

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015CC194				
<b>Name of Service:</b>	Kate's Montessori				
<b>Address of Service:</b>	Derrynanool, Mitchelstown, Co. Cork				
<b>Eircode:</b>	P67 P042				
<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Hannah-Kate Finn				
<b>Service type:</b>	Part Time, Sessional				
<b>Date(s) of Inspection:</b>	18/11/2025				
<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>AM</td> <td>30</td> <td>PM</td> <td>25</td> </tr> </table>	AM	30	PM	25
AM	30	PM	25		
<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Second Floor, Estuary House, Henry Street, Limerick.				
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	F Collins				
<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>	Not applicable
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### Description of service

Kate's Montessori it's a privately run service located near Mitchelstown in the rural location of Derrynanool. The service operates as a part time service and additionally four sessional services are run, two in the morning commencing at 8.30 and a further two commencing at 11.45. The part time service operates from 8:30 to 13.30 daily. The sessional services operate from 8:30 to 11:30 and from 11:45 to 2:45 daily.

Care and education is provided to children aged from two to six years.

The premises consists of a detached single storey premises that has been converted into a childcare premises consisting of one large playroom divided into two sections. There are in addition to this two outdoor classrooms and toilet facilities for adults and children.

The outdoor area is extensive with open areas, concrete covered areas, areas that are covered for shelter, sand and digging areas, grass areas with tyres and mulch.

The service is secured by fencing all around.

### Staffing

The service has ten staff on the staff roster and all staff on the staff roster work directly with children. The staff are qualified in early years care and education from level 5 to level 8 on the national qualification's framework. In addition to this a staff member also holds the special award for leadership and inclusion in the service.

### 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 designated person in charge and a named deputy. The deputy person in charge was onsite when the inspector arrived at the service with the registered provider arriving soon after. The registered provider was the person in charge on the day of inspection.

(b) The registered provider and deputy person in charge was on the premises for the duration of the inspection.

(2) There were ten staff that may work in the service inclusive of relief staff and all ten staff files were assessed.

(a) For the 10 staff employed, 20 references were required, and 18 validated references were available from past employers.

(b) Of the 20 references required 1 validated reference was available from a source other than a past employer.

(c) Up to date Garda vetting was on file for all 10 staff that may work in the service. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Police vetting was required for one staff member, and a copy of appropriate police vetting was made available to the inspector on request.

(4) All 10 staff who may work in the service had proof of appropriate qualifications in early childhood care education from level 5 to level 8 on the National Qualifications Framework available on file. One staff member also had Leadership for Inclusion training completed.

### Non-Compliance Information

(2) (a) One employer reference was not validated by the registered provider.

Not ensuring all staff are appropriately vetted may allow for staff that are not suitable have access to children.

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

### **Corrective and Preventive Action**

(2)(a) The relevant employer reference has been validated, and the registered employer has committed to ensuring that all references are validated prior to staff commencing in the service.

### **Supporting documentation submitted**

(2) (a) A copy of the relevant reference has been received.

### **Summary Comment**

The requirements for this regulation as assessed have been met.

## 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 healthy eating policy was reviewed, and this contained all the requirements to ensure that the children attending both sessional and part-time services would be provided with adequate food and drinks.

### **Non-Compliance Information**

1. The complaints policy was reviewed. The policy contained most of the guidance required for the service to manage a complaint should one be received. However, the policy did not state how the records of all complaints received by the service would be stored. Not ensuring the records were safely stored may hinder them being found in the event they were required.

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

#### **Corrective and Preventive Action**

1. The complaints policy has been updated and now includes the managing of the complaints records. The registered provider is responsible for the safe storage of all complaint records.

#### **Supporting documentation submitted**

1. The amended complaints policy has been received.

### **Summary Comment**

The requirements for this regulation as assessed have 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.*

*(4) Subject to paragraph (5), where a registered provider contemporaneously provides-*

*(a) a sessional pre-school service, and*

*(b) a full day care service or a part-time day care service, or both, the minimum ratio of adults to children applicable for the duration of the sessional pre-school service in respect of the children attending that service shall be the ratio specified in paragraph (3).*

#### Compliance Information

- (1) The registered provider ensured that there were adequate staff on the premises at all times. This was assessed on the staff roster and when assessing the adults available to the children throughout the day of inspection.
- (2) During the operation of the sessional services in the morning 8 adults cared for 30 children attending. During the operation of the part-time service 2 adults cared for the 7 children who remained in the service. In the afternoon sessional service there were 3 adults caring for the afternoon early childhood care and education scheme and 2 adults caring for the children attending on a sessional basis aged between 2 and 2 years and 8 months.
- (4) (a) The minimum ratios as required for a sessional service were provided with 8 adults caring for 30 children attending the sessional service in the morning and 5 adults caring for 18 children attending on a sessional basis in the afternoon.
- (b) There were two adults caring for the seven children attending the part-time service after the morning sessional service finished.

### 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 requirements as set out in (a) – (i) above were met in 11 of the 12 children's records randomly assessed across the two care rooms in use on the morning of the inspection.

#### Non-Compliance Information

(1) (f) The requirements as set out requiring the registered provider to have knowledge of any illnesses, disabilities or allergies for all children in attendance were not demonstrated as one child's records had no indication of the child having any medical needs. Not having this information may hinder the care of the children should they require medical care or attention.

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

##### Corrective and Preventive Action

(1) (f) The enrolment form for the child in question was updated following the inspection. A system has been put in place to ensure all children's details that may be required by the service are recorded and immediately available should they be required. A process has also been put in place for how to address any gaps in information should they be missing. The registered provider is responsible for this to be completed.

##### Supporting documentation submitted

(1) (f) A photograph of the updated enrolment form with the additional information recorded was received.

## Summary Comment

The requirements for this regulation as assessed have been met following the submission of the corrective and preventive action plan.

## 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 in both groups ate their morning snack in the care room areas. Lunch was eaten in the outside classroom and the food served was provided by the parents/guardians for both meals.
- The water bottles for each child were easily accessible throughout the day, and children were observed to access their drinks as required.
- The children used the toilet when needed and the children who needed assistance were helped and reminded to wash their hands.
- Children dressed in full cover waterproof clothing when going outside and wore wellington boots which were stored outside for daily use.
- The children attending both areas had child height couches and rest areas accessible to them, this would allow them to rest and opt out of activities if they wished to do so. No child slept in the service on the day of inspection; a stackable bed was available should this be required.
- Individual access and inclusion plans were available and were completed by the staff and the early years specialist. The staff members supporting the children could describe the strategies used to support the children when needed.
- Childrens handwashing and personal hygiene was assisted by the staff.

### Supporting Relationships Around Children:

- The staff caring for the children created a supportive environment, assisting each child as required with snacks, tabletop activities and with their outdoor play activities of digging, riding on ride-on toys, playing with the mud kitchen and using the slides.
- Children were observed to play together in small or large groups and for one or two to play alone and opt out of group activities.
- Children were encouraged in their activities, and the children were observed to be given jobs when handing out lunches and drinks which supported them to be independent thinkers.
- Communication with parents and guardians was at drop off and collection.
- Transitions were managed by giving adequate notice of changes in the day. Notice was given for snack time, for going outside and when preparing for going home.

### Physical And Material Environment:

- All of the tables and chairs in the service were at an appropriate height for use by the children.
- Sensory experiences were developed through playing with sand and bark mulch and with water, all when playing outside.
- Fine motor development was encouraged through the use of activity boards, shape sorters and when doing arts and crafts. All activities were stored on open shelving which was accessible to the children.
- Gross motor development was evidenced through outdoor play where the children were cycling, digging sand, using wheelbarrows, running and climbing on the playhouse and using the slide.
- Imaginary play was developed through room layout in home, dress up, and various activities indoors.

### Programme Of Activities

- The plan for each day was similar with accessing the outdoor space a significant part of each day. At this time the two groups of children could play together.
- All children were noted to have the opportunity to learn through play for example: the children's fine motor skills developed through arts and crafts and through the use of blocks and using little fishing nets for the tuff tray.
- Children were afforded the opportunity to choose their own activities and both indoors and outside the children were allowed to move about freely.

### Outdoor Area:

The outdoor area was adjacent to the service and was integrated into use all day with two outdoor classrooms and an extensive outdoor area.

The children had access to slides, balance equipment, a large boat area which was covered and filled with sand for use when the weather was poor. Areas of interest included a mud kitchen, tyres sunk into the ground, bark mulch area and ride on toys that all were 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 entrances to the service were secured. The gates into the yard were secured with running bolts and the door that would access the unsecured area was secured and did not allow unauthorised access into the service or for children to leave the service unaccompanied.
- The temperature of the hot water in both care areas indoors was recorded at 36.7 and 37.1°C respectively in the children's toilets the hot water was recorded at 36.5 and 35.4°C respectively. This allowed for comfortable hand washing and was at a temperature that would not cause a scald injury.
- The fire exits were unobstructed and easily opened on the day of inspection.
- The window openings were out of the reach of the children.
- There were no hot drinks consumed in the service during its operation.
- All toys inspected were in good condition with no pinch or crush points noted.
- Cleaning and disinfection products were stored out of reach of the children.
- No loose or exposed electric cables were evident in the care rooms.

#### Infection Control:

- The cleaning of the service was evident with staff cleaning tables before and after snack time and after messy play.
- There was hot water available in the children's toilets. Liquid soap and paper towels were available at all sinks to ensure the children and staff could wash their hands as required, and paper waste was disposed of in pedal operated lidded bins.

- Snacks were stored in the fridge to prevent contamination and potential illness from perishable items contained in the snacks.
- Children were observed to wash their hands after messy play, after toileting and before eating.
- The children's bags and coats were stored off the ground which prevented contamination and cross infection.

### Administration of Medication:

- No medication was observed to be administered on the day of inspection.

### Safe Sleep:

- No child slept on the day of inspection.

### Fire Safety:

- The fire exit doors were not blocked and were freely accessible.

## Non-Compliance Information

### General Safety:

1. One of the children brought uncut grapes in their snack to the service. These were not seen by the staff, and the inspector asked the staff to cut them before being eaten by the child as uncut grapes pose a risk of choking.
2. The two fire extinguishers near the main exit door were unsecured and were stored on the ground near the sink. This posed a risk of the children pulling them over on top of themselves.

### Infection Control:

3. The staff toilet in the Semora Dearg was also being used by the pre-school children as evidence of a step up was in this toilet. Sharing of toilet facilities between adults and children poses a risk of cross infection.
4. There was a nappy changing mat stored in the toilet cubicle in the toilets beside the Butterfly care area. This posed risk of contamination and cross infection if used.

## Action submitted by the Registered Provider

### Corrective & Preventive Action

### General Safety:

1. The staff have been advised about the safety of foods being eaten by the children and for their increased vigilance on children's snacks and lunches. Parents have also been communicated with regarding the need to ensure the food sent into the service are suitable and do not pose a risk of choking.
2. The fire extinguishers have been wall mounted and the registered provider shall ensure that they remain wall mounted.

### Infection Control:

3. The children will no longer use the toilet in Seomra Dearg and will be brought into the children's toilets in the service should they need same.
4. The nappy changing mat has been removed and the policy has been updated to reflect how the service will manage nappy changing with the children inclusive of the use of a step for the nappy changing unit.

### Supporting documentation submitted

#### General Safety:

1. The note sent to parents has been received. The healthy eating policy has been received.
2. The assurances received on the corrective and preventive action submission are accepted that this action has been completed.

#### Infection Control:

3. The assurances received on the corrective and preventive action submission are accepted that this action has been completed.
4. The nappy changing policy has been received.

### Summary Comment

The requirements for this regulation as assessed have been met.

## Part VIII - Notifications and Complaints

### Regulation 32 – Complaints

- (1) A registered provider shall ensure that the complaints policy of the service specifies-*
- (a) the procedure to be followed by a person for the purposes of making a complaint in relation to the service,*
  - (b) the manner in which such a complaint shall be dealt with, and*
  - (c) the procedures for keeping a person who makes such a complaint informed of the manner in which it is being dealt with.*

### Compliance Information

- (1) No complaint had been received in the service for which it could be assessed to be in compliance with the Regulations.