

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC140		
Name of Service:	Easy Learning Montessori School		
Address of Service:	Sliabh Dotia, Whitechurch, Co. Cork		
Eircode:	T34 TK75		
Name of Registered Provider:	Elizabeth Cahill		
Service type:	Sessional		
Date(s) of Inspection:	26/10/2023		
No of pre-school children:	AM	2	PM n/a
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Administration Office, St Mary's Health Campus, Gurrabraher, Cork		
Inspection undertaken by:	C Stokes		
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		

Description of service

This preschool was established in 1998 as a private sessional service. It offers ECCE provision from 9.30am-12.30, Monday to Friday for 38 weeks of the year. The service is a play-based Montessori influenced setting. The service is in a rural area, within the registered providers own dwelling, and comprises of one playroom and one sanitary area for children. There is a large outdoor area to the side and rear of the service.

Staffing

The Registered Provider was service-based. The sole adult (Registered Provider) working directly with the children in the service has a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education.

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-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, 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,

(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 service has a designated person in charge, the registered provider, who operates single-handedly with a second person for emergencies.

(2) The registered provider recruitment file was reviewed previously and was found to be compliant, and no new staff had been recruited.

(4) The registered provider had a major award at Level 8 of the National Qualifications Framework in Early Childhood Care and Education.

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 ensures that an adequate number of adults works directly with the children. The registered provider works singlehandedly with up to 11 children.
- (3) On the day of inspection, the registered provider was caring for 2 children.

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

- The registered provider sat with the children and chat to make the snack time a social occasion.
- Children were encouraged and supported to develop independence regarding personal care, particularly, with hand washing prior to meals.
- The children were in pull-up nappies and the service had a sensitive practice of dealing with these children.
- The setting provided for the children's need for relaxation during the session by means of a cozy area with mats.
- Children's need for mobility with different indoor activities observed on the day of inspection, as due to inclement weather the outdoor area was not in use.

- There was a calm and positive approach to managing behaviour, with the registered provider speaking in low tones with supportive interactions around turn taking and waiting.

SUPPORTING RELATIONSHIPS AROUND CHILDREN:

- The registered provider advised the inspector that the service operated in partnership with parents; daily diaries are kept for each child to charter their progress and set weekly aims, which are shared with parents at handover times.
- Regular observations on the children are maintained and shared with parents. Photographs of children are shared with parents on a communication online platform.
- The registered provider showed positive regard for the children on the day of inspection, with encouragement and praise for specific tasks in a warm and caring manner for example matching games and one to one interactions.
- The setting is integrated into the local community, particularly with the local schools.

PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

- The indoor environment of the playroom was child friendly and was laid out in defined interest areas, including Montessori materials, a home area/ cozy area, arts/crafts, dolls, role play, small world, transport, construction area, dolls and puzzles were available.
- There was open shelving with play materials and items laid out so that the children could identify and access them easily and independently.
- Children's artwork was on display at an appropriate level for children. The artwork was linked to the themes of the week/month, for example, Halloween.
- A visual timetable was on display, for children to understand their predictable daily routine.

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:

- Internal and external doors were secured on the day of inspection.
- Emergency exit doors were unobstructed.
- Storage facilities were inaccessible to children.
- No cables were within reach of children on the day of inspection.

Infection Control:

- Children were observed to wash their hands before eating.
- There was a supply of thermostatically controlled hot water, liquid soap, and paper towels available in the children's sanitary area.
- Suitable lidded bins were in place for waste disposal.

Administration of Medication:

- The administration of medication was not observed at the time of inspection

Safe Sleep:

- No child was observed to sleep in the service as the service is a sessional service.

Fire Safety:

- No fire safety issues were observed on the day of inspection, fire doors were unobstructed.

Outing:

- No outings were conducted on the day of inspection.

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 trained in first aid for children is, always, immediately available to the children attending the pre-school service.
- (2) The registered provider ensured that a suitably equipped first aid box for children-
- (a) was safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position on the premises.
 - (b) It was available to the children attending the pre-school service always.

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) The registered provider ensured that a record was kept of the fire drills, the most recent drill was dated 11 October 2023.
- (b) The registered provider ensured that a record was kept of the firefighting equipment. The service record indicated the fire extinguishers were maintained in March 2023 and the fire alarm was most recently serviced on 7 November 2023.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was on display at the fire point in the room

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

There was adequate insurance for 11 children attending on a sessional basis valid until 27 November 2023.