

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015RN036
--------------------------	-------------

Name of Service:	Little Rascals Montessori Pre-School
-------------------------	--------------------------------------

Address of Service:	Cooley, Fuerty/Castlecoote, Co. Roscommon
----------------------------	---

Name of Registered Provider:	Geraldine Mullen
-------------------------------------	------------------

Service type:	Sessional
----------------------	-----------

Date of Inspection:	22/01/2024
----------------------------	------------

No of pre-school children:	AM	6	PM	n/a
-----------------------------------	----	---	----	-----

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Year's Inspectorate, TUSLA, Child and Family Agency, Government Buildings, Convent Road, Roscommon, Co. Roscommon.
Inspection undertaken by:	A. Kennedy
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

This sessional service is located in a rural setting close to the village of Fuerty, outside Roscommon town. A service is provided to children aged between 2 years 8 months and 5 years. The service is open from Monday to Friday between 9:30hrs and 12:30hrs. A room with a separate entrance within the registered providers domestic dwelling has been adapted and purpose built for the provision of a preschool service.

Staffing

There were two adults present on the day of inspection to include the registered provider and the emergency person. The registered provider works within the service.

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.

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.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

The contents of the report are compiled by the inspectorate body.

Additional Information

On the 24th of January 2024, an immediate action notice was issued, for Regulation 25 First Aid as there was no person on the premises with accredited First aid training at all times immediately available to the children attending the service.

On the 25th of January 2024, the registered provider, advised as an interim measure until FAR training is completed she has completed paediatric first aid training and provided evidence of confirmation that FAR training has been booked.

Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, the second adult 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.*

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 designated person in charge is the registered provider and the service is operated single handedly so if the designated person is not available the service will close.

(b) The registered provider was on the premises when the early years inspector arrived. The staff rosters indicated that the registered provider was available on the premises at all times when the pre-school children were present. The files of the registered provider and the emergency person were reviewed.

(2)

(a)&(b) Four of the written validated references, on file for the two adults were from a past employer or from a source other than the past employer.

(c) A Garda vetting disclosure was available in respect of two adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Not applicable as neither of the adults had resided outside the jurisdiction for six months or more while over the age of 18 years.

(4)

The registered provider working directly with the children, held a Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI), at a Level 5 to 6 in Early Childhood Care and Education.

Copies of qualifications were on file for the adult.

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.*
- (8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-*
- (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)**
- At all times during the period of the inspection, the person in charge ensured that an adequate number of staff were working directly with the children.
- (3)**
- Documentary evidence in the form of attendance records and staff rosters indicated that adult child ratios were adhered to.
- (8)(c)**
- On the morning of the inspection, there were six pre-school children aged between 2 years and 8 months to 5 years. The registered provider was caring for the children.

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,*

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Compliance Information

- The registered provider encouraged and supported the children to be as independent, as possible.
- The snacks were supplied by the parents/guardians. The children were given sufficient time to eat in an unhurried manner. The foods provided complied with the service's healthy eating policy.
- The tables and chairs were suitable for the children's ages and stages of development.
- The children had unrestricted access to the toilet and did not have to wait to use the toilet. The registered provider used the correct language surrounding toileting.
- The children had the opportunity to rest or relax in a designated cosy area in the playroom.
- The children had plenty of opportunities to move themselves, to practice and improve their emerging skills, such as co-ordination and balance. Play activities and experiences were developmentally appropriate and suitably challenging. The children had opportunities to move about freely and explore their environment. The children were observed at free play, playing with pegs and peg boards, making puzzles, doing art and craft activities, playing house / kitchen, and at dress up / pretend play. The children were observed stacking, constructing, shape sorting, connecting, and playing with animals. The staff used visual aids and probed with questions such as 'who is this?', 'how many are there?'. The registered provider acknowledged a child's achievements, 'well done', 'that's great' and the children were observed laughing and having fun.
- The registered provider supported children in forming and sustaining positive relationships by - showing respect for each unique child and developing their trust, listening to the voice of the child as they communicate their needs, thoughts, and experiences both verbally and non-verbally, by reading children's cues, gestures, and body language, using soft tones, the child's individual name, and getting down to their level and making eye contact, providing opportunities for individual and small group activities and play, leading to increased social awareness, co-operation, collaboration, teamwork, and a sense of belonging, providing opportunities for children to learn from each other and with each other, to work together, join in and contribute to projects and tasks, working with parents and guardians by sharing knowledge and observations of the child's interests, strengths, developmental and care needs, approaches to learning, changes in their life, and any other concerns.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

- On speaking with the registered provider, the inspector was informed that she verbally provides parents with daily information on their child's experiences in the pre-school including the child's likes, interests and preferences and play activities engaged in. This information was provided at collection times and via text messages, by phone calls, and by email.
- The registered provider was observed helping children to find solutions, supporting them, and talking to the children in a variety of ways, discussing, questioning, modelling, and commenting, extending a child's activities and initiating games and activities.
- On the day of the inspection the adults showed kindness. They were thoughtful, supportive, and reassuring whilst caring for the children. They cared for children by being supportive while the children engaged in free play, role play, and creative play. A climate was fostered where the children knew their boundaries.
- The adults supported children to enter social groups, and to learn to help and positively engage with other children. They encouraged and praised children for specific, positive, and appropriate behaviours.
- Children were given positive alternatives, rather than just being told 'no'. Children were supported in preventing, managing, and resolving conflict.

Physical And Material Environment

- The pre-school room was spacious, bright, and colourful. The room was laid out with clearly defined areas of play to include an arts and crafts area with a selection of paint, glue, brushes foam shapes, scissors, glitter, sponges, stampers, paper, and card.
- Large and small-scale construction (plastic and wooden blocks) and manipulative materials; picture books, problem solving toys (e.g., jigsaws and puzzles), role and pretend play (e.g. a play kitchen with play accessories, dolls, highchairs, cots, buggies and accessories, a farm with play accessories, a dolls house with play accessories and small world toys (e.g. play animals, transport toys, musical instruments, and play figures.
- A dress up area with a selection of dress up items, accessories, and a mirror.
- A soft seated area was provided for circle time activities and as a reading area should a child wish to relax or opt out of activities.
- Wall art and visual displays added additional decorative features to the indoor play environment.
- Low level tables and chairs were in place and low-level shelving with equipment and materials were accessible to the children.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

- The outdoor play area located to the rear of the premises supported a range of physically active play including running, ride on vehicles, ball games, climbing and messy play opportunities. There was a covered sheltered space which was equipped with low level tables and chairs and shelving units with tabletop and arts and crafts activities.
- On the day of the inspection the children were observed playing outdoors which demonstrated the services commitment to ensuring that outdoor play time played a significant part of children's daily routine in the service.

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

- There was a buzzer access system into the main entrance to the preschool premises.
- The external play area was secure so that children could not leave the area unsupervised and unauthorised persons could not enter the area.
- All cleaning agents were stored inaccessible to the children.
- The room temperature was maintained between 18°C and 22°C.
- The openable window in the preschool room had a restricted opening device fitted.
- Daily records of attendance were kept for all of children attending the service.
- Heavy equipment and furnishings were anchored appropriately.
- All toys and play equipment were observed to be safe and in good condition

Infection control

- Hand washing facilities were provided with a supply of warm water, liquid hand soap and disposable paper hand towels.
- Thermostatically controlled warm water was available for use by the children to facilitate hygienic hand washing.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

- Children were observed washing their hands after toileting, after messy play and prior to consuming their snacks.
- Tabletops and work surfaces were cleaned with disposable paper towels and disinfectant spray.
- The playroom was observed to be kept adequately ventilated with the windows left open whilst maintaining the room temperatures at the required levels.
- Adequate supplies of disposable tissues were readily available in the playrooms.

Administration of medication

- On the day of inspection, it was advised that no child is presently on medication. The registered provider was aware of the medicine administration policy within the service should medication need to be administered to a child within the service.
- Medication administration records including written parental consent were available.

Non-Compliance Information

Fire Safety:

It was noted from the assessment of the fire records that the fire drills are not carried out on a monthly basis. The last recorded drill was carried out in November 2023. It is recommended that fire drills are carried out on a monthly basis to ensure the children are familiar with the procedure in event of an emergency.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

The registered provider submitted a written response on 22nd of February to advise that:

Fire Safety:

They omitted to carry out a fire drill in December 2023. Two drills have been carried per month in January and February 2024 to ensure the children are familiar with the procedure. The registered provider will ensure they are carried out monthly.

Supporting documentation submitted

Fire Safety:

A copy of the fire drill record was submitted to the office of the early year's inspectorate with evidence of the drills carried out in January and February 2024.

Summary Comment

The early years inspectorate has assessed the action taken and evidence submitted and deems it to address the noncompliance under Regulation 23.

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

(2)(a) A suitably equipped first aid box was available in the playroom and was stored in a conspicuous position.

(b) The first aid box was readily available, with content items within date.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) There was no evidence provided that an adult trained in First aid for children is available to the children at all times.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider submitted a written response on 25th of January and 22nd of February to advise that paediatric first aid training has been completed. Confirmation of booking of FAR training was submitted to the early years inspectorate. The registered provider advised on 15th of May that she has completed FAR training on 4th and 5th of March and the practical exam on 26th of April and is awaiting certification.

Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of the paediatric first aid training certificate and confirmation of the booking and evidence of attendance of the FAR training was sent to the office of the early year's inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The early years inspectorate have assessed the actions taken and evidence submitted and deems it outstanding.

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) Arrangements were in place to record monthly fire drills. The last documented fire drill was dated November 2023.
- (b) A record of the number, type, and maintenance of firefighting equipment in the service was on file. Records indicated that the last annual maintenance for the firefighting equipment and the fire detection system was dated 3rd of October 2023.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in the playroom.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service had insurance with an expiry date 27th of March 2024, which was for a sessional service for eleven pre-school children included the following: -

- public liability insurance,
- insurance against fire and theft,
- buildings insurance,
- insurance for outings undertaken as part of the service provision.