

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>N/ATUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015CC239
-----------------------------	-------------

<b>Name of Service:</b>	Little Stars Montessori Pre-School
-------------------------	------------------------------------

<b>Address of Service:</b>	14 Bradfields, Dunderrow, Kinsale, Co. Cork
----------------------------	---

<b>Eircode:</b>	P17 XY32
-----------------	----------

<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Helen Forde
-------------------------------------	-------------

<b>Service type:</b>	Part Time
----------------------	-----------

<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	03/11/2025
----------------------------	------------

<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	14	PM	6
-----------------------------------	----	----	----	---

<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor, Estuary House, Henry Street, Limerick, V94 XT5F
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	S O'Brien
<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>	N/A
---------------------------------	-----

### Description of service

Little Stars Montessori Pre-School is a privately operated early years service based in the village of Dunderrow, Cork. The service caters for children aged 2 to 6 years and also offers the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme. The service operates from 9am to 2pm, Monday to Friday. The service has one large care room, sanitary facilities, and an outdoor area adjacent to the building.

### Staffing

There are three staff members employed in the service which includes the registered provider, a childcare educator and a member of staff who provides relief cover as required. The registered provider is based in the service. On the day of inspection, two staff members were present.

### 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, 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 was the designated person in charge, and a named deputy was available if required.
  - (b) The registered provider and the named deputy were on the premises for the duration of the inspection.
  - (c) There was a clear management structure in place, and the staff were aware of their roles and responsibilities.
- (2) Three recruitment files were reviewed including the file of the registered provider.
- (a) Three of the references available were from a previous employer and were validated.
  - (b) Three of the references available were from a reputable source and were validated.
  - (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all three staff. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
  - (d) A police vetting disclosure was available for one staff member who had lived outside of Ireland for longer than six consecutive months
- (4) All three adults held a relevant qualification in Early Childhood Education and Education from level 5 to level 6 or a qualification deemed relevant by the minister.

### Non-Compliance Information

- (2)
- (d) On review of one staff members curriculum vitae, it was observed that the staff member had lived outside of Ireland for longer than six consecutive months and a police vetting disclosure was not available for this state.

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

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

##### **Corrective Action**

The registered provider stated in the response that the employee as informed them that they have applied for police clearance.

### Preventive Action

The registered provider will ensure that all employees have correct police and garda vetting fully completed on review of their CV.

### Supporting documentation submitted

The registered provider submitted photographic evidence of an application for police vetting to the inspectorate.

### Summary Comment

Evidence of an application for International Police Vetting was reviewed however; a copy of the completed International Police vetting has not been submitted for the one staff member to the inspector to date. The registered provider is required to furnish the required documentation to the Inspectorate upon receipt. The noncompliance in relation to regulation 9(2)(d) remains outstanding.

### 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, provide assistance to the person in charge in operating the service is, at all times, within close distance of the service and available to attend the service to assist the person in charge in the event of an emergency.*

### Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider ensured that there was an adequate number of staff working directly with the children during the inspection.

(2) In the morning, there were 14 children aged from 3 to 5 years being cared for by 2 staff members. In the afternoon, there were 6 children aged 3 to 5 years being cared for by 2 staff members; therefore the service met the minimum adult to child ratios during the inspection.

(8) There was a minimum of 2 staff members on the premises at all times while the service was in operation. This was observed on review of staff checking in and out records.

### 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) A sample of 12 children's records were reviewed and were observed to be completed and contained the relevant information outlined from (a) to (i). This supported the care and safety of the children in the service if this information was needed for care provision.

## 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:*

- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*
- (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

### Compliance Information

The following records were reviewed:

- (i) Checking in and out times for each staff member was recorded on the attendance book for the service. The start and finish times were clearly outlined for each staff member.
- (j) No medication records were available for review. On discussion with the staff, it was outlined that no child had required medication to be administered in the service. The staff outlined the procedures to follow in the event of medication administration being required.
- (k) Three accident and incident records were reviewed from March 2023 to June 2025 and were completed with the relevant information as required.

## 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 were observed freely moving around the care room throughout the day partaking in activities of choice.
- The staff were observed supporting children with toileting and personal hygiene such as cleaning their face and nose.
- The children had individual water bottles available on a child height shelf to promote hydration.

- Children’s lunches were provided by the parents and guardians. Lunches consisted of fruit, yoghurts, meat sandwiches, cheese and crackers.
- A soft seating rest area with cushions was available to the children in the sensory area if children wanted to take some time away from the larger group which supported the children to regulate their emotions if needed.

### Supporting relationships

- The staff were observed sitting with the children during snack time and children were given time to sit and enjoy their food.
- The staff were observed listening to the children’s voices. This was observed when a child outlined, they did not want to partake in the music game. The staff were observed to be kind and respectful in their interactions with the children.
- Staff were observed showing empathy towards children who were finding the transition back to the service difficult after the midterm break.
- The staff ensured they were at the child’s level when communicating with them.
- The staff were observed supporting the children to find positive solutions when they experienced challenge. This was observed when some children found sharing difficult. The staff were observed to use positive behaviour strategies with the children. This was observed when a child was climbing on a table and the staff outlined ‘I am worried that you might hurt yourself climbing on the table’.

### Programme of activities

- The children were observed playing with tabletop activities such as peg boards and jigsaws which supported fine motor skills.
- The children took part in musical chairs which supported their physical development and turn taking.
- The children’s language development was supported through story books.
- The children were observed playing with sensory materials which supported their development of learning different textures.
- The children were observed making choices on what activities and materials they wanted to partake in and play with.

### 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 main entrance door to the service was secured which prevented a child from exiting the service unsupervised or any unauthorised access to the service.
- The outdoor area was observed to be a secure environment for the children to play in. A fence was observed around the boundary of the area.
- Internal doors to unsafe areas in the service were secured to prevent children from accessing unsafe areas.
- Visibility strips were observed on the door to the outdoor area on inspection.
- The toys and equipment observed were in good condition during the inspection.
- Heavy shelving was anchored to the wall to prevent the shelving from tipping over on inspection.
- During the inspection, cables were observed to be in good condition and out of reach to children.
- Blind cords were secured and out of reach to children on inspection.

##### Infection Control:

- Children were observed washing their hands before snack time. Warm water, soap and paper towel were available to the children.
- The room was naturally ventilated throughout the inspection.
- Perishable items from the children's lunches were stored in a refrigerator to prevent foods from spoiling.

##### Fire Safety:

- Fire exits were observed to be clear and free from obstruction.

### Part VI - Safety

#### Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

*(1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.*

*(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-*

*(a) no person other than-*

- (i) pre-school child attending the service,*
- (ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,*
- (iii) an employee, or*
- (iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and*

### Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider ensured that each child was checked in and out on an attendance book.

(3)

(a) On arrival to the service, the inspector was requested to sign the visitor book, and this was approved by the registered provider.