

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015OY045
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Name of Service:	The Montessori Clubhouse
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Address of Service:	Community Centre, Scurragh, Birr, Co. Offaly
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Eircode:	R42 YY13
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Name of Registered Provider:	Arlene Finnerty
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	11/06/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	6	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla, Child and Family Agency, Primary Care Centre, Church Avenue, Tullamore, Co Offaly.
Inspection undertaken by:	K. Murphy
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

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Description of service

The age range of children that the service is registered to accommodate is 2 to 6 years of age. The service operates between the hours of 09:45 and 12:45 on a Monday to Friday basis. The service is operated by an independent provider. The Early Years' Service is located within a community-based facility. One pre-school room, a breakout room, a kitchenette and an office are provided. An outdoor play area is attached to the rear of the service. The service is situated in the town of Birr, County Offaly.

Staffing

The registered provider and one staff member were present on 11 June 2024.

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.

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.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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 co-operation 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.*

(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.*

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

(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 registered provider and a designated person in charge were available as required.

(b)

The registered provider was present throughout the inspection.

The files of the registered provider and the staff member were reviewed and the following was noted:

(2)(a)(b)

The required number of written validated references were available from either a past employer or a source other than a previous employer in respect of the files reviewed.

(c)

Garda vetting disclosures were available in respect of the files reviewed.

The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d)

Police vetting was not required as no staff member had lived outside the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

(4)

All staff members employed in the service held a major award in Early childhood Care and Education at level 5 - 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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)

The minimum ratio of adults to children was exceeded during the inspection.

(3)

There were six children attending the service supervised directly by two adults.

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;*
- (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.*

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Compliance Information

(1)
In a review of ten child records for the children enrolled in the service the details relating to (a)(b)(c)(d)(e) and (f) were in place.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(g)
The name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner was not in place in the ten child records reviewed.

(h)
A record of immunisation, if any received by the child was not in place in the ten child records reviewed.

(i)
Consent for the administration of an anti-febrile agent in an emergency situation was not in place in the ten child records reviewed.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)(g)
The registered provider stated in the response that the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner is now recorded and a new revised standardised booking form has been developed (form included)

(h)
The registered provider stated in the response that a record of immunisations is now recorded and a new revised standardised booking form has been developed (form included)

(i)
The registered provider stated in the response that consent for the administration of an anti-febrile agent in an emergency is now recorded and a new revised standardised booking form has been developed (form included)

Summary Comment

In respect of the corrective actions taken documentary evidence was submitted to the office of the Early Years Inspectorate, reviewed by the Early Years Inspector and deemed to meet the regulatory requirement.
The practices as stated will be reviewed on the next inspection.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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;*
- (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

Compliance Information

(1)

The service kept and maintained written records of information in relation to the service in accordance with (h)(i)(j) and (k).

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 enjoyed the morning play activities and were observed to move freely around the pre-school room. Turn taking was observed as the groups swapped to other activities after a period of time. Children's independence was encouraged as they dressed for outdoor play, went to the toilet and washed their hands before snack time supervised by staff. The midmorning snack was provided by the parent and a variety of sandwiches, crackers, fruit, vegetable and dairy products were noted. Children enjoyed their snack sitting at tables and conversing with each other. Children were content with their carers. Staff used individual names, maintained eye contact and conversed with the children during play activities, toileting and mealtimes. Staff used a gentle approach of redirection for managing behaviour in a positive caring manner. The staff were familiar with each child and their personality. Staff members were observed to be positive towards children evidenced by individual names used,

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

eye contact and praise for children on completion of activities. Good teamwork between the staff members was observed during the inspection. The registered provider gave a verbal handover to parents on collection at the end of the morning session.

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 19 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.*

(4) Where outdoor space to which the pre-school children attending the service have access is provided on the premises of a sessional pre-school service other than such a service to which paragraph (2) applies, a temporary pre-school service or a pre-school service in a drop-in centre, the registered provider shall ensure that such outdoor space is suitable, safe and secure.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

Suitable and adequate play and work equipment were provided indoors and outdoors which included toys and equipment for construction, sensory, tabletop activities and arts and crafts.

(b)

Soft furnishings in the pre-school room supported rest and relaxation for the children in attendance.

(4)

An outdoor play area with a tarmac surface area was attached to the rear of the service and could be accessed directly from the pre-school room. A high-level perimeter wall secured the area.

The outdoor area was equipped with a small plastic playhouse and climb /slide units. Bikes and trikes were available for use and stored indoors. Additional play resources suitable for outdoor activities were stored in the breakout room.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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 entrance door to the service was secure to ensure the safety of the children within. The service met the necessary safety requirements in respect of the indoor environment, toys and equipment and the safe storage of cleaning agents.

Infection Control:

The premises were visually clean. All toys and materials were easily cleanable. Warm water, paper hand towel and liquid soap was available in the sanitary accommodation. Children were observed to wash their hands before snacks and after using the toilet. Foot operated pedal bins were available in the sanitary accommodation and pre-school room for the hygienic disposal of waste.

Administration of Medication:

Temperature reducing medication was available in the service if a child presented with a high temperature. Appropriate documentation was in place to record the administration of medicine should it be required by a child in attendance.

Fire Safety:

Emergency exit doors were in place and were unobstructed. A fire assembly point was noted to the side of the premises.

Outing:

The registered provider stated that outings were not carried out from the service.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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 was qualified in First Aid response (FAR) and available on the premises during the hours of operation.

(2)(a)
A first aid box was available in an accessible and conspicuous location in the premises.

(b)
A first aid box was accessible to children in the pre-school service.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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 firefighting 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)

A written record for the completed monthly fire drills was available on the premises. The last fire drill was recorded as taking place on the 8 May 2024.

(b)

A record was available demonstrating the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises. The firefighting equipment in the premises was serviced in June 2024. The smoke alarms in the premises were serviced in May 2024.

(4)

A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in a conspicuous position in the premises.

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 were supervised by staff during play activities both indoors and outdoors during the inspection. Staff members supervised the children when toileting and handwashing.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

There was evidence of current insurance cover for the number of children attending the service. The expiry date noted was 27 March 2025.