

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC247
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Name of Service:	Little Wonders Montessori Preschool
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Address of Service:	Chapel St., Charleville, Co. Cork
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Eircode:	P56 EA89
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Name of Registered Provider:	Marie Tangney
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	23/04/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	21	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	13 Market Square, Mallow, Co Cork
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Inspection undertaken by:	F. Collins
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Title:	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).

Conditions if applicable	N/A
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Description of service

Little Wonders Montessori Pre-school it is sessional service located in the urban setting of Charleville town. The service is located off the main street in a section of the community centre. The service operates from 9:00 AM to 12:30 PM daily for 38 weeks of the year and offers the Early Childhood Care and Education programme.

A service is provided to children aged between two and six years.

The premises is part of the community centre and there is direct access to the service at the side of the building.

There are two care rooms in the service and additionally a hallway where the sanitary accommodation for the children is accessible. The adults can access the toilets of the community centre. The storage room for the outdoor toys is located across the main hall in the community centre.

The large room of the community centre can also be accessed by the service to use for playing during inclement weather.

There is an outdoor area located directly outside the front of the service, this is secured by a high gate.

Staffing

There were four adults present on the day of inspection, one of whom was the registered provider, all four were working directly with the 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, 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 service had a designated person in charge and a deputy, both staff were present on the day of inspection.
- (b) The designated person in charge or the deputy were on the premises during the operation of the service.
- (c) The staff were aware of the management structure within the service.
- (2) There were four staff employed in the service.
- All four staff files were assessed.
- (a) All eight references required were available from past employers. Four of the references were validated as required.
- (b) Not applicable as all references were available from past employers.
- (c) Garda Vetting was available for all four staff. However, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew staff Garda vetting every three years. Please refer to the information outlined under Regulation 23 of this report.
- (d) Police vetting was not required as no staff member had resided outside of the country for greater than six consecutive months.
- (4) The four staff that work in the service all held a relevant qualification on the National Qualifications Framework at level 5 or above or a qualification deemed equivalent by the minister.

Non-Compliance Information

(2) (a) Two of the references were not validated as required. Not ensuring staff are vetted prior to commencing in the service may allow staff that are inappropriate to work with children.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2) (a) Both references have been validated and the registered provider has committed to ensuring these are onsite at all times.

Supporting documentation submitted

(2) (a) Both validations have been received.

Summary Comment

The requirements for this regulation have been met following receipt of the validations and the assurances of the registered provider.

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 policies were assessed for completeness:

- The complaints policy.
- The accident and incident policy.

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) The service had appropriate numbers of adults working directly with the children throughout the sessional service.
- (2) There were 21 children aged between three and five years attending on the day of inspection these children were cared for by four adults, two of whom were employed under the access and inclusion model scheme.

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) Twenty-one children were in attendance on the day of inspection. Of those in attendance, 13 of the children's enrolment forms were assessed.
- (a)-(i) All 13 forms were completed with the details as required above.

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:*
- (g) *the policies, procedures and statements the service is required to maintain in accordance with Regulation 10;*
- (h) *details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (3) *A record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection on the premises, and the documents and records referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall be open to inspection whether on the premises or elsewhere, by an authorised person.*

Compliance Information

- (1) (g) The policies of the service were made available to the inspector and were maintained in the service.
- (h) The details of attendance for each child were recorded in the service with all records for this year available for review.
- (3) All records as requested were available for inspection on the premises.

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:

- Snacks consumed in the service were provided by parents/ guardians. The food provided included pasta, crackers, fruit and vegetables, sandwiches and drinks of water and yogurts.
- The children were observed to toilet independently and staff were available to assist when required.
- The children who wished to opt out of activities or who wished to work in a smaller quieter area, could access the smaller room and sit with their peers on bean bags, or sit with a staff member at the child height table. There was access to books from the library in this area. Children also had access to mats were they practiced yoga. The service operated as a sessional service and did not provide sleep facilities for the children.
- The care room temperature was recorded at 18.9°C , ensuring the comfort of the children in attendance.

SUPPORTING RELATIONSHIPS AROUND CHILDREN:

- The same adults cared for the children daily and a supportive relationship between the adults and children in the group was evident.
- The staff interacted with each other and supported the children's activities as required.
- Staff were observed to sit with the children during small group play and at snack time and provided support and engaged in conversation throughout.
- The service demonstrated a language rich environment where the staff spoke with the children in the large circle time and the person in charge encouraged each child to talk and respond to questions and play activities.
- The children chose their own play activities and interacted with their peers throughout. The children were observed to play with blocks and bricks, to do drawing for their art activity and play with household activities for pretend play.
- Children who were receiving support under the access and inclusion model scheme had inclusion plans developed and were being implemented by the staff.
- Communication with parents was face to face at the start and end of each session.

PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

The following was observed on the day of inspection.

- The indoor play facilities consisted of two playrooms that were an open free moving space. There was access to resources at the children's height on accessible shelving in both spaces which allowed the children independent access to the activities and allowed them choice on what they played with. There were toilet facilities accessible independently to the children but within easy supervision of the staff.
- The care rooms had six appropriate height tables with suitable chairs for the children who wished to partake in tabletop activities and for snack time.
- There was a selection of activities inclusive of arts and crafts equipment, shape sorters and building blocks and the children were observed to use these throughout the morning promoting sensory, fine motor and cognitive development.
- The rest area consisted of bean bags and cushions, which children were observed to use when chatting with their peers and taking a rest from activities.

OUTDOOR PLAY FACILITIES:

- The service had an outdoor play area that was secured from the road by a lock when the children were outside. This area was partially covered with a shelter to ensure the area could be used all year round.
- The children brought out a selection of toys when they went outside and chose this independently from the storage area.
- The service has access to the large hall for running and for moving about using outdoor toys when the weather is poor.

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 external door was secured by an easy turn lock, this prevented any child gaining access to the road unaccompanied and prevented unauthorised adults from gaining access to the children. The outdoor area when in use was secured with a chain and lock to prevent children accessing the main road and prevent access to the children from unauthorised adults.
- The windows were high and out of reach of the children.
- There were no long glass doors in the service that the children could walk into.
- The toys and play equipment assessed were in good condition and free from pinch and crush points.
- There was no heavy equipment and furniture that could be pulled onto a child.
- The flexes and cables assessed were in good condition and were out of reach of the children.
- There were no blinds on the windows in the service.
- Access to the storage heaters was prevented as suitable guards were surrounding the heaters.
- The Electricity box was secured and safe with no protruding pieces.
- The storage facilities were inaccessible to the children and the waste was out of reach.
- Cleaning agents were stored out of reach on a high shelf.
- No hot drinks were consumed in the service close to the children.

Infection Control:

- It was evident the staff of the service managed the cleaning and the service appeared clean on the day of inspection.
- The children were observed to wash their hands after going to the toilet and after arts and crafts early in the morning. The children were supported to use hand sanitiser before and after snack time as the hot water was too hot and the registered provider did not allow for its use to prevent a scald injury to a child.
- There was hot water, liquid hand soap and paper towels available at the children's toilets and in the adult toilets.
- Hand towels were disposed of in the pedal operated lidded bin in the toilets.

- The perishable items contained in the snacks served to the children at snack time were stored in the fridge from time of arrival to the service to snack time.
- The tables were cleaned with disinfectant prior to the children sitting for their snack.

Administration of Medication:

- The registered provider advised that they had not had any medications administered in the service this year.

Safe Sleep:

- Not applicable for this sessional service as sleep is not facilitated within the service.

Fire Safety:

- The fire extinguishers were safely tethered to the walls.
- The fire door was not obstructed.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Garda vetting was available for all four adults working in the service however the Garda vetting for one staff member was not dated within the previous three years in adherence to with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.
2. Uncut grapes were in one of the children's snacks and the inspector needed to advise the staff to cut these to ensure they were eaten safely. Not ensuring the fruit was appropriately cut poses a risk of choking to a child in the service.
3. The hot water in the children's toilets was recorded at 49.8°C at 10.20am, this temperature poses a risk of a scald injury to a child. The registered provider discontinued the use of the sink at that time to allow for a plumber to adjust the temperature.

Infection Control:

4. Coats and bags were stored on the ground and pose a risk of contamination when placed on the tables at snack time.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The Garda vetting is currently being processed by the relevant agency. The registered provider has committed to putting a system in place to ensure the relevant vetting's are maintained up to date.
2. Parents have again been informed of the need to ensure grapes are cut before sending them into the pre-school. A copy of the notice sent to parents has been received to the inspectorate.

3. The committee have had the water heating system adjusted and a thermometer has been purchased to test the water temperature. A photograph has been received of the thermometer purchased.

Infection Control:

4. The registered provider has submitted that additional coat hooks have been fixed to the wall.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. The commitment of the registered provider that the Garda vetting process has commenced is accepted as proof.
2. A copy of the notice sent to parents has been received.
3. A photograph of the thermometer has been received.

Infection Control:

4. The commitment of the registered provider is taken as proof that this has been completed

Summary Comment

Following receipt of the corrective and preventive actions 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) The registered provider ensured that at all times when the service was operating there was a person onsite with first aid training (FAR Training). One staff member had first aid responder (FAR) training, three staff had basic first aid training.
- (2) (a) There was an equipped first aid box on the premises and this was stored on the high shelf at the rear of the room.
- (b) The box was easily accessible when required.

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.
- (2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-
- (c) an authorised person.
- (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 maintained of all fire drills that took place on the premises, the last fire drill took place on 20.03.2024. The records of monthly fire drills having taken place on the previous months were also available.
 - (2) The records in relation to fire were open to assessment by the inspector.
 - (4) There was an evacuation procedure notice displayed near the main door of the service.

Non-Compliance Information

- (1) (b) The record of maintenance for the firefighting equipment was available however was not completed within the last 12 months the date on which the fire extinguishers were last serviced was 12.01.2022. The servicing for the smoke alarms was out of date and was last serviced on 15.10.2021. Not servicing fire detection and firefighting equipment on an annual basis may not ensure that these are in working condition in the event they are required.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (1) (b) The centre committee were contacted regarding the certificate, and this was issued by them with it indicating the fire extinguishers were serviced on 14.05.2024. The new committee have arranged to ensure the certificate is issue to the registered provider annually.

Supporting documentation submitted

(1) (b) A copy of the certificate has been received.

Summary Comment

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

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider insured the service to operate as a sessional service. The number of children included on the insurance was 22 pre-school children.

The expiry date of the insurance was 27.11.2024.