

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2023DL001
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Name of Service:	Coiste Forbartha Dhobhair Teo
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Address of Service:	Ionad Naomh Padraig, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal
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Eircode:	F92 EH6N
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Name of Registered Provider:	Máire Uí Chomhaill
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Service type:	Part Time
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Date of Inspection:	21/04/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	NA	PM	14
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, TUSLA Child & Family Agency, Markievicz House, Barrack St, Sligo, F91 XC84
Inspection undertaken by:	K Folan
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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Description of service

Coiste Forbartha Dhobhair Teo is a part time service offering care to children aged 3 to 6 years from 12:00 to 16:00 from Monday to Friday. The service is located within the building of Ionad Naomh Padraig in the townland of Dobhair in County Donegal. The service operates from one main care room on the ground floor with access to a large indoor sports hall, dining room and playroom on the first floor. A school age service is onsite, with school age children joining the preschool room at 14:00. There is an outdoor play area to the rear of the premises fully enclosed with a boundary fence.

Staffing

There are five adults employed in the service. The registered provider is on site on a daily basis but does not work directly with the children. Of the five adults, two adults work directly with the preschool children on a daily basis. Three of the adults work with the school age 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, safety, premises and facilities*. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

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The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9,11,19,23,25,26 and 28. However, on inspection additional non-compliances which posed a risk were identified under Regulation 8, 21 and 24. 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.

Additional Information

An internal Tusla referral was made in relation to the service operating outside of its registered status.

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.

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Part II - Registration and Register

Regulation 8 - Notification of change in circumstances

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a temporary pre-school service shall, subject to paragraph (3), notify the Agency in writing of any proposed change in the details in relation to the pre-school service contained in the register pursuant to section 58C(2) of the Act or Regulation 7(2) at least 60 days before it is proposed that the change would take effect.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) The service is registered to open from 12:00 to 16:00 from Monday to Friday, however the registered provider informed the inspector that the early years children attend the service until 17:00. On the day of the inspection five preschool children remained in the service at 16:20.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

A change in circumstance application was made to extend the opening hours.

Supporting documentation submitted

Documentary evidence submitted.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider adequately address the non-compliance found on inspection. This regulation is now compliant.

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,*

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- (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) The registered provider ensured that:

- a) There was a designated person in charge and a named adult to deputise in their absence.
- b) The designated person in charge was available on the premises throughout the period of inspection.
- c) There was 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.

(2)

The staff files of six adults, including the registered provider were reviewed, and the following vetting information was available:

- (a) Four written validated references from past employers for three of the adults.
- (b) Five written validated reference from reputable sources for three of the adults.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for six adults. However, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as 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.
- (d) Police vetting from the police authorities in another state was not required as employment records demonstrated that no adults had lived outside the state for a period of six consecutive months or more.

(4) Evidence of completion of a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent was on file for two staff members from the Department of Children, Disability and Equality.

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Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a)(b)

1. There were no references on file for one adult.
2. One reference was not available for one adult.

(4) There was no qualification on file for one adult. On discussion with the registered provider, it was established that one adult, working directly with the preschool children did not have the required qualification.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. All references have now been obtained. We have noted that references will be required in future before commencing employment.
2. All references have now been obtained. We have noted that references will be required in future before commencing employment.

Supporting documentation submitted

1. Documentary evidence submitted.
2. Documentary evidence submitted.

(4)

One of our School Aged Children Educators covered a break for our Early Years Leader, she did not have the relevant qualifications. The relevant educator will not work in the early years' service until qualified.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider adequately address the non-compliance found on inspection. This regulation is now compliant.

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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.*

(2) *Subject to paragraphs (4) and (5), a registered provider of a full day care service or a part-time day care service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 1 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) thereof at that reference number is satisfied.*

Compliance Information

(1) On the day of inspection, there was an adequate number of adults working directly with the preschool children attending the service.

(2)

On the afternoon of the inspection the following ratios were observed:

- Two adults cared for 14 children aged between 3 years and 5 months and 5 years and 2 months.

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

(1) *A registered provider shall, in providing a pre-school service, ensure that-*

(b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)(b)

Basic Need

- The service provides a snack and hot meal to the children. All food is freshly prepared on site, and a weekly menu was available. Alternative food was available should a child refuse their meal for any reason; however this was not required on the day of the inspection.

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- On the day of the inspection dinner was cottage pie and snack was a selection of fruit.
- Fresh drinking water was available to the children throughout the day.
- On the day of the inspection, the children had access to the outdoor playground.
- Spare clothing was available for each child, should they require it.

Supporting relationships

- Staff informed the inspector that communication with parents takes place at drop off and pick up times, and via telephone if necessary.
- Staff were observed interacting respectfully with the children and speaking kindly to them. For example, some of the children requested their preferred toys which were in another location, the staff responded in a timely manner and retrieved the items for the children.
- The service promotes the Irish language through conversation, songs, books and posters displayed on the wall.
- The service has links to the local community, with the children attending a nearby sessional service in the morning. Staff informed the inspector of the communication process in place between the services to ensure the children's wellbeing, and to prepare the children for starting primary school.

Physical and material environment

The environment was bright and spacious, with ample room for the children to move freely around the room. Materials were stored on low level shelving to allow the children to access the items independently. A play kitchen, dress up area, large plastic bricks and vehicles were available to the children. Puzzles and prewriting materials were neatly organised and accessible to the children.

The outdoor environment was recently renovated to include a brightly coloured easy fall surface and a range of equipment for climbing to support the children's gross motor development.

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Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

(1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day, and

(b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(b) At 13:00, ten children were observed resting side by side on 2 large sofa's which were reclined to a flat position. These sofas were not adequate and suitable for the number of preschool children present. There was not adequate space of 50cm between each child. It is acknowledged that the registered provider has ordered additional low level individual stackable beds.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Low level stackable beds have been ordered and the sofas will no longer be used for sleeping.

Supporting documentation submitted

1. Receipt submitted.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider adequately address the non-compliance found on inspection. This regulation is now compliant.

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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 main entrance into the service was found to be secured upon the inspectors' unannounced arrival to the service. A restricted entry system was provided allowing staff to control access preventing persons entering unauthorised and children from leaving the care room unsupervised.
- The outdoor play area was securely enclosed with high-level fencing and gated access points.
- Materials were observed to be in a good state of repair.
- Warm running water was available for hand washing at a temperature below 43°C.
- Cleaning products and equipment were stored out of the reach of children.

Infection Control:

- The materials and resources throughout the service were visually clean.
- Tables were observed to be cleaned prior to and after mealtimes in both care rooms.
- There was adequate handwashing facilities provided throughout the service with thermostatically controlled warm water, liquid soap and paper towels.
- Sanitary facilities were observed to be kept maintained and clean.
- Ventilation across the service was provided through a combination of openable windows and mechanical systems.
- Child friendly handwashing posters were placed beside the sinks.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Garda vetting was available for one staff member. However, this vetting disclosure was not dated within the previous three years in adherence to with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.

Infection Control:

2. In the sanitary accommodation, swing top bins were in place for the disposal of waste. Foot operated pedal bins are required to reduce cross contamination.

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Administration of Medication:

3. On discussion with staff, the inspector was informed that one child in the service occasionally required medication. However, while a care plan and medication consent form were available, no records of the details of medication administered in the service were kept.

Safe Sleep:

4. Between 13:10 and 13:50, four children were observed sleeping on low level stackable beds. No physical sleep checks were carried out or recorded.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. Garda Vetting renewal was applied for. We will ensure Garda Vetting is up to date in the future.

Infection Control:

2. Foot operated pedal bins were obtained.

Administration of Medication:

3. Medine records have been generated and are in place.

Safe Sleep:

4. Sleep records were generated and are now in place.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. Documentary evidence submitted.

Infection Control:

2. Photographic evidence submitted.

Administration of Medication:

3. Documentary evidence submitted.

Safe Sleep:

4. Documentary evidence submitted.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider adequately address the non-compliance found on inspection. This regulation is now compliant.

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Part VI - Safety

Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) Although a daily list of the children expected in the service is kept, children attending the service were not checked in or out which poses a risk to the safety of the children in the event of an emergency evacuation.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

We have generated a Check in/Check out Record Sheet for all children attending our service to ensure the safety of all children. These records will be completed on a daily basis.

Supporting documentation submitted

Documentary evidence submitted.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider adequately address the non-compliance found on inspection. This regulation is now compliant.

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.*

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Compliance Information

- (1)
One adult was a trained First Aid Responder (FAR) in the service and was one adult was available to the children at all times during the day.
- (2)(a)(b)
There was a suitably equipped first aid box available in the service. The first aid box was stored in an easily accessible position.

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-*
- (a) *a parent or guardian of a pre-school child attending or proposing to attend the pre-school service,*
 - (b) *an employee, and*
 - (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.*

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) A procedure was in place to practice and record monthly fire drills. The last documented fire drill was 20 April 2026.
 - (b) A record of the number, type, and maintenance of firefighting equipment and smoke detection system in the service was on file. Records indicated that the last annual maintenance for the firefighting equipment was dated July 2025. The records for the smoke detection system indicated the last service occurred on 04 March 2026.
- (2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) was available and open to inspection by-
- (c) an authorised person.

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(4) On the day of inspection, a notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire were observed to be displayed in a conspicuous place within the premises.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured adequate insurance was in place for part time care service for 16 preschool children up until 21 March 2027.