

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC098
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Name of Service:	Circle Time Montessori Ltd
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Address of Service:	Whitechurch & Waterloo Community Centre, Whitechurch, Co Cork
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Eircode:	T34 RR58
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Name of Registered Provider:	Dawn Moore
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Service type:	Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	29/04/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	30	PM	8
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate, 13 Market Square, Mallow, Co Cork, P51 DD5Y
Inspection undertaken by:	N O'Donoghue
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

Circle Time Montessori Ltd is a part- time and sessional service located in a community centre in a rural setting. The service is registered to cater for children aged 2 to 6 years. The Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme is provided to children aged between 2 years and 8 months to 6 years. The service is registered to operate a sessional service from 9.10am to 12.10pm and the part-time care operates from 9.10am to 1.45pm. A registered school age service is also provided. The premises is a two-storey building with one playroom downstairs and one playroom upstairs. An enclosed outdoor area is available. The registered provider is a multiple service provider.

Staffing

There were 10 adults attached to the service on day of inspection. This included the registered provider, person in charge, five early years educators and three school age staff.

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. 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.

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*
- (c) there is a clear management structure in the service that identifies the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and unpaid worker.*

(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*

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(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.

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(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 service had a designated person in charge and a deputy person in charge on the premises on the day of inspection. In the event the person or deputy person in charge were not on the premises, a named person able to deputise was available.

(b) Through a review of the roster it was determined that a person in charge or named deputy person in charge were on the premises at all times during the operation of the service.

(c) There was a clearly identified management structure in the service. This included person in charge, deputy person in charge, early years educators and school age staff.

(2) Ten adults were attached to the service; all adult files were open to inspection.

(a) Of the 20 references required, 17 validated references were from past employers.

(b) Of the 20 references required, 3 validated references were from a source other than a past employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all 10 adults carried out by the registered provider. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Police vetting was deemed to be required for 1 of the 10 adults working in the service. All required documentation was available and on file for the one adult.

(3) All procedures specified under paragraph (2) were carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

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(4) All seven adults working directly with the preschool children held relevant qualifications in Early Childhood Care and Education at least at Level 5 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.

(2) Subject to paragraphs (4) and (5), a registered provider of a full day care service or a part-time day care service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 1 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) thereof at that reference number is satisfied.

(8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-

(a) a registered provider of a pre-school service other than a child-minding service or a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that there are at least 2 adults on the premises at all times,

Compliance Information

(1) There was an adequate number of adults working directly with the children at all times during the inspection.

(2) On the day of inspection, the adult to child ratios were in adherence to the requirements of the regulation.

- In the morning session, there was one staff working with seven children aged between 3 years and 11 months and 5 years and 2 months of age, all attending sessional care.
- In the afternoon session, there was one staff working with six children aged between 2 years and 9 months and 3 years and 9 months of age, all attending sessional care.

(8)

(a) The registered provider ensured that there were at least two adults on the premises at all times during the service operation hours. This was evident through the staff rota and staff sign in.

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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)

Basic needs:

- Staff supported children with toileting. Staff encouraged independence and provided support as required.
- Children had access to soft tissues to clean their noses themselves. Staff were observed cleaning children's faces after meals and throughout the day.
- Drink bottles of water were brought in from home, children had access to these bottles at all times and were stored on child height shelving.
- Staff provided support to children that needed help when eating and children were encouraged to be self-sufficient.

Supporting relationships:

- Staff spoke with children at their level, in a calm and relaxed tone. Children were at ease with staff and were comfortable in expressing their feelings and emotions to the staff members.
- Children engaged in parallel play and were observed to check in on their friends and include them in play.
- Staff were asking children if they wanted to participate in cleaning up, children were observed to freely get the dustpan and brush and support staff with clean up after free play.
- During mealtime staff sat at the table and engaged in social conversations with the children.

Physical environment:

- The children were observed to freely move around the care room and outdoor area. All children had access to the outdoor area throughout the inspection.

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- Children were encouraged to engage in a wide range of gross motor skills including jumping, running and bouncing.
- Fine motor skills were encouraged through puzzles, colouring and sorting activities.
- The care rooms were broken into clearly identified areas including construction, role-play, kitchen, and creative corner.
- A rest/quiet area was available in each care room consisting of rubber mats, pillows and cushions if children required it.
- Children's artwork was displayed throughout 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 and external doors of the service were secured and prevented children from exiting the premises and unauthorised persons accessing the service.
- Toys and equipment appeared in good condition and well maintained.
- The openable windows were out of reach of children.

Infection control:

- Windows were open which allowed for fresh air circulation.
- Perishable food was observed to be stored in the refrigerators.
- Appropriate water temperatures were recorded in the sanitary facility between 28°C to 36.2°C.
- Staff were observed cleaning tables and chairs between activities.
- Foot operated bins were available in each room and sanitary facility.

Administration of medication:

- No administration of medication was observed on the day of inspection. Discussion with staff ensured staff were aware of the correct process for administering medication in the event it was required.

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Fire safety:

- Fire equipment was available which included fire extinguishers.
- Fire exits were clear of any obstruction and clearly identified.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) no person other than-

(i) pre-school child attending the service,

(ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,

(iii) an employee, or

(iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and

(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.

Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider ensured that staff checked in and out each child attending the service. This was completed through the use of the service's mobile application. This was observed to be regularly completed throughout the day.

(3)

(a) The registered provider ensured that no person other than a child attending the service, the person dropping or collecting the child, staff or unpaid workers could enter the premises without being approved.

(b) A daily record of persons entering the premises was kept onsite and was available to the inspector.

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.

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- (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 ensured that staff trained in First Aid Responder (FAR) were at all times immediately available to the children. This was evident through the staff rota and staff sign in records.
- (2) The first aid box was assessed on day of inspection and was fully stocked.
- (a) The first aid box was stored up high, out of reach of children and easily accessible to staff.
 - (b) The first aid box was accessible to staff in the event that a child may require it.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

A copy of the insurance certificate for the service was furnished to the inspector. The information provided on the insurance certificate included:

- The contact details for the insurance provider.
- The name and address of the service insured.
- The categories of insurance cover for the service.

The expiry date of the current insurance cover was 27 March 2027.