

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2023DL002				
Name of Service:	Naíonra Páistí Sásta				
Address of Service:	Devlinreagh, Carrigart, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal				
Eircode:	F92 E680				
Name of Registered Provider:	Mary Ann Coyle, Evelyn McClafferty				
Service type:	Part Time, Sessional				
Date of Inspection:	26/02/2024				
No of pre-school children:	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>AM</td> <td>17</td> <td>PM</td> <td>-</td> </tr> </table>	AM	17	PM	-
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Donegal Early Years Inspectorate, St. Conal's Campus, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal. F95 XK94
Inspection undertaken by:	L Mc Glynn
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

Naíonra Páistí Sásta is a preschool service located in the grounds of the local national school in the townland of Devlinreagh, Carrigart. The service operates through the medium of Irish and provides both part time and sessional care for children aged 2-6 years. The morning part time service runs from 8.00am to 1.00pm with the sessional service operating from 9.15am to 12.15pm. The evening session operates from 1.00pm to 4.00pm. The service is operated from a dedicated room within the primary school building. Accommodation includes one large playroom, a sensory room with connecting storeroom and sanitary facilities for adults and children. A large outdoor play area is available on the premises with sanitary accommodation adjacent to it.

Staffing

There are five staff members employed to work in the service, two of which are employed in a relief capacity when required. On the day of inspection, there were two staff members and one student on educational placement working directly with the children.

The service has two registered providers both of which work directly with the preschool children on a daily basis.

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 announced and focused on the area of governance/ health, welfare and development of child/ safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 19 and 23; however, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 27. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulation 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.

Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered providers, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

(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

(2) There were five staff members and two students on work placement working in the service at the time of the inspection. The files for all seven adults were reviewed as part of this inspection and the following information was available.

(a) and (b) Two references from past employers, including the most recent employer or a source other than a past employer in cases where there was no past employment was available for two adults. One past employer reference was available for one adult.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all seven adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(4) Certification evidence of a Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) minimum Level 5 qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education or equivalent was on file for the five adults who required it.

Non-Compliance Information

(2) (a) (b)

- There was no evidence of consideration of references for two adults.
- A second validated reference was required for one adult.
- Four of the references on file for three adults were not validated by the service.

(d) There was no record of experience on file for two adults therefore the requirement for international police vetting could not be determined. There was also no form of identification on file for both these adults.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2) (a) (b) References are now on file. References will be checked and validated with each new employee or student starting. There will be a recruitment checklist in service going forward.

(d) A full file has been put together for both students. CVs will be checked for each new employee and student starting. We will make sure there is no gaps and all years are accounted for.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copies of validated references, records of employment and identification were submitted to evidence compliance.

Summary Comment

The information submitted by the registered provider has been reviewed. The non-compliances identified under Regulation 9 (2) and (d) have been adequately addressed.

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) The minimum number of adults were working with the children during the inspection.
- (2) On the morning of inspection there were 17 children aged 2-4 years being cared for by two adults. Of the 17 children attending, 6 children attended the part time service and 11 children attended on a sessional basis.

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) Childrens basic care needs were tended to by staff in a prompt and efficient manner. Children were independent when using the sanitary facilities and staff were observant, providing gentle assistance when required. Childrens hands were washed at appropriate intervals and children were supported to clean their own nose when needed. Children brought healthy and nutritious snacks from home and sat together

in a social group to eat. Independence was supported by children distributing lunchboxes, retrieving cutlery and crockery as required and feeding themselves. Children were observed to be given ample time to finish their lunch and staff were heard encouraging children to take their time and enjoy their food.

Staff members were observed to be kind, caring and patient in their interactions with children. Children appeared to be comfortable with the routine of the day and relaxed in their surroundings. Children played alongside each other, and minor disputes were dealt with in a positive manner by staff. Children appeared to have made connections within the group and were comfortable in their social interactions. Staff encouraged turn taking, listening and kindness with children and provided comfort and reassurance when children were upset.

The preschool room and adjoining areas presented as a print rich environment with numerous displays of children's artwork, images of children at play and representations of children's individuality through their creative pieces. Each of the interest areas in the room were accompanied by wall displays of children engaged in play relevant to the learning opportunities available in the area. There was also various real-world images such as farm animals and growing crops beside the farm table. Each of the interest areas in the room were well resourced with a mix of both real world and pretend play items to allow children to engage in meaningful play opportunities. For example, the home corner contained old toasters, tea pots, saucepans and food containers alongside the plastic play items. Children were observed to be actively engaged when in the interest areas, playing independently or alongside their peers. The room was adequately resourced to provide different types of play and learning opportunities for children. The farm, home and construction are provided space for role and imaginary play. Open shelving and drawers housed manipulative play items and toys which supported children cognitive development and a large book corner provided opportunities for early literacy development. There was a separate section within the room housing messy and creative play items such as sand, water and sensory trays. Two large wall hanging painting easels and mark making items were also available.

Children played outdoors on the day of inspection in a designated play area within the grounds of the school. The area was well resourced with a range of play items and interest areas to provide for children's gross motor play with an area for cycling and running. A large wooden structure provided space for climbing and swinging. There was also space for digging, planting and a large wooden playhouse for role

play. The area was partially covered overhead providing shelter from inclement weather and picnic benches in the shelter was used by children for more focused activities.

The play activities of the day were structured around a daily routine allowing time for free play, large group time and outdoor play. There was evidence of curriculum planning in the service with evaluations of children's learning ongoing through observations and learning stories. Staff used large portfolios to compile children's artwork and observations of their learning which was to be given to parents at the end of the year. Staff demonstrated an understanding of individual children's learning needs and tailored the activities accordingly.

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 building was secured on the inspector's arrival with a buzzer system alerting staff to visitors. The boundary of the outdoor play area was enclosed with wooden fencing and high-level securing mechanisms on the gate to prevent children leaving the area unsupervised.
- Cleaning equipment and products were stored in an area inaccessible to children.
- All exit routes within the service were free from obstruction.
- Toys and play resources were noted to be clean, in good repair and appropriate for children's use.

Infection Control:

- The hot water supply at children's wash hand basins was thermostatically controlled to not exceed the maximum safe limit of 43°C. Children were observed washing their hands at appropriate intervals with adult support when required. A wash hand basin was available in the room with liquid soap and paper towels to facilitate hand hygiene practices throughout the day.

- The main waste storage bins were in a secure area away from the children’s play areas. Foot pedal operated bins are available within the room and the sanitary accommodation.
- Childrens lunches containing perishable food items were sorted in a refrigerator in the room.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. There were whole grapes in two children’s lunch boxes posing a choking hazard. It is acknowledged that when alerted to the risk by the inspector, staff immediately removed the grapes for cutting.
2. There was a small trampoline in the outdoor play area. Trampolines are prohibited from being used on site by pre-school children unless prescribed as a therapeutic intervention, in which case they should only be used for that purpose.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. A reminder letter was sent to all parents and guardians of the healthy eating policy and safe preparation of food. Going forward, lunch boxes will be checked each day.
2. The trampoline was removed immediately following the inspection and will no longer be in use unless under therapeutic interventions.

Supporting documentation submitted

Documentation was submitted to support evidence of compliance.

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Summary Comment

The assurances provided by the registered provider have been accepted and the non-compliances identified under Regulation 23 have been adequately addressed.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

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

Non-Compliance Information

From approximately 10.55am to 11.10am there were two children in the sensory room. While playing in this room, children were supervised by a student on educational placement. Students on educational placement are required to be under the supervision of staff and not left alone with children at any time.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

A review of the student policy has taken place and students will not be left without staff supervision going forward.

Supporting documentation submitted

No documentation submitted.

Summary Comment

The assurances provided by the registered provider have been accepted in addressing the non-compliance. This regulation will be subject to review on the next inspection.