

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015KY016
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Name of Service:	Bright Sparks Montessori
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Address of Service:	Asdee National School, Asdee Village, Asdee, Co. Kerry
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Eircode:	V31 C997
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Name of Registered Provider:	Marie Enright
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	18/11/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	05	PM	None
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Áras an Phobail, Deans Lane, Tralee, Co, Kerry.
Inspection undertaken by:	N.Reidy
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	N/A

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Description of service

Bright Sparks Montessori is a private early years service that is registered to provide care for children aged between 2 years and 6 years. Currently the service caters for children between the age of 3 years and 5 years. The service is registered as operating 1 session between the hours of 09:00 am and 12pm. The premise consists of 1 playroom located within the national school. The children have access to a designated outdoor play area located to the rear of the building.

Staffing

There are 3 adults currently employed in the service that includes the registered provider who deputizes for the designated person in charge as needed and 1 adult employed under the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) Support Scheme. In addition, there is a named contact emergency person working in the national school in the event that 1 adult works single handedly.

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 inspections 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.

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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 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.

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Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) There is a designated person in charge and the registered provider deputizes 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 deputy is on the premise.
- (2)
- The person in charge confirmed that 3 adults were employed in the service. There is also a named adult working in the national school who is the emergency contact person.
- The recruitment records in respect of the 4 adults were the subject of the inspection.
- (a)
- Seven written references and validations were on file from a past employer.
- (b)
- One written reference was on file from a source other than a past employer.
- (c)
- The service had demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting disclosures every three years in respect of each of the 4 adults.
- (d)
- The service had a Police vetting disclosure in respect of two adults for whom it was required.
- (4) The adults working directly with the children had attained Quality Qualifications Ireland (QQI) in childcare training at Level 5 and above.

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.*
- (8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-*

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(c) a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that, where the person in charge operates the service single-handedly, a second person familiar with the operation of the service and in a position to provide assistance to the person in charge in operating the service is, at all times, within close distance of the service and available to attend the service to assist the person in charge in the event of an emergency.

Compliance Information

- (1) There were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children on the day of the inspection.
- (2) The adult child ratio was maintained. There were 2 adults caring for 5 children aged between 3 years and 5 years attending the service on a sessional basis.
- (8)(c) There are 2 adults working each day with the children.

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:

- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*

Compliance Information

- (1) There was a written record of the following:
 - (h) The arrival and departure time for each child on a daily basis.
 - (i) The arrival and departure time for each adult working in the service on a daily 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

Basic Needs

- The food served was provided by the parents and included sandwiches, crackers, cheese and a selection of fruits with water to drink.

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- The Children choose where they wanted to sit at the table supported by the staff. The staff supervised the children and assisted them as was required during the mealtime.
- The children had access to their individual drink's bottles during the session on the low-level ledge in the playroom. The inspector observed the children independently helping themselves to drinks outside of the midmorning snack time.
- The children attending had un-restricted access to the toilet located outside the playroom.
- The staff issued gentle reminders to children during the session about using the toilet.
- A quiet rest area consisting of soft matting, child sized seating, cushions and blankets was available for children who wanted to rest and relax.

Supporting Relationships

- The staff members were observed to be kind and caring in their interactions with the children. For example, a child who was feeling tired and unwell approaching home time was cuddled and comforted on the staff member's lap, the staff member re-assured the child that the parent was on enroute following prior telephone contact and taking a body temperature reading.
- The staff were observed to encourage and praise children for specific, positive behaviours for example sharing toys.
- The staff members facilitated a relaxed and unhurried mid-morning snack. The children who had finished eating before others had freedom to pick an activity for example some children went to the rest/ cosy area to pick out a book.
- The inspector was informed that the service communicates with parents via What's App, for example sending pictures of the children participating in various activities in the setting, in person at drop-off and collection times, planned in person meetings as needed and phone calls.

Physical and Material Environment

- The spacious room was clean, bright and airy.
- The room was laid out in clearly defined interest areas enabling the children to move about freely between the areas.
- There was open low-level shelving, storage boxes and baskets with a variety of toys for example shape sorters, puzzles, games, arts and crafts materials, paints, blocks, train sets, play kitchen with associated utensils and a selection of books.
- The children were participating in an ongoing activity of building a gingerbread man with the staff member explaining to the children the next steps in completing it.

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- The outdoor play area was not used on the day of the inspection due to the inclement weather conditions.

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 external door was secured to prevent children accessing out to the school yard and roadway unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons in.
- The blind cords were noted to be secured.
- The T.V screen was mounted securely.
- The medicine observed on inspection was stored securely in the locked in the playroom.

Infection Control:

- The tables were cleaned down after tabletop activity time and prior to the mid-morning snack time.
- The children's perishable food items were stored in the fridge to prevent food spoilage.
- The children were observed washing their hands under adult supervision, at the sink in the playroom prior to eating and after using the toilet.
- The staff were observed to remind the children when coughing to cough into their elbows.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety

- The temperature of the warm water accessible to the children at the sink in the sanitary accommodation was recorded at 47 degrees Celsius posing a scalding risk to children.

Fire Safety:

- The last fire drill conducted in the service was on 27.9.'24. It was acknowledged the registered provider submitted a record demonstrating that a fire drill was conducted following the inspection on 19/11/'24.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

- The National school have arranged for a Plumber to fix the problem, it will be fixed for the school re-opening in January. Until then as is evidenced in the video provided, the water supply has been turned off at the sink in question. The children are washing hands at the classroom sink.

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Fire Safety:

2. A fire drill was completed on 19.11.'24. The service will complete and record a fire drill every month.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. Video footage in respect of the warm water that has been turned off at the sink in the children's bathroom.

Fire Safety:

2. The record of the completed fire drill.

Summary Comment

The requirement for the regulation has been met.

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) The registered provider did ensure that there were staff available at all times with appropriate first aid responder (FAR) training. The FAR certifications on file indicated that the 2 staff members held current up to date training.
- (2) (a) There was a suitably equipped first aid box available to the children attending. The box was stored in the secured cupboard under the sink in the playroom.
(b) The first aid equipment was available to the children at all times.

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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) The service had maintained in writing a record of the following: -
- (a) A template to record each fire drill that had taken place in the service. The last recorded fire drill took place on 27.9.'24
 - (b) A record of the number, type, and maintenance checks of the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarm. The records on file demonstrated the last check for the smoke alarms was 29.03.'24 and for the firefighting equipment was 12.06.'24.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire was displayed in the service.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

- A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-
- (a) of sound and stable structure,
 - (b) safe and secure,
 - (c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated
 - (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and
 - (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.

Compliance Information

- (a)
- From a visual assessment, the building appeared to be of sound and stable structure.
- (b)
- The entrance door to the service was secure.

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(c)

- Within the playroom, natural lighting was provided via high level windows on 2 walls and this was supplemented with 4 enclosed lights in the playroom.
- Adequate lighting was also ensured in the sanitary facilities and the entrance hallway, via a combination of natural and artificial lighting.
- Natural ventilation was supplied via openable windows in the playroom and in the sanitary accommodation.

(d)

- The premises was observed to be maintained in a clean condition.
- There was a written cleaning schedule in place, with provision to record frequent cleaning of the various areas, materials and equipment throughout the service.

(e)

- The children had access to toilet facilities outside the playroom.
- There was 1 toilet and 1 wash hand basin provided for children's use.
- The sink in the playroom was allocated for children's use with a supply of warm running water that was thermostatically controlled to a maximum temperature of 43 degrees Celsius (temperature recorded was 41 degrees Celsius), liquid soap, disposable paper towels and a lidded, pedal-operated bin.