, was via a gate, which was found to be secure upon the inspector’s arrival. This reduced the risk of unauthorised persons gaining entry and the risk of a child exiting, while unsupervised. The perimeter of the outdoor play space was enclosed by fencing.
- Entry to the main building was through the use of a fob, with an intercom system provided for parents and visitors.

- An electronically operated half door was in place on the corridor that provided access to the main national school. The positioning of the door release button at adult height prevented the children from entering this area of the building.
- Restrictive opening devices were fitted to cupboard doors, which contained potentially hazardous items.
- First aid boxes were wall mounted, out of the children's reach.
- The fire exit route was maintained free from obstruction.
- Fire extinguishers were securely wall mounted.
- Electrical sockets located at the children's level were fitted with safety plugs.
- Blind cords were examined and found to have been adequately secured with tension devices.

Infection Control:

- Refrigerators were provided and utilised for the storage of perishable foods.
- There was a supply of warm running water at each of the wash hand basins within the service, along with liquid soap, disposable paper towels and lidded, pedal operated bins.
- The children were observed to wash their hands after using the sanitary facilities and before beginning their mid-morning snack.
- The care rooms, sanitary facilities and overall premises were clean and well maintained. Cleaning by staff was also observed in between the morning and afternoon sessional services.
- Suitable storage was available for the children's outdoor clothing and bags; a combination of wall hooks and shelves was used.

Administration of Medication:

- The administration of medication was not observed at the time of inspection.
- Staff had received training in relation to administering the medication which may be required by one of the children. A corresponding health care plan was displayed in the care room attended by the child. This included emergency contact details, signs and symptoms of the medical condition and important information regarding the medication.
- Medication maintained in the service was stored safely out of the children's reach, appropriately labelled and was in-date.

Safe Sleep:

- The children were not noted to sleep during the inspection period.

Fire Safety:

- Fire exits were free from obstruction.

Outings:

- Outings from the service were not undertaken, as confirmed by the registered provider.

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) Evidence was available to demonstrate that four of the staff members held up to date First Aid Responder (FAR) training.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service was insured to provide sessional care for up to 44 children to attend at any one time, with cover valid until 27 March 2024. School age care was also included in the insurance policy.