

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC013		
Name of Service:	Aim High Montessori		
Address of Service:	16a Cois Coillte, Kilworth, Kilworth, Co. Cork		
Eircode:	P61 DX92		
Name of Registered Provider:	Finola Hogan		
Service type:	Sessional		
Date(s) of Inspection:	08/11/2023		
No of pre-school children:	AM	18	PM N/A
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	134 Bank Place, Mallow, Co Cork.		
Inspection undertaken by:	F Collins		
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

Aim High Montessori is a privately run sessional service and facilitates the Early Childhood Care and Education programme. The service is run from a purpose-built building in the village of Kilworth in North Cork. The service runs from the ground floor of the premises inclusive of the garden with no access to upstairs. The service comprises of a large playroom, a small activity room (Messy Room), adult and child sanitary accommodation, a kitchen, storage facilities and access to a large outdoor grass area that is partially covered, which the children have access to on a daily basis.

The service has a small amount of off-road car parking and parents/guardians can also park in the Cois Coillte estate.

The hours of operation are from 09.00 - 12.00 daily and the service caters for a maximum of 22 pre-school children. The service is registered to provide care for children aged 2-6 years.

Staffing

The service is staffed by 3 staff, a registered provider and two childcare staff one of whom is employed under the Access and Inclusion Model. One relief staff member is also named and available to the service.

The staff are qualified in Early Childhood Care and Education from Level 5 to Level 8 on the National Qualifications Framework. Staff also hold qualifications in Leadership for Inclusion.

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. 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

- (1) (a) There was a named person in charge who was the registered provider, in the service when the inspector arrived and remained in the service for the duration of the inspection.
- (b) The roster indicated that there was a person in charge on the premises at all times during the operation of the service.
- (2) There were three staff working and one relief staff available to the service and their files were assessed: Of the four files assessed eight references were required:
- (a) Of the eight references required all eight were available from past employers.
- (b) Not applicable as all references were available from past employers.
- (c) In the four staff files assessed the required Garda Vetting disclosure was available for all four staff.
- (d) Police vetting was on file for the one adult who required same.
- (4) All four staff were appropriately qualified between Level 5 and Level 8 on the National Qualifications Framework.

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 registered provider ensured that there were adequate staff working in the service at all times.
- (3) The registered provider ensured that the minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained. There were three adults working directly with 19 pre-school children attending on the day of inspection.

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.*
- (c) an authorised person.*

Compliance Information

- (1) There were 22 children enrolled in the service of which 19 children were attending the service on the day of the inspection. All 22 enrolment records were available. Eleven of the enrolment records for the children who were in attendance were reviewed.
- (a) – (i) The enrolment forms were complete and up with date with parents and registered providers signatures, all relevant information and details required to ensure adequate care for the children, identifying their individual needs as required.

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 basic needs of the children were met in the service.

- The children were facilitated to eat and drink at snack time and no child indicated they required food before this time.
- Snack time was scheduled and children were supported to transition to snack time through singing clean up songs and helped to clean up. Snacks were healthy and nutritious and there were drinks of water available to the children at all times.
- Two of the children attending the service on the day of inspection were wearing nappies and these were changed on schedule. The younger children were assisted with toileting as required and were supported with hand washing.
- The faces of the children were cleaned as necessary at nappy changing or after snack time. There were no bibs required on the day of inspection as there was no painting or messy craftwork completed.

- The children were dressed appropriately when going outside, they had wellington boots, water proof pants, coats and hats, it was a cold day and the comfort of the children was met with these warm clothes for outdoor play.
- There was a rest area available to the children and this consisted of soft couches and was located in an area beside the library to allow the children to rest and relax when required.
- The mobility of the children was encouraged with children moving about freely in all of the spaces accessible to them. There was a small playroom (messy room) also available and this was not used on the day of inspection but was set up with play equipment.
- Staff were able to support positive behaviour and anticipated events such as the sharing of toys by more than two children.

SUPPORTING RELATIONSHIPS AROUND CHILDREN:

- The registered provider met with each parent/guardian each morning at drop off and again at collection time ensuring they were informed of the activities within the service.
- The children received the support they required from the three staff in the room. Children with additional care needs were integrated into the service and were supported when needed but allowed to be part of the small and large groups and one of these children was observed to be the helper on the day of the inspection.
- Although an inclusion plan was not available in writing for the two children who required same the staff were aware of the care needs and requirements for each child and how they would be met.
- A staff member sat at each table at snack time and helped the children with their food and also held conversations about the day, the food, the days of the week and about the toys.
- The staff assisted the children to put on and take off the outdoor clothing but allowed them to learn for themselves with support.
- Transitions were managed well with staff informing children when they were moving from one activity to the next such as when moving from free play to snack time and when moving from snack time to outside play. Children appeared to be very aware of the morning's routine and what to expect next.
- The service supported a language rich environment with the children spoken and stories told to the large group.

PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

- The indoor environment was set up into areas of interest, accessible shelving with adequate resources for the numbers of children attending was available to them. This equipment included Montessori equipment, shape sorters and arts and crafts equipment along with other play activities.
- There was space for children to move about freely with no restriction, the space was uncluttered and free from any excess equipment.
- The indoor environment consisted of two play areas, the large playroom and the messy playroom which was not used on the day of inspection. The larger playroom consisted of four child sized the tables with suitable height chairs.
- Tabletop activities of moulding clay, jigsaws, small and large bricks and shape sorters were carried out in this room there was also a garage area, kitchen, home area, library and rest area and a work bench.

PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES

- The staff had a schedule of what activities would be done daily. There was a schedule in place and the children were aware of what activities inclusive of going outdoors and when snack time was happening. The children appeared happy with the schedule.
- The children were observed to have the opportunity to learn through play, their gross motor development was supported through outdoor play, climbing and running.
- Fine motor development was supported through play with arts and crafts, colouring and when building blocks and using shape sorters.
- Their sensory development was supported through the use of sand, water and play with coloured rice and with moulding clay.

OUTDOOR AREA

- The outdoor area consisted of a grass covered area, some of the grass area was worn away due to use, there was a footpath around the building and some of the resources were set up on this.
- The grass area had a slide and swing, a ship to climb into, sand and water tables and activities on the walls. All of these supported the development of the children offering them different sensory, gross motor and fine motor experiences and afforded the children the ability to challenge their play.
- The outdoor area has clearly defined areas of interest.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 22 – Food and drink

A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

The snacks served in the service were provide by parents/guardians. The food as consumed was in keeping with healthy food choices and included fruit/vegetables, sandwiches, crackers and yogurts. Water was the only drinks available 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:

- The internal doors to the kitchen, staff toilet and storage areas were secured and accessible to the staff only.
- The windows in the service were not accessible to the children.
- There were no patio doors or low glazed panels that could cause an injury to a child.
- There were no highchairs in the service and all toys and play equipment were safe and free from pinch and crush points.
- The shelving units were low and did not pose a risk of being pulled down by a child.
- The electric cables assessed were in good condition.
- The storage facilities were out of reach of the children and the waste was inaccessible both indoors and outside.
- All medicines were kept in their original containers and stored in the kitchen.
- Cleaning agents were stored in the kitchen or on high shelves in the large playroom or in the toilets near the nappy changing unit.
- A risk assessment of the outdoor area was completed before the children went outside on the day of inspection.

Infection Control:

- There was hot water available in the children's toilet recorded at 39.4 °C, in the adult toilet at 38.4 °C and in the sink in the care room at 34.3 °C.
- There was liquid soap hand towels and pedal operated litterbins available for the safe disposal of the contaminated hand towels.
- The perishable items contained in the children's snacks were stored in the fridge and were handed out at snack time, this prevented contamination and the growth of potentially harmful bacteria.
- The cleaning schedule was maintained and this was recorded daily/weekly.
- Tables were cleaned with suitable disinfectant after messy play and before snack time.
- Fresh water was taken outside to fill the water play table to ensure that no stagnant water was used for children's play.

Administration of Medication:

- Medication was not routinely administered in the service however parents had given signed permission for the administration of temperature reducing medication in the even this was needed in an emergency. This medication was available to the staff in a high press in the kitchen.

Safe Sleep:

- Children do not sleep in the service during the running of the three-hour service. A rest area is available if required.

Fire Safety:

- The fire extinguishers were safely tethered to the wall outside the door of the large playroom.

Non-Compliance Information

Fire Safety:

1. The main door into the service was secured by a lock and key and the external gate that was used to access the fire assembly point during fire drills was secured with a padlock. The key locked front door and the padlocked secured gate poses a risk of safe and fast escape from the premises in the event of a fire or other emergency.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Fire Safety:

1. The lock on the door identified as the fire exit door has been replaced with a thumb turn lock. The padlock on the gate to exit the garden of the premises to access the fire assembly point has been removed.

Supporting documentation submitted

Fire Safety:

1. Photographic evidence of the thumb turn lock has been received.

Summary Comment

The requirements for this regulation have been met following evidence received and the assurances given on the corrective and preventive action form.

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 insured that two staff were trained in first aid for children and were immediately available to the children.
- (2) (a) There was a first aid box stored above the sink in the care room
(b) This first aid box was available to the children attending the pre-school at all times.

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.
- (2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-
- (c) an authorised person.
- (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 fire drills that took place in the service were all recorded and the last fire drill took place on the 25.10.2023 with evidence that drills take place monthly observed.
- (b) The firefighting equipment (Fire extinguishers) were last serviced in Sept 2023. The smoke detection system was last serviced on 23.08.2023.
- (2) (c) The records as referred to above were available for review on the day of inspection.
- (4) The procedure to follow in the event of a fire was displayed near the door into the hallway to the toilets and front door.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service was insured as a sessional service. The expiry date of the insurance was 27.03.2024.