

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2016LD003
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Name of Service:	Laugh and Learn Preschool/Montessori
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Address of Service:	Mornine, Moydow, Co. Longford
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Eircode:	N39 R984
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Name of Registered Provider:	Gemma Flanagan
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	10/06/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	12	PM	NA
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, SAP Office, St Loman's Campus, Springfield, Mullingar, Co Westmeath, N91 N4XC.
Inspection undertaken by:	T. Duignan
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

Laugh and Learn Preschool and Montessori was established in 2016 as a privately run childcare service for pre-school children aged 2 years to 6 years by the present registered provider.

The service provides sessional childcare and education to children from 9.00am to 12.00pm.

The service is located in a prefabricated premises to the rear of the registered providers family home. The care room is a spacious open plan area.

Staffing

Laugh and Learn Preschool and Montessori employs two childcare staff including the registered provider who works directly with the children. The adults working in the service have completed a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education. Two adults were present on the day of the inspection.

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.

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.

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Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

(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 previous inspection information, information available on inspection and discussion with the person in charge it was determined that a staff member from an external agency was employed.

(2)

(a), (b) Two written and verified past employer references or references from a reputable source other than a past employer were available in respect of the adult.

(c) Garda Vetting disclosures were available for all adults working in the service. 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 no adult had resided outside the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months whose records were reviewed.

(4) The adult working directly with children attending the service held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education on the National Framework of Qualifications.

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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) There were twelve children attending the service being supervised directly two staff members during the inspection.

(3) The minimum ratio of adults to children was adhered to during the day as specified in column (3) of Part 1 of Schedule 6.

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-

(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

(1)(b)

Children were observed to enjoy the play activities during the morning session in the care room and this included free play, tabletop activities, speaking out loud and singing songs as part of the preparation for the upcoming graduation day.

Children enjoyed a healthy lunch provided by their parents which consisted of sandwiches, crackers and cheese, fruit and yoghurt with water to drink.

Children were encouraged to be independent as they dressed for outdoor play assisted by staff as needed. Children went to the toilet independently and washed their hands supervised by staff.

The staff were positive towards children and were familiar with each child and their personalities. Staff used individual names, maintained eye contact and conversed with the children during play activities.

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The physical and material environment of the service was constructively planned, considered and presented from a child's perspective. It was well resourced with equipment, toys and resources and had interesting play and learning spaces which provided developmentally appropriate, challenging, diverse, creative and enriching experiences that facilitated child led play.

The care room was bright and colourful with children's artwork and family photographs displayed.

Areas of interest were evident and included a home area, construction area, hairdressing corner, reading and rest space, arts and crafts area, puzzles and jigsaws, small world area and sensorial play. All equipment and materials were accessible on low shelving to the children and grouped to encourage children to use them independently. Low level tables and chairs were in place.

The children were provided with outdoor play in the adjoining outdoor play area.

The service works in partnership with parents and guardians. There is an open door policy, and information is shared at the drop off and collection point as the parents were collecting their children. A closed electronic messaging system was in place with parents sharing the children's daily play and work activities.

The service had close engagement with the local primary schools to support the children's transition from preschool to primary school.

The child's learning journal depicting the child's play and work activities are shared with parents at the end of the pre-school term.

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 to the service and the garden gate were appropriately secured to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the Early Years' service.

The service met the necessary safety requirements in respect of the indoor environment, toys and equipment and safe storage of cleaning agents. The staff members advised the inspector that they immediately cut/chop any food that may pose a choking risk to a child at snack time. They also stated that they would remove any neck jewellery if they observed a child wearing it.

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There was documentary evidence available that daily indoor risk assessments were completed daily and reviewed to promptly identify and manage any potential risks in the care rooms. The service had a system in place to manage maintenance issues.

Infection Control:

Thermostatically controlled warm running water, liquid hand soap and paper towels were readily available for hygienic hand washing and drying in the sanitary area. The staff members were familiar with the importance of handwashing practice as a means to control the spread of infection in the service. They supervised children's handwashing and handwashing routines were well established. The staff were observed washing their hands also. Nappy changing facilities were available in the service however it was not required on the day of the inspection. Foot pedal operated bins were provided for the disposal and containment of used tissues. Written cleaning schedules were maintained for the room environment which was observed to be maintained in a clean and hygienic condition.

Administration of Medication:

Medication was not given at the time of the inspection. The staff members were familiar with the required practice when administering medication in the service including recording of same. Medicine was safely stored out of the reach of children.

Safe Sleep:

A designated rest area was available for any child wishing to take a break from activities and rest in the care room.

Fire Safety:

Monthly fire drills had been carried out, and staff members were familiar with fire safety evacuation procedures from the service. Fire assembly signage was in place in the area at the front of the service.

Outing:

The person in charge confirmed that the service conduct outings. An outings policy is in place to guide the practice.

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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) The staff members present were trained in in first aid response (FAR) and were immediately available to the children attending the service.
- (2)
- (a) First aid equipment was safely stored, in a conspicuous position in the care room.
 - (b) A suitably equipped first aid box for children was available at all times to the adults caring for the children attending the service.

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 numbers of children attending the service. The expiry date was noted to be 27 March 2027.