

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC156
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Name of Service:	First Steps Montessori & Daycare
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Address of Service:	Bridgefield, Curraheen Road, Bishopstown, Cork, Co. Cork
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Eircode:	T12 AF86
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Name of Registered Provider:	Aine Murphy
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	02/07/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	38	PM	31
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate Administration Building St Mary's Health Campus Gurrabraher Cork T23X440
Inspection undertaken by:	V. McCarthy
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

First Steps Montessori & Daycare is a privately operated service that caters for children aged between 0 and 6 years of age. It provides full day-care, part-time care, sessional care and the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme. Daily opening hours are from 7.45am to 6pm and the service also provides care for school age children on the premises. The service operates from a purpose built one storey building that is situated in a residential area on the suburbs of Cork city. There are 5 care rooms namely the Wobbler (1) room, the Wobbler (2) room, the Toddler room, the Montessori (1) room and the Montessori (2) room. There is a designated sleep room beside the Wobbler (1) room. There are two large outdoor play areas, one provided at either end of the premises. The 4 care rooms positioned to the rear of the premises also each has direct access to a small secured outdoor area.

Staffing

There are 18 adults attached to the service including the registered provider and the accountant/maintenance person who are not service based. On the day of the inspection there were 11 adults on the premises including the registered provider who visited the premises at 11am and stayed on for a period of time for work meetings. The person in charge and 9 other adults were working directly with the early years children.

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, 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

(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 had a named person in charge and a named deputy that could deputise as required.
 - (b) The person in charge was on duty when the inspector arrived at the premises and remained on site for the duration of the inspection.
- (2)
- (a) There were 30 references and required validations available on file from past employers in respect of the 18 adults attached to the service.
 - (b) There were 6 references and required validations available from sources other than past employers.
 - (c) A Garda vetting disclosure was available on file for review in respect of each of the 18 adults. The service also

demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting for the relevant staff every 3 years.

(d) Police vetting was available for 3 adults that had lived outside the jurisdiction for a period of more than 6 consecutive months.

(4)
A copy of a childcare qualification as listed on the National Qualifications Framework or letter from the Minister or letter from an appropriate training college was available on file in respect of the 16 adults that worked directly with the children.

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 policy on administration of medication was reviewed by the inspector.

- It referred to the safe labelling and storage of medications.
- It set out the procedure for the administration of medications.
- It detailed the requirement of parental consent and how to obtain it prior to the administration of medications.
- It referred to the recording of how medications were administered.

Non-Compliance Information

The policy on administration of medication did not refer to the following:

1. The timeframe regarding the retention of records
2. The procedure for dealing with an individual care plan if required for a child.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider responded to state that the policy was reviewed and amended, and was uploaded to the service parent app. The registered provider stated they will keep policies under constant review, and in the coming weeks they will add 'storage of records' where applicable to each policy in the service

Supporting documentation submitted

The policy was submitted and contained the two required points, as outlined above.

Summary Comment

The requirement for Regulation 10 has been met.

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 person in charge ensured that there were an adequate number of adults always working directly with the children.

(2) On the morning of the inspection there were 10 adults working directly with 38 early years children and the roster demonstrated that there was an adequate number of adults on duty to cover staff breaks. Additionally, the registered provider visited the premises at 11am and remained office based.

(8)(a) There were more than 2 adults on the premises during the hours of operation. The roster demonstrated that there were 6 adults on the premises at 8am when the service opened and that there would be 5 adults on the premises at 6pm when the service closed.

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:

(j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;

Compliance Information

(1)
(j) The service used a digital application for the recording of any medications administered to the early years children. The person in charge showed the inspector the template that was used to record any medication administered and stated parental consent was always obtained beforehand. The medication was checked and signed by 2 adults before being administered to a child. The inspector was informed that as per the service's policy, medications are not routinely administered by the service. However, the service administers medications if a child has a condition that requires a specific care plan or in an emergency setting. The person in charge was able to show the inspector a prewritten procedure that was specific to a child currently attending the service and it detailed the management steps set out to manage the condition and how to deal with an emergency should it occur. The registered provider informed the inspector that senior staff had attended First Aid Response (FAR) training and that they could administer first aid immediately in an emergency whilst their colleagues contacted an ambulance, the respective child's parent and informed the registered provider.

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

SUPPORTING RELATIONSHIPS AROUND CHILDREN

- There were key adults assigned to each care room and the adults were observed to speak kindly and positively to the early years children in their care as the children participated in colouring, storytelling or outdoor activities.
- General Information regarding the services' activities was provided to parents and guardians by means of an electronic application, emails, notice boards and by verbal communication.
- Parents and guardians were informally spoken to daily at drop off and collection times and formal meetings were arranged as requested by parents/guardians regarding their respective child.
- The service maintained strong links with support groups such as Early Childhood Ireland, the local training colleges, the local residential network and the Cork City Childcare Committee.
- Full-service meetings were carried out at the premises monthly and records of agendas regarding same were available on file. The adults in each room carried out a daily meeting to plan the activities and care that were proposed to be provided to the early years children.
- A support person for the promotion of a high-quality Montessori care was employed by the registered provider to visit her multiple services and provide the staff with additional training and support. Evidence of this training and support was available to the inspector.

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

Infection Control:

- The person in charge informed the inspector that each care room was cleaned daily by the staff that worked in the respective care room and that a 'clean as you go' policy was operated. There were also 2 identified floating adults that carried out a deep cleaning of the premises each evening. There were detailed cleaning records on the electronic application available for review. The premise, furniture and play materials in each care room were noted to be clean and in good condition.
- Adults were aware of the correct measures for coughing and sneezing and assisted the children follow this process. There were boxes of tissues and pedal operated bins for safe disposal of used tissues provided in each care room.
- Crockery was provided and used by the children during their snack and dinner meal breaks.
- There were fridges available to store the children's perishable food for their snacks and meals.
- Hand washing occurred regularly and at required times by both the staff and children.
- A supply of thermostatically controlled warm water, liquid soap, paper towels, pedal operated bins and hand sanitiser was available throughout the premises. The water temperature at wash hand basins was recorded between 26.1°C and 28.4°C.
- Wipes, nappies and barrier creams were individually labelled and not for communal use. They were stored on shelves or in presses that were out of children's reach.
- The nappy changing mats used were sanitised after each nappy change.
- The children's personal belongings were stored off the floor on individually labelled wall hooks along the main corridors.