

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2021DY004		
Name of Service:	Naíonra Lios na nÓg		
Address of Service:	21a Oakley Road, Ranelagh, Dublin 6, Co. Dublin		
Eircode:	D06WF43		
Name of Registered Provider:	Carol Merriman, Jane Ní Chonchúir		
Service type:	Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	08/09/2025		
No of pre-school children:	AM	17	PM Not applicable
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Brunel Building Heuston South Quarter Kilmainham Dublin 8		
Inspection undertaken by:	A Spain		
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		

Description of service

Naíonra Lios na nÓg is a naíonra preschool service caring for children in the age range 3 to 6 years. The service is operational between the hours of 8.40am and 12.10pm during school terms. The service has the use of a playroom and sanitary accommodation for both children and staff working in the service. The rooms in use are located on the ground floor of the school building which has basement, ground floor and first floor levels. The children cared for in the service transition into the Gaelscoil on site. The service has the use of an outdoor play area at the front of the service and an area outdoors at basement level. A school age service is operational between the hours of 1.15 and 2.15pm during school terms.

Staffing

The service is staffed by three adults which includes one of the registered providers who works directly with the children.

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 and safety. 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 11 – Staffing levels,
Regulation 16 – Records in relation to pre-school service,
Regulation 19 – Health, welfare and development of child,
Regulation 22 – Equipment and materials,
Regulation 23 – Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child,
Regulation 25 – First aid,
Regulation 26 – Fire safety measures,
Regulation 27- Supervision,
Regulation 28 – Insurance.

The scope of the inspection included the rooms in use in the service and the outdoor play area.

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, 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.

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(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 service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.

(b)

Both the designated person in charge and the named person to deputise were present in the service on arrival of the inspector and for the duration of the inspection.

(c)

The three key workers in the service were observed to have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities as they cared for the children and engaged them in play activities.

(2)(a)(b)

Two references from past employers and two references from reputable sources were held on file in respect of two staff members. A reference from a past employer and a reference from a reputable source was held on file in respect of the remaining staff member.

(c)

Garda vetting disclosures were held on file in respect of the three staff members working in the service. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years in respect of two staff members. Please also refer to regulation 23 of this report.

(d)

Police vetting was not required as none of the staff had lived outside of the state for over six consecutive months as adults.

(3)

Records held on file confirmed that the necessary vetting procedures were conducted prior to staff appointment to work directly with the children.

(4)

Documented evidence was available to confirm that all staff working directly with the children held a major award in Early childhood Care and Education varying from level 5 to level 7 on the National Qualifications Framework.

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)
Children were cared for in a room in the school building dedicated to the preschool and an afterschool service. An adequate number of adults worked and cared for the children present on the day of inspection.

(3)
The adult to child ratio was maintained as evidenced by the following which was observed on the day of inspection.

Three staff members cared for 17 children in the age range 3 to 5 years for a morning sessional service on the day of inspection. The inspector also reviewed the children's attendance records and the staff roster for the 28 and 29 August 2025. Records confirmed that the maximum number of children in daily attendance was 18 children with three staff members present.

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:

(k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.

Compliance Information

(k)
The inspector reviewed a sample of accidents and incidents recorded from March 2023 to May 2024. The records included details of the accidents/incidents, remedial measures taken, and were signed by a staff member, the service manager and a parent. This was in keeping with the accident and incident policy also reviewed by the inspector. A staff member was familiar with the procedure for recording accidents and incidents when asked about the process.

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)

Children were observed to be encouraged and supported to use the toilets independently and were praised by the staff for both using the toilet and washing their hands afterwards. Children were observed to be prepared for transitions by staff so that they knew what to expect in advance. Examples of this included taking their bags to tables for lunch boxes to be returned to after break time, lining up for hand washing prior to lunch time and taking their lunch boxes in turn from the refrigerator in the playroom at break time.

Break time in the service was relaxed with pleasant social conversation between the children and the staff members sitting at the tables with the children present. Children were afforded time to enjoy their sandwiches, rice cakes, yogurts, fresh fruit and water while other children returned to play with toys in the room. Children were observed to sit in the raised rest area of the playroom which was provided with soft cushions to sit on and books to choose, as they required rest or wanted to opt out of activities.

Staff were observed to be mindful of the children's cues. The inspector was introduced to the children on their request and children needing comfort were set on staff members laps. A child's wish not to have a birthday celebrated conspicuously was respected by staff by marking the occasion with a brief hand clapping exercise in the playroom.

Staff in the service were observed to ensure that the environment of the service was both social and interesting for the children and was focused on their active engagement and involvement in activities. Examples of this included sitting the children to colour pictures using blackberries as paint, passed around in bowls to the children. Children sat in a circle with the staff to listen to the story about "Mickey Monkey" at the zoo. The children observed pictures in the book and watched the puppet used to illustrate the story. Time was allowed to pause the story, listen to and answer the children's questions. At home time, chairs were grouped in pairs, children sat with their Lewis tickets and returned the ticket to the staff member on the arrival of a parent for collection.

Children had use of two separate outdoor play areas enclosed at the front of the building and at basement level for energetic play outdoors. Children played outdoors on arrival to the service between 9.00 and 9.40am. A second slot was allocated for outdoor play on the school grounds between 10.20 and 10.35am daily.

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 service was equipped with low level tables and chairs for children to sit for play activities and during snack time in the service. Toys and play equipment were observed to be in good repair and clean. Natural materials available to the children on the day of inspection included leaves, rhubarb sticks and fruit grown in gardens which included apples, pears and blackberries for children pass to each other, feel textures and smell. Toys located at low level for children to play with of their choice included wooden play houses in home corners, miniature animals, figures, toys on wheels and blackboards for children to develop writing skills . A variety of blocks, bricks and connecting toys were provided for construction play. Jigsaws, puzzles, and games were located on open low level shelving within easy reach of children. Pencils, colours, paint, paintbrushes, paper, and scissors were provided for arts and crafts activities. Shapes cut out and coloured, painted pictures, as well as a tree designed from paper, were among the children’s artwork on display. Examples of children's art and crafts work to illustrate their emerging interests were held in storage on open shelves and in individual folders for children to take home on Fridays and at the end of the year term.

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:

Entrance to the service was secured by a cast iron gate at the entrance to the school grounds which was secured and a key pad provided for staff access. A Bell was provided on the gate to signal arrival of parents. There was direct access to the playroom from outdoors to allow parents and guardians to enter through a timber gate off the entrance to the service and avoid access to the school building. Cleaning agents and chemicals were stored in a secured press under the sink in the playroom. Wall hooks were provided in the lobby area off the toilet to hang childrens coats off the floor in an area outside of the playroom.

Infection Control:

The room floors, furniture and play equipment was observed to be clean and well maintained on the day of inspection. A sink was provided in the playroom to assist with daily cleaning. A child height washhand basin was provided in the playroom to assist with hand washing after messy play and at break times. The washhand basin in the playroom and in the childrens sanitary accommodation were serviced with thermostatically controlled hot water, liquid soap, disposable paper towels and foot pedal operated refuse bins. A refrigerator was provided in the playroom to store perishable foods and snacks provided from home for break time.

Administration of Medication:

No medication was administered to children on the day of inspection. Temperature reducing medication was stored in a press in the playroom. Permission to administer temperature reducing medication in the event of an emergency was included on the enrolment forms for the children.

Fire Safety:

Fire exit doors off the hallway to the service were clearly signposted. A fire assembly point was posted on the wall close to the entrance gate leading to the premises.

Outing:

The service had a documented risk assessment which covered an annual outing conducted by the service and signed parental consent to partake in the outing was secured as part of the service policy on outings. The inspector also reviewed the outings policy for the service. It was observed that risk assessments conducted were in keeping with the requirements of the documented outings policy for the service.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

In relation to Garda vetting for one staff member, re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years, were not adhered to. It was acknowledged that the registered provider submitted written confirmation on the 16 September 2025 to confirm that re-vetting for the staff member was submitted to the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána and accepted for processing on the 9 September 2025. A processed Garda vetting was subsequently submitted to the inspector as conducted on the 18 September 2025.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

The registered provider advised in the CAPA response to the inspection report that an outstanding processed Garda vetting for one staff member was received and forwarded to the inspector on the 22 September 2025, as received. As a preventive measure, it was advised in the CAPA response that a staff meeting was held after the inspection and a staff member was allocated to review all Garda vetting to ensure renewal dates for Garda vetting are not missed and are followed up on.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

An outstanding renewed Garda vetting was submitted to the inspector.

Summary Comment

The registered provider provided actions to correct and prevent the recurrence of the non-compliance identified on inspection. This has been accepted by the inspectorate and is deemed to meet the regulatory requirement.

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)
A staff member with up to date First Aid Response (FAR) training with an expiry date of 23 November 2026 was available to the children attending the preschool service.
- (2)(a)(b)
A first aid box was stored in a press in the playroom and was easily accessible to staff caring for children in attendance in the service.

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.*
- (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)
The service maintained a record of fire drills conducted in the service. The last monthly fire drill was recorded on 20 June 2025 and before the end of the school term.
- (b)
The maintenance record for the firefighting equipment located in the hallway outside of the service confirmed that an annual service was conducted in January 2025. The maintenance record for the smoke alarm system confirmed that a service was conducted on 20 June 2025.
- (4)
A notice of the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire was on display on the wall in the playroom.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.

Compliance Information

Children in the service were observed to be supervised at all times during the course of the inspection. Staff were observed to work as a team to ensure supervision of the children during activity time, while children moved to the resting area, during break time, when children went to the toilet and when parents and guardians arrived to collect the children at home time.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service had insurance cover for a maximum of 20 children in daily attendance in a sessional service. Insurance cover was valid from the 28 March 2025 to the 27 March 2026.