

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015CC127
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Donna's Montessori
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Earls Court, Churchtown, Mallow, Co. Cork
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<b>Eircode:</b>	P51 WTW1
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Donna Cullen
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<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	10/06/2024
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	12	PM	5
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	13 Market Square, Mallow, Cork. P51 DD5Y
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	E. Friel
<b>Title:</b>	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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	N/A
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### Description of service

Donna's Montessori is a private early years care and education service in operation since 2011. It provides full day care, part-time and sessional services for children aged 2 years to 6 years of age. The service is registered to open between the hours of 7.00 am until 6.00 pm, current opening hours are from 8.00 am until 5.00 pm, Monday to Friday and the Early Years Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme is facilitated between the hours of 9.00 am to 12 noon. The service is opened 49 weeks of the year, and a school age service is currently available between 1.40 pm and 6.00 pm.

The service is located in the village of Churchtown in North Cork opposite the national school. It consists of one large care room off which there is one adult toilet including a children's changing unit, two children's toilets, and a storage room. The main care room opens out onto a large secure outdoor play area and car parking is located at the side of the service

### Staffing

There are five adults who work in the service including a support worker employed under the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) and the registered provider who covers for lunches. In addition, a contractor attends the service once weekly during term time.

### 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-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*
- (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.*

*(7) A registered provider shall ensure that all employees, unpaid workers and contractors are appropriately supervised and provided with appropriate information, and where necessary training, including in relation to the following:*

- (a) the policies, procedures and statements of the service specified in Schedule 5;*

### Compliance Information

(1)

- (a) The registered provider ensured that there was a designated person in charge, deputy and named persons available on the premises. Both the designated person in charge and the deputy were on the premises when the inspector arrived. The registered provider arrived at lunch to cover lunch as one staff member was absent.
- (b) The staff roster indicated that either the designated person in charge, deputy and/or named persons were on the premises while the early years children were present in the service.
- (c) The management structure was available on the wall in reception and staff were aware of their roles and responsibilities.

(2) Recruitment files for all six adults were reviewed;

- (a)(b) There were eight validated references from previous employers and four validated references from sources other than previous employers.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for all six adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) An international police disclosure was available for one adult who had lived outside of the State for a period of six consecutive months or longer as an adult.

(4) Four of the six adults working directly with the children held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications and one adult had a Letter of Qualification Recognition from the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth. The school age care adult did not require a childcare qualification.

### Non-Compliance Information

(7) (a)

(1) Contrary to the service's supervision policy which stated that staff supervision would be scheduled regularly staff stated that supervision is carried out yearly, with the last supervision meeting taking place in November 2023. In addition, staff stated documentation had not been signed by the employee as stated in the policy. In discussion with management, they stated that going forward supervision of staff would take place every three months.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective and Preventive Action

The following statement was received from the registered provider;

(7) (a)

(1) Staff supervision has been arranged with each staff member and this will be carried out every three months, or sooner, if required. Supervision notes for each employee will be signed and each employee will be given a copy after each supervision period.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

(7) (a)

(1) The statement from the registered provider has been accepted. A copy of a supervision template was received in the office of the inspectorate.

### Summary Comment

The actions taken by the registered provider has addressed the non-compliance identified under Regulation 9 (7) (a).

### Part III – Management and Staff

#### Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

*A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.*

#### Compliance Information

The following policies were reviewed and contained all relevant information and guidance.

- The complaints policy.
- The Safe Sleep Policy.

### 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) The registered provider ensured that there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children at all times.

(2) There were seven sessional and five part-time children in attendance with two adults in the morning, and five children in attendance with two adults in the afternoon.

(8)

(a) The registered provider ensured that there were two adults on the premises at all times as demonstrated on the staff roster.

### Part IV – Information and Records

#### Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

*(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:*

- (a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;*
- (b) details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services;*
- (c) details of the adult: child ratios in the service;*
- (d) the type of care or programme provided in the service;*
- (e) the facilities available;*
- (f) the opening hours and fees;*
- (g) the policies, procedures and statements the service is required to maintain in accordance with Regulation 10;*
- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*
- (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

*(3) A record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection on the premises by an authorised person.*

#### Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) The name, position, qualifications and experience of the registered provider, manager and of every employee, were available in the staff recruitment files in the service.
  - (b) Details of the class of service and the age profile of children, for which the service is registered to provide, were available in the parent handbook and on the Tusla Registration Certificate visible on the notice board in the reception area of the service.
  - (c), (d), (e) and (f) The details of the adult/child ratios in the service, the type of care or programme provided, the facilities available and the opening hours and fees were available in the newly designed parent handbook.
  - (g) The policies, procedures and statements the service is required to maintain in accordance with Regulation 10; were available in a folder in the service.

- (h) Details of attendance for each child were recorded in an attendance book, which was furnished to the Inspector during the inspection.
- (i) The weekly staff roster was presented to the inspector on arrival and contained all staff breaks.
- (j) While administration of medication forms were available, staff stated none had been administered.
- (k) Nine accident/Incident reports were reviewed. Each one was found to contain the necessary particulars required.
- (3) The records referred to in paragraph (1) were open to review, on the premises, by the inspector.

## 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:

- Food, provided by parent's/guardians, was served during the day and was observed to be healthy and nutritious. Staff stated breakfast is available in the morning between 8.15 am and 8.45 am, mid-morning snack was served at 11.15 am which consisted of filled sandwiches, berried fruits, cheese and yogurts. Hot lunches including pesto pasta, bolognaise and sandwiches were heated in the microwave at 1.15pm and staff stated that a mid-afternoon snack is available from 4.00 pm. The table was prepared with table cloths and the children's food was served on plates with suitable cutlery and crockery available.
- Individual water bottles were available throughout the day both indoors and outdoors.
- Children were observed accessing the sanitary area independently and nappy changing was observed being carried out during the day.
- Independence was encouraged with children observed putting on their boots for outdoor play by themselves. Staff were nearby to provide support.
- Staff were sensitive and responsive in promoting positive behaviours with children in the outdoor area observed being supported to find positive solutions when sharing play equipment and during turn taking.

- A rest/quiet area was available, where child could sit quietly away from noisy activities. It was furnished with two vinyl sofas, wooden benches, a bean bag and a blanket.
- Individual inclusion plans were implemented in line with the child’s needs. All staff were aware of the child’s individual goals and worked with the child throughout the day, both indoors and outdoors, to ensure that these were met.
- There was ample room for the children to move and play in both the indoor and outdoor environments.

### Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

#### Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

*A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.*

#### Compliance Information

The children in the service had access to developmentally appropriate equipment and materials.

- Opportunities for practicing gross motor skills including cycling, swinging and balancing were available in the outdoor play area with a range of apparatus and resources such as tricycles, swings, and a balancing walkway with a bridge.
- Materials for practicing fine motor skills were observed indoors including inset puzzles, pencils and chalk.
- Imaginary play was provided with a range of resources in the home corner including, dolls, buggies, and a wooden kitchen.
- Sensory materials were provided including a sand trough and stone area outdoors and pasta and grains indoors.
- A number of books were available from tiered shelving in the rest/quiet area ensuring each child had opportunities to promote language development.
- Low-level shelving around the care room facilitated ease of access to materials and equipment and promoted independence.
- Age and stage appropriate equipment including tables and chairs enabled children to sit comfortably with their feet on the ground.
- All toys, equipment, materials and furniture in the indoor and outdoor areas were clean and in good condition.

### 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 main door was secured on arrival and the bell was answered by a staff member preventing unauthorised adults from entering the building. Exiting the door was achieved by using a key which was located on top of a box, which was inaccessible by the children, preventing unsupervised children from exiting the building.
- Murals of animals and nature were painted on low level windows to prevent children banging into them.
- The windows in the room were secured to prevent children from gaining access to them.
- The indoor and outdoor toys appeared in good condition and were in a good state of repair.
- Cables from the fridge were secured out of reach of the children.
- Cleaning agents were observed to be stored on high shelving in the care room, inaccessible to the children.
- The outdoor perimeter was secured by metal and wooden fencing, a block wall and high hedging. Entry gates had sliding bolts ensuring the children could not exit the area.

##### Infection Control:

- Tissues were available and staff were observed assisting children to clean their nose. When finished the staff member washed their hands and the child disposed of the used tissue in a nearby pedal operated bin.
- Perishable food was observed to be stored in the fridge in the service. Staff were observed removing the children's perishable snacks and lunches at snack time and at lunchtime.
- Sinks in use in the service by staff and children were noted to have thermostatically controlled hot water (33°C-35.8°C), dispensing soap, paper towels and pedal operated bins for the disposal of paper waste.
- Staff were observed wearing disposable aprons and gloves during nappy changing. The adult disposed of the nappy in a pedal operated nappy bin and the unit and mat were disinfected after use. Both the adult and the child washed their hands after nappy changing.
- Handwashing was observed before and after food, outdoor play and after toileting. Adults were nearby to provide assistance, if required.

- A staff member was observed sanitising areas, emptying bins and sweeping floors ensuring the area was hygienic and clean.

### Administration of Medication:

- Anti-febrile medication was stored in the original container in a locked cupboard, out of reach of the children.

### Safe Sleep:

- No children were observed sleeping on the day of inspection.
- Stackable beds and individual bed linen were available in the event a child should wish to rest or sleep.

### Fire Safety:

- The emergency fire exit door was unobstructed.
- Fire extinguishers were secured by brackets onto the wall.
- The fire assembly point was visible in the outdoor area, a safe distance from the service.

### Outing:

- Staff stated that no outings take place.

## Non-Compliance Information

### General Safety:

- (1) An eight-box storage unit was not anchored in the care room, posing a safety risk as it could tip forward onto a child.

## Action submitted by the Registered Provider

### Corrective & Preventive Action

The following statement was received from the registered provider;

### General Safety:

- (1) The storage box has been anchored to prevent it tipping or falling. All heavy equipment will be secured to prevent an accident from occurring in the future.

### Supporting documentation submitted

### General Safety:

- (1) A photograph of the anchored storage unit was received in the office of the inspectorate.

## Summary Comment

The action taken by the registered provider has addressed the non-compliance under Regulation 23.

## 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) Certificates were available to evidence that three adults in the service had First Aid Responder (FAR) training completed and one adult had a paediatric first aid certificate. The staff roster indicated that a person trained in first aid was available at all times.

(2) (a) (b) The suitably equipped first aid box which was easily accessible by the adults was available at all times, from a shelf between the care room and the reception area.

## 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.*

*(2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-*

*(a) a parent or guardian of a pre-school child attending or proposing to attend the pre-school service,*

*(b) an employee, and*

*(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) Written records were available of the monthly fire drills which took place in the service. The date recorded of the most recent fire drill was 7 June 2024. Previous dates included, 7 May 2024, 10 April and 19 March 2024.
- (b) Written records were available detailing number, type and maintenance of firefighting equipment in the service and the smoke alarms. The firefighting equipment record was dated 17 April 2024 and the smoke alarm record was dated 13 December 2023.
- (2)
- (c) Both the firefighting equipment certificate and the smoke alarm certificates were open to review on the day of inspection.
- (4) The notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were located on the notice board in the service, near the emergency fire exit doors.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

## Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured that the service was insured. A certificate was available to evidence that the service was insured for 22 full day care children. The expiry date was noted as 27 March 2025. Details included cover for public liability and fire and theft.