

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015CC128
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Donna's Montessori
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Cregane, Buttevant, Co. Cork
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<b>Eircode:</b>	P51 T862
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Donna Cullen
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<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	05/07/2023
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	35	PM	29
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	134 Bank Place, Mallow, Cork. P51 EC59.
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<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	E. Friel
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<b>Title:</b>	Early Years Inspector
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### 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>	Not Applicable
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### Description of service

Donna's Montessori is an early years facility offering a choice of full day care, part-time and sessional services. Opening times are from 7.00 am until 6.00 pm, Monday to Friday, 50 weeks of the year. The Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme is facilitated in the morning between the hours of 9.00 am until 12 noon, term time only. The service accommodates children aged from zero to six years of age and a school age service is available with a breakfast club operating from 7.30 am until 9.00 am and an afterschool club from 1.30 pm until 6.00 pm.

The premises are located near Buttevant, a rural town in North Cork. It is a single storey, purpose built childcare service comprising of an entrance area leading to a main corridor off which there are four care rooms namely Butterfly, Caterpillar, Buzzy Bees and Baby Bunny. A kitchen, storage area, dedicated sleep room and sanitary facilities for both adults and children are also located in this area. There are three secure outdoor play areas available.

### Staffing

There are eleven staff currently employed in the service and the registered provider covers staff breaks.

### 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 announced and focused on the area of governance/ health, welfare and development of child and safety. The inspections 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, manager, deputies, 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.*

### Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) The registered provider ensured that there was a designated person in charge and two adults available to deputise.
  - (b) The registered provider was available to facilitate the inspection. The staff roster indicated that either the manager or both deputies were available while the pre-school children were present.
  - (c) The staff structure was available on the notice board in the entrance area of the service.
- (2) The registered provider confirmed that four adults had begun working at the service since the previous inspection undertaken on 31 May 2022. Therefore, recruitment records in relation to these adults were reviewed.
- (a) (b) There were three validated references from past employers and five validated references from sources other than past employers.
  - (c) Garda Vetting disclosures from the National Vetting Bureau were available for each of the four staff members.
  - (d) International police vetting disclosures were not required as none of the staff had lived outside the state as adults for six consecutive months or longer.
- (4) Certificates on file indicated that all four staff members, working directly with the children, held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications.

### 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 with the children at all times.

(2) The adult child ratio was met. There were three care rooms in operation on the day of inspection.

Baby Bunny (12 months – 24 months)

There were five full day care and one part-time child in attendance with two adults.

Buzzy Bees (18 months – 3 years)

There were ten full day care, one part-time child and two sessional children in attendance with three adults.

Butterfly Room (2 years 9 months – 6 years)

There were sixteen pre-school children, ten of whom were full day care and six of whom were part-time, in attendance with three adults. Two school age children were also in present in the room.

(8) The staff roster indicated that there were two adults on the premises at all times when the pre-school children were present in the service.

## 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.*

### Compliance Information

(1) The records of fifteen children were sampled on the day of inspection, all records were found to contain the particulars of (a) to (i) above.

### 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;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

#### Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) The name, position, qualifications and experience of the staff were available in the staff recruitment files.
  - (b) Details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered was found on the Tusla Registration Certificate available on the notice board in the entrance hall.
  - (c), (d), (e), (f) Details of the adult child ratios, type of care or programme provided, facilities available, opening hours and fees were available in the service’s Parent/Guardian form.
  - (g) The policies, procedures and statements the service is required to maintain in accordance with Regulation 10 were available on soft copies in the entrance hall.
  - (h) Attendance records for each child were available and completed in an attendance book for each room.
  - (i) The staff roster was available for the week.
  - (k) Ten records of accidents and incidents were review and each were found to contain the necessary particulars including the signatures of staff, management and parents/guardians.

### 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 service promoted healthy eating, food and snacks prepared by the parents/guardians were provided at regular intervals throughout the day. Staff stated breakfast is served between 7.30 am and 9.00 am with the service offering cereals, toast, water and milk. At 11.00 am children in the Buzzy Bee care room were observed eating crackers, yogurts, pancakes and a variety of berry fruits, while the younger children in the Baby Bunny care room were observed eating fruit pouches, vegetable sticks and rusks. A hot lunch was served at 2.00 pm and children in the Butterfly room were observed enjoying chilli and rice, salmon, chicken, broccoli and carrots and a further snack is provided at 4.00 pm.
- Children in each care room had access to water with children in the Baby Bunny care room accessing two handled cups and children in the older age groups (2 years and over) accessing their water from sports bottles. Cutlery, which was suitable for the age and stage of development of each child, was available in each room. Children in the Buzzy Bee care room were observed feeding themselves with forks while others were assisted and supported by staff members with spoons.
- Nappy changing in the Buzzy Bee care room was carried out regularly and promptly with a staff member observed changing children when required. In conversation, the staff member stated that children are changed every two hours. The nappy changing experience was noted to be handled in a positive and sensitive manner.
- The sleep needs of the older and younger children were met, and this was observed on the day with sleep needs being mainly child led. Children in the Buzzy Bee care room were facilitated with a scheduled rest period after lunch. Each care room had appropriate rest facilities for children who did not require sleep and these were observed in operation throughout the day.
- Children had room to move freely and explore their surroundings, resources and materials in each care room. All children had access to the outdoor play areas.

- The staff working with the children were responsive and supportive in promoting positive behaviours. A staff member in the Buzzy Bees room was heard reminding a child with a puppet to be gentle interacting with another child. In addition, another staff member was heard praising children for putting their rubbish in the bin by themselves.

### **SUPPORTING CHILDREN'S RELATIONSHIPS:**

- Staff were observed interacting with the children by sitting on the floor in the Baby Bunny care room and at the tables in the care rooms. The interactions were observed to be warm, caring and positive with staff in the Baby Bunny room sitting on the couch cuddling a child during a bottle feed and staff in the Buzzy Bee room sitting in the book corner reading books chosen by the children.
- Children in each of the rooms were observed to be treated by staff with dignity, respect and encouragement. Staff members in the Buzzy Bees care room were heard asking children “were they finished with their snack and drink” before staff removed it while also encouraging older children to tidy away their belongings by themselves.
- Each child was given time to finish their food with the atmosphere at the tables noted as being friendly, relaxed and calm.
- Various methods of communication with parent/guardians were observed in use including communication books in use in the Baby Bunny and Buzzy Bee care rooms. Written details included the children’s toileting, food, sleep routine and activities for the day. Staff members were observed exchanging information with the parents/guardians at drop off and collection and staff stated that text and emails were also used.

### **PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:**

- Each care room was laid out in clearly defined areas providing playful opportunities to enhance learning across all developmental domains. The Baby Bunny care room staff were sitting with children on the soft vinyl mats on the floor. A variety of toys were available including sensory toys, a climbing frame for gross motor opportunities, pop-up toys encouraging fine motor skills and exploration and a wall mirror where children could develop their visual senses.
- Equipment was stored in baskets on low-level shelving in each of the rooms making them easily accessible, offering choice and encouraging independence for each child.
- Each care room had a suitable rest/quiet area. The Buzzy Bee care room area, which was in use throughout the morning, was fitted with a sea creature rug, vinyl sofa, furry cushions and a bookcase with age and stage appropriate books.

- The walls were decorated with family pictures, beehive birthday pictures and summer artwork including paintings of hot air balloons and ice-creams.
- There were three outdoor areas in use on the day of inspection. The Butterfly and Caterpillar care rooms shared one main outdoor play area and the Baby Bunny and Buzzy Bee care rooms shared another. The third area was furnished with picnic tables and staff stated that the children have lunch outdoors in this area in good weather. The Butterfly and Caterpillar outdoor play area had a range of developmentally appropriate equipment and a covered area facilitating outdoor play in all weathers. Children were observed swinging, sliding, riding, running and climbing. They had access to sensory materials including sand and water. While children in the Baby Bunny and Buzzy Bee outdoor play area had access to bucket swings, a small slide, tunnel and rocking horse facilitating gross motor skills and a play kitchen and house providing opportunities for imaginary play. Each area was secured with high metal fencing, concrete walls and high hedging.

### PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES:

- Scrapbooks containing seasonal artwork, photographs of each child involved in activities and observations of each child were available and furnished to the inspector. These helped to create a complete picture of each child's time in the service.
- Children's language development was supported through story telling in the Buzzy Bee care room and songs including the "Wheels on the bus" in the Baby Bunny care room.

## 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:

- Children were unable to access unsafe areas in the setting as the doors of the kitchen, adult toilets and storage rooms were secured with a single bolt located at the top of the top of each door, out of reach of the children.
- The entry gate to the main door was controlled by a keypad, only accessible by the staff. In addition, a surveillance camera was in place ensuring unauthorised adults could not enter the area.

An electronic switch located indoors, which facilitated exiting the building, was positioned out of reach of children, preventing any child leaving the service unsupervised.

- Windows were fitted with restrictors preventing children from exiting or falling from them.
- Blind cords in the dedicated sleep room were secured on hooks, out of reach of the children.
- The highchairs in the Bunny care room were all fitted with safety harnesses in working order.
- Toys and equipment appeared well maintained and in good condition.
- Flexes and cables were secured and stored out of reach of the children.
- Waste was stored in pedal operated bins.
- Cleaning agents in the Buzzy Bee sanitary area were stored on top of the towel dispenser out of reach of the children.
- The kitchen was locked, and the key was hung outside on the top of the door frame, out of reach to the children, preventing access to hazardous objects such as kettles.
- The perimeter of the outdoor area was secured with block walls, high metal fencing and high hedging.

### Infection Control:

- The adults and children were observed washing their hands with thermostatically controlled hot water and dispensing foam soap, drying their hands with paper towels and disposing of waste in the pedal operated bins which were available in each area.
- Perishable food was observed stored in the fridge of each care room preventing spoilage.
- Highchairs in the Baby Bunny care room, and tables in the care rooms, were disinfected before and after mealtimes. Floors were swept maintaining a safe, healthy and inviting environment.
- Nappy changing in the Buzzy Bee care room was observed to be carried out according to the service's nappy changing procedure. The staff member washed their hands before putting on disposable gloves and an apron, the children's labelled nappies and wipes were located nearby. The staff member chatted to the child while changing the nappy and when finished, disposed of the nappy in a sealed, lidded and lined bin, along with disposing of the gloves and apron. Both the staff member and the child washed their hands and the staff member disinfected the mat and the area after use.
- Care room windows and a sleep room window were opened providing natural ventilation ensuring safe, healthy and comfortable conditions.
- Cleaning schedules were available for each room and were noted to be completed and up to date.
- Children's personal belongings were stored on personal hooks off the main floor area.
- A change of clothing was available for each child in the Baby Bunny care room in the event of an accident.

### Administration of Medication:

- Anti-febrile medications were stored in original containers, clearly labelled and placed out of reach of the children in the cabinet in the Buzzy Bees changing area.

### Safe Sleep:

- There was a designated sleep room for children from the Baby Bunny care room adjacent to the care room with eight standard cots, each with a waterproof mattress in good condition. There was a camera monitor located in the sleep room and staff in the room were observed monitoring this during sleep times in addition to carrying out ten-minute sleep checks. There were five children observed sleeping in this room at 1.00 pm.
- In addition, there were two additional rooms with stackable beds utilised for sleep during the day. The Buzzy Bee's care room became a sleep room, and ten children were observed resting after lunch in this room at 1.15 pm. Three Butterfly children were observed sleeping in a small room located off the main Buzzy Bee care room area.
- Documentary evidence indicated that ten-minute sleep checks were kept for each child with staff members observed physically recording the child's name, time, skin colour, position of the child, staff name, room temperature and any action required.
- Bedding was appropriate for each age group with the children in the Baby Bunny room having access to cellular blankets and older children in the Buzzy Bee care room observed with soft fleece blankets.
- A thermometer was visible in the room and was used as a method of maintaining and monitoring safe sleep temperatures between 16°C and 20°C. In addition, a portable air conditioner was on helping to maintain an ambient, safe room temperature.

### Fire Safety:

- All fire doors were unobstructed.
- Firefighting equipment was secured to the walls.
- The fire assembly point was located in the car park, a suitable distance from the service.

### Non-Compliance Information

#### General Safety:

- (1) Large doll houses located in the Butterfly and Caterpillar care rooms were not secured or anchored posing a safety risk from them tipping or falling on the children.
- (2) The chairs in the Buzzy Bee care room were stacked six chairs high posing a risk of the chairs tipping or falling on the children.

## Infection Control:

- (3) There were no practices in place for the sterilising of children's soothers in the Baby Bunny or Buzzy Bee care rooms, posing a safety risk of cross infection from being left on the shelf after use.

## Action submitted by the Registered Provider

### Corrective & Preventive Action

The following statements were made by the registered provider:

#### General Safety:

- (1) The doll's houses have been secured by way of brackets to the walls.
- (2) Staff have been reminded of the dangers of stacking chairs. Chairs are now stacked in a locked cupboard in the hall.

## Infection Control:

- (3) Sterilising units have been installed in the Baby Bunny and Buzzy Bee care rooms and staff have been instructed to use the sterilising units to prevent cross infection.

### Supporting documentation submitted

The following photographic evidence was received in the office of the inspectorate:

#### General Safety:

- (1) Both doll houses secured to the walls with brackets.
- (2) Chairs stacked in a locked cupboard in the corridor.

## Infection Control:

- (3) New sterilising units visibly in use in the Baby Bunny and Buzzy Bee care rooms.

## Summary Comment

The actions taken by the registered provider have addressed the non-compliances under this Regulation.

### 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 ensured that a person with First Aid Responder (FAR) training was available at all times.

(2)

(a) (b) The two first aid boxes were visible, stored within easy reach of the staff and were available 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.*

*(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 of monthly fire drills that took place were available in the service. The last fire drill was recorded as taking place on 23 June 2023.

(b) Written records of the number, type and maintenance of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms were available. The maintenance certificates were dated 20 April 2023 and 17 January 2023 respectively.

(4) The notices of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were displayed beside the fire exits.

## 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. An insurance certificate with an expiry date of 27 March 2024 was available detailing insurance for 67 children on full day care basis.