

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015CC194
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Kate's Montessori
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Derrynanool, Mitchelstown, Co. Cork
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<b>Eircode:</b>	P67 P042
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Hannah-Kate Finn
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<b>Service type:</b>	Part Time, Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	27/11/2023
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	19	PM	23
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate, 13 Market Square, Mallow, Cork P51DD5Y
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<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	F Collins
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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>	N/A
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## Description of service

Kate's Montessori is a privately run service located in the rural location of Derrynanool near Mitchelstown.

The service offers a part-time service and a sessional service and is open daily from 08.30 -14.45.

The sessional services are facilitated from 08.30-11.30 and from 11.45-14.45. The children attending the part-time service remain on in the setting after the early sessional service and can stay until 13.30.

The service is provided to children aged from 2-6 years.

The premises consists of a detached single-story premises that has been converted into a childcare facility consisting of one large playroom divided into two sections. The care room has 3 children's toilets and storage facilitates.

There are two large outdoor areas that have been developed for use by the children, these areas are secured by secure gates and appropriately high fencing.

There is a separate building for the adult toilet facilities and where the staff can take a break

## Staffing

There were eight staff, inclusive of the registered provider included on the staff roster. All eight staff held qualifications at level 5 to level 8 on the National Qualifications Framework.

## 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, deputy 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 registered provider ensured that there was a person in charge in the service during the operation of the service. On the day of inspection, the registered provider was the person in charge. There was a named deputy for the service in the event the person in charge was not onsite.

(b) The staff roster indicated there was at all times a named person in charge or a named deputy onsite.

(2) There were eight adults named as being available to work in the service. All eight staff files were assessed.

(a) Of the 16 references required for the eight staff, 15 of these references were available from past employers and these references were validated as required.

(b) The remaining reference was available from a source other than a past employer and this reference was validated.

(c) Up to date Garda Vetting was available on file for each of the eight staff named as working in the service.

(d) Police vetting was not required for any staff.

(4) All eight staff that work with the children daily were qualified at Level 5 to Level 8 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.*

#### Compliance Information

(1) There were adequate staff available to the children on the day of inspection to meet the needs of the children in attendance.

(2) The adult child ratio was correct during the inspection.

The morning sessions:

The Butterfly group in the morning where seven children aged 3-5 years were in attendance were cared for by three adults.

The Caterpillar group where 12 children aged between 2 and 3 years in the morning were cared for by three adults.

Six children in total remained on in the service for part time care, these children were aged 3-4 years and were cared for by one adult from the end of the sessional service to the end of the part-time service.

The afternoon sessions:

The Busy Bees group were cared for by two adults. These children were aged 3-4 years.

The Lady Bugs group, six in total, were all aged between 2 years and 1 month to 2 years and 10 months. These children were cared for by two adults. The staff roster indicated that two staff were always rostered on 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 enrolment forms for the children attending the service were reviewed.

Of these a sample of fifteen children's records were reviewed between the children in attendance between morning and afternoon sessions.

Of the 15 children's files being reviewed 11 had the details in keeping with the requirements as outlined above in

(a) – (i).

Three records had the details (a) & (c) – (i) maintained as outlined above.

#### Non-Compliance Information

(1) Of the fifteen records being reviewed one record was not available on file for assessment.

(b) Three records did not have the commencement date of when the children started in the service.

Not having records or having incomplete records for each child in attendance may hinder their care when attending the service.

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

## Corrective and Preventive Action

- (1) The enrolment form that was not available on the day of inspection has been obtained and filed.
  - (b) The commencement date has been added to the records of the children where this was not previously recorded.

## Supporting documentation submitted

- (1) The assurances received from the registered provider are accepted as confirmation that all children's records are now up to date.

## Summary Comment

The requirements for this regulation have been met.

## 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:*

- (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) (h) The attendance details of each child were maintained and the time in and out was recorded.
  - (i) The staff roster was reviewed and included staff breaks and start/finish times.
  - (k) The accident and incident records for this academic year were reviewed, there were four accident and incident records reviewed and all four records contained the correct details inclusive of signatures of staff and parents/guardians of the 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

##### Basic Needs:

- The children's needs were met around food and drink provision. Snacks were served at 10 am for the morning session and lunch was served at 12.30. the children did not indicate that they were hungry before this time. Drinks of water were available to the children throughout the day.
- The temperature of the care room was at 18.9°C, this temperature ensured the children were comfortable for play and activity in the care room.
- The older children toileted independently and assistance was given with the younger children who needed reminders with hand washing and with their clothing.
- Care was given to the personal care of the children with children's noses cleaned as needed.
- Children were allowed to rest and opt out of activities as they wished and the comfortable rest area that had been developed was used by the children throughout the morning.
- The children were free to move about and their activities were not restricted.
- The needs of the children when going outside were met when the staff ensured each child was dressed in waterproof coats and leggings and wellington boots, these were provided by the service.

##### Supporting Relationships:

- The children were supported by the staff at snack time when the staff sat with the children and provided support when required.
- The service communicated with parents via text and also daily at drop off and collection.
- Each child was supported to participate in each activity and it was observed when some needed more help this was offered.
- Activities that have been completed in the service were displayed.
- The children knew their carers and all of the staff in the service and were observed to seek support to a named staff member when required.
- A family wall was displayed in both areas of the care room and ensured children could source support from photographs of family when needed.

- Children who had been assessed for additional supports had access and inclusion plans available to guide the staff on the care needs of each child. Each child had a key worker to support them and communicate with parents/guardians.

### Physical and Material Environment:

- The layout of the indoor environment allowed for the children to use their imagination in choosing and doing activities. There were areas of interest and these were grouped so children could play in small and large groups.
- Gross motor development was encouraged outside when using the sand shed with the boat, when digging or when running about with the activities as set up by the staff.
- Fine motor development was encouraged through use of jigsaws, blocks and bricks and outside through the use of the mud kitchen and the resources such as the garage that was brought outside to play with.
- Some children were observed to play with water and sand, promoting sensory development.

### Programme of Activities:

- The children were observed to participate in a schedule of activities such as free play, outdoor activities and large movement activities. All were to promote the sensory and motor awareness of each child.
- There was a language rich environment noted with children encouraged to sing, recite and participate in stories.

### Outdoor Environment:

- The outdoor environment consisted of two areas. The area outside the care room door was divided into area for a yard, for running and riding on ride on toys, a grass area with a mud kitchen, a house and tunnels to climb through. There was an outside classroom that was used and could be heated as required. A further area that was an enclosed area with sand and a ship that had a cover over so could be used in comfort during poor weather.
- The second space consisted of a field with a poly tunnel for growing vegetables and photographs of the previous crops were evident. There was a shed and water tables and access to a walking path which was not used on the day of the inspection. The shed was being set up as a crib for Christmas and children would visit this during the Christmas period.

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

### Regulation 22 – Food and drink

*A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.*

### Compliance Information

The service followed their healthy eating policy and this was displayed through the foods available in the children's snacks. These contained yogurts, chopped fruit and vegetables, crackers and rice cakes, sandwiches and cheese.

## 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 doors into the service were secured and no child could leave the premises unattended.
- The door from the playroom to the outdoor area was secured with a thumb turn lock.
- The window openings were out of the reach of the children.
- The electric cables were out of reach of the children and were made safe.
- The toys were safe and did not have any pinch or crush points.
- The cleaning equipment was stored out of reach of the children.
- There were visibility transfers on the glass door to the outdoor area this ensured that the children could see the door and prevent an accident running into the glass.
- Breaks were taken in the house next door and therefore there was no access by the children to boiling water or hot drinks.
- The outdoor area was fenced and was secured to ensure no child could leave unaccompanied.

#### Infection Control:

- All of the food for snack and lunchtime was stored in the fridge to prevent contamination of the perishable items.

- The bags and coats for the children were stored off the ground on accessible hooks.
- The windows were opened to ensure good air circulation.
- The service was cleaned daily and the cleaning sheets were signed by the staff.
- Tables were cleaned with appropriate disinfectant after tabletop activities and before snack and lunch time and children's meals were served on plates.
- There was hot water in the sinks in the children's toilets in the care room and in the adult toilet in the house beside the service.
- There was liquid hand soap and paper towels beside each of the children's sinks and at the sinks in the care room.
- The children were seen to be reminded to wash hands before snack and lunch time and after using the toilet.

### Safe Sleep:

- No child was observed to sleep in the service on the day of the inspection.

### Fire Safety:

- The fire door exiting into the outdoor play area was accessible and not locked during the inspection.
- The firefighting equipment was accessible to the staff.

### Non-Compliance Information

#### General Safety:

1. Childrens snack/lunches contained whole fruit berries (Blueberries) that were a size that could pose a risk of choking in a child, the staff did not chop them until requested to do so by the inspector.

#### Infection Control:

2. There were no paper towels at the adult sinks and a cloth towel was available. Cloth towels harbour potential bacteria following use by multiple staff and pose a risk of cross infection. This non-compliance was also identified on the last inspection.
3. The water table for use in the outdoor area beside the car park was filled with rainwater that was in the water table for an unknown amount of time. Using stagnant water that could be contaminated poses a risk of cross infection to the children who play with the water table.

#### Fire Safety:

4. The fire evacuation notice was not updated and indicated that the main door was a fire exit door however this was locked by a chain lock and as explained by the registered provider was not used for fire drills.

### Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective & Preventive Action

##### General Safety:

1. The staff are now aware to check children's lunch boxes daily and ensure that any choking hazards are identified and managed. The staff have discussed this at a staff meeting.

##### Infection Control:

2. Paper towels have been added to the adult toilet facility. This has been added to the cleaning checklist to ensure the paper handtowels are available at all times. The responsibility for this has been given to a staff member.
3. The water tray has been emptied and the registered provider has submitted assurances that the water tray will be emptied daily and filled with fresh water.

##### Fire Safety:

4. The registered provider has updated the fire evacuation notice and has removed the chain locks. The staff have been informed of the updates and have been shown the new evacuation procedures.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

##### General Safety:

1. Minutes of the staff meeting post inspection have been received and these indicate that staff have been requested to review the children's snacks and lunches for foods that pose a risk of choking.

##### Infection Control:

2. The staff meeting minutes following the inspection have been received, these indicate that the staff have been informed of the need to have disposable handtowels in the adult toilet and a staff member has been given this responsibility.
3. The assurances received on the corrective and preventive action form are accepted as proof that the water tray will be monitored.

##### Fire Safety:

4. Staff meeting minutes have been received and the updated fire evacuation plan.

### Summary Comment

Following receipt of the corrective and preventive action form and the evidence received the requirements for this Regulation have been met.

## 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) There were two staff trained as First Aid Responders which ensured there was a staff member with appropriate first aid training available to the children should they be required.

(2) (a) The first aid box was stored in the care room on a high shelf near the children's sinks.

(b) The first aid box was available to the children at all times. The contents of the first aid box were suitable and in date.

## 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 service practiced fire drills on a monthly basis and the last recorded fire drill took place on 13.10.2023.  
(b) The firefighting equipment was last serviced on 13.11.2023 and the fire alarms were last serviced on 01.12.2022. Records of these were available for inspection.
- (4) The procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were displayed in the service

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

### Compliance Information

The service had up to date insurance for a part-time service. The service was insured to have 32 children in attendance at any one time and to operate as a part-time service.