

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WX006
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Name of Service:	ABU Montessori
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Address of Service:	Dowsley's Barn, New Ross, Co. Wexford
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Eircode:	Y34 WK37
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Name of Registered Provider:	Niamh Fitzgibbon
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	08/02/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	15	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Child and Family Agency, Ely Hospital, Wexford.
Inspection undertaken by:	E Mc Garry
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

ABU Montessori is situated on the outskirts of New Ross Co Wexford. The service is registered to provide a sessional service to 25 children aged 2 to 6 years of age. The service is in a purpose-built facility in the grounds of the registered provider's parents' home. It consists of a large playroom, toilets, kitchen /dining room and an outdoor play area.

Staffing

There were four staff employed in the service including the registered provider who also works directly with the children. All staff held the minimum of level 5 and above on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ).

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.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations:

Regulation 9 Management and Recruitment (1) (2) (a) (b) (c) (d) (4),

Regulation 11 Staffing levels (1) (2),

Regulation 19 Health, Welfare, and Development of the Child (1) (a)(b),

Regulation 23 Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child,

Regulation 25 First aid (1) (2) (a) (b),

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Regulation 26 Fire safety measures.

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 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, 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.

Compliance Information

Following a review of documentation and discussion with the registered provider it was established by the inspector that there were four staff employed in the service. All staff files were reviewed on the day of inspection.

(1)(a)(b)

The registered provider was the designated person in charge and remained in the service for the duration of the inspection.

(2)(a)

There were four written and validated references available from previous employers. There were two written references available on file for the registered provider which did not require to be validated.

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(b)

There were two written and validated references available from reputable sources.

(c)

There was Garda vetting disclosures available for all four staff members working in the service.

(d)

Police vetting was available for two staff members who had lived in a state other than Ireland for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

(4)

All staff held the minimum of level 5 and above on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ).

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)

There were at all times an adequate number of staff working directly with the children attending the preschool service on the day of inspection.

(3)

At 10.30am

There were 15 children aged between 3 and 6 years of age in the care of 4 staff.

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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)

The registered provider ensured that each child's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the daily life of the service. Children were engaged in a variety of appropriate activities during the inspection including playing in the outdoor area, enjoying free play in the preschool room and exploring the areas of interest which had been well developed in the preschool room. Interactions between children which were well managed by the staff who were caring for them.

Children were encouraged to be independent appropriate to their age and stage of development, for example, by tidying up and helping staff to replace the toys they had played with during their time in the service. During activities staff used opportunities to extend children's learning and development by encouraging them to make independent choices in what they wanted to play with. Of note was a large dolls house which had been painted by the children using a variety of rainbow colours. The materials and equipment available included a large range of developmentally appropriate Montessori equipment, arts and crafts materials and other open-ended materials which were well organised and easily accessible to children.

Children enjoyed freedom of movement within the care room and in the outdoor area. There was a cosy wicker chair on a swing for children to relax in. There were two small rooms just off the main preschool room. One was set up as a rest area for the children. It was equipped with a soft floor covering and cushions for children to relax on. The second small room was used for the children as a lunchroom. Staff who spoke to the inspector said the children took their lunch when they wanted to. Staff said this worked well in the service and gave children choice in the service to eat when they wanted to.

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The service had a large safe and secure outdoor area situated to the rear of the premises. The area consisted of a large, grassed area. There was a covered sand pit, a well-stocked mud kitchen, a jungle gym, a hammock, a large tractor made of wood which had a slide and storage underneath for bikes and ride on toys. There was a large wooden car that children could sit in to play.

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 registered provider had taken the following steps to ensure the safety of the children attending the service.

General safety:

Access to the service was gained through the front door which was secure on arrival. The outdoor play area was safe, suitable and secure. All harmful substances such as cleaning liquids were stored in an area which was in accessible to children.

Infection control:

The service appeared to be clean on the day of inspection. There was a large fridge available in the service to store the perishable food provided by the parents for the children. All sinks for hand washing in the service were equipped with warm thermostatically controlled water, liquid soap, and foot operated pedal bins. The service provided small wash cloths which were laundered daily for children to dry their hands.

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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)

There was a person trained in a first aid responder course immediately available to the children attending the preschool service.

(2)(a)(b)

There was a suitably equipped first aid box stored in an easily accessible position on the premises which was available to the children attending the preschool service.

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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 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)

The last fire drill was carried out in the service in January 2024.

(b)

The annual maintenance of the firefighting equipment was carried out in October 2023. The wired smoke alarm in the service was last serviced in February 2024.

(4)

A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire is displayed in a conspicuous position in the premises at the entrance to the service.