

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DR062
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Name of Service:	Fontanelles Montessori
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Address of Service:	Mount Merrion Community Centre, North Avenue, Mount Merrion, Co. Dublin
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Eircode:	A94 R2Y4
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Name of Registered Provider:	Emma Behan
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	11/06/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	20	PM	Not Applicable
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate - Tusla Child and Family Agency Brunel Building, Floor 7 Heuston South Quarter Dublin 8, D08 X01F
Inspection undertaken by:	M Bermingham
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

Fontanelles Montessori is registered to provide sessional care for up to 22 children aged 2-6 years and operating hours are 09:00-12:30. The service operates in a room, named Tatiana, on the ground floor of a community centre, and the room is used by another organisation in the afternoons. There is an outdoor play area to the side of the building that is fully enclosed, and the service has use of the community centre hall.

Staffing

There are three adults employed by the service all who work directly with children. There were two adults present on the day of inspection, and the registered provider arrived after the inspection started.

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.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulation 15 – Record of a Pre-School Child.

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-

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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*
- (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.

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(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) That service had a named person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.
- (b) The person in charge and/or the deputy were rostered to be present on the premises for the duration of the opening hours.
- (c) A clear management structure was in place, as evidenced by observing the operation of the service and through discussion with staff.

(2)

There were three adults employed in the service who commenced employment prior to the last inspection dated 15 November 2023, as evidenced through a review of previous inspection information and discussion with the person in charge. Garda vetting renewals were reviewed for these three existing adults and were found compliant as follows:

- (d) Garda vetting renewals were available in accordance with the Early Years Inspectorate's regulatory notice requiring three-year Garda vetting renewal for all adults employed.

(3)

Recruitment vetting documentation for the three existing adults was reviewed on the previous inspection.

(4)

Qualification records for the three existing adults were reviewed on the previous inspection.

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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.

(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)

An adequate number of adults were working directly with the children at all times during the inspection.

(3)

The minimum ratio of adults to children was adhered to at all times during the inspection; there were 2 adults caring for 20 children.

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;*

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(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

(1)

A sample of 12 child records were reviewed, and 7 records were found to contain the complete set of required information as follows:

- (a) The name and date of birth of the child.
- (b) The date when the child first attended the service.
- (c) Provision for recording the date when the child would cease to attend the service.
- (d) The names, addresses, and telephone numbers of parents and an alternative contact, and information on how to contact a parent or an alternative contact during the operational hours of the service.
- (e) Authorisation for the collection of the child.
- (f) Provision for the recording of any illness, disability, allergy or special needs of the child, and relevant information to support the provision of special care or attention.
- (g) The name and telephone number of the child's medical practitioner.
- (h) Written consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)

Five of the 12 child records under review did not contain some of the following required information;

- (d) The names, addresses, and telephone numbers of an alternative contact, and information on how to contact an alternative contact during the operational hours of the service.
- (e) Authorisation for the collection of the child.
- (h) Record of immunisations, if any, received by the child.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (1) The registered provider stated that all forms were updated and completed correctly to include emergency contacts, authorised collections and immunisations, and that all forms will be checked by staff members.

Supporting documentation submitted

Supporting documentation was submitted by the registered provider and reviewed by the inspector.

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Summary Comment

The actions stated by the registered provider adequately addressed the non-compliance identified under Regulation 15.

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

(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

19(1)(a)(b) The following observations demonstrated how children's learning, development, and well-being was facilitated within the daily life of the service and how appropriate and suitable care practices were in place:

Children ate a snack at 11:20 which was provided by parents and consisted of healthy items to include fruit, vegetables, sandwiches, and crackers in line with the service's healthy eating policy. Children drank from individual water beakers. Adults assisted children open lunchboxes and encouraged children to eat. Adults supervised and supported children's personal care and using the toilet.

The daily routine was displayed along with picture reminders and consisted of opportunities for Montessori work, play, and snack. Adults communicated with each other as they invited and guided children respectfully through transitions in which children appeared familiar and content. Children were engaged in their play and Montessori work to include, for example, sand and shells wooden blocks and stairs, number cards and counters, threading, puzzles, playdough. Adults continually guided, praised and encouraged children to support and extend learning. Adults sat with children in both small and large groups reading stories, singing songs, and circle time. The environment supported children's learning and development and was clearly laid out and organised with materials accessible and inviting to children from low open shelves. Children fetched and replaced materials throughout the morning. There were a variety of books available and seating for reading or rest.

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Children's social and emotional development was supported as adults engaged with children socially with warm and kind interactions. Adults comforted and reassured children when needed and promoted positive interactions among children in line with displayed picture reminders of kindness and positive behaviour. Children and their home lives were reflected in the environment through displays of their artwork, birthdays and family pictures and labels on their coat hooks. Children's family life and individual preferences were documented and adults demonstrated that they were knowledgeable about families which is important for a sense of belonging and identity for children.

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

The following measures were taken to safeguard the health, safety, and welfare of children and provide a safe environment, as evidenced by observation of practise, I review of the environment and documentation, and through discussion with staff:

General Safety:

- That entrance into the service was appropriately secured to prevent unauthorised access or children exiting the service unsupervised.
- The outdoor area was enclosed and secure.
- Windows were made safe to prevent a child exiting or falling.
- Blind cords were secured and made safe.
- Toys and play equipment were in good condition.
- Cleaning agents were stored out of reach of children.

Infection Control:

- The premises, environment, equipment and materials appeared clean and were maintained in a hygienic condition in line with the services infection control policy and cleaning records were updated.
- Effective hand washing was facilitated, through the provision of warm running water, liquid soap, and dispensed paper towels, in line with the infection control policy. The children were supported to wash their hands after using the toilet and before meals.

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- Waste was inaccessible to children and managed appropriately in line with the service's infection control policy.

Administration of Medication:

- Staff demonstrated their familiarity with the procedures and practices in place for the administration of medication in line with the services policy on medication.
- Prior parental consent was recorded to administer medication if required with procedures in place to administer and document such medication if required, including in the case of an emergency.
- Medication was clearly labelled, within its expiry date, stored in the original container, and stored out of reach of children.

Fire Safety:

- Emergency escape routes and exits were unobstructed and clearly signposted.
- Staff outlined the procedures to evacuate children in the event of a fire and knew the location of the assembly point, in line with the services procedures that were displayed.