

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC361
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Name of Service:	Seskin Montessori & Pre-School
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Address of Service:	Seskin, Bantry, Co. Cork
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Eircode:	P75 V522
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Name of Registered Provider:	Mary O'Sullivan-Keane
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	27/11/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	15	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Department, Child & Family Agency, Hospital Grounds, Coolnagarrane, Skibbereen, Co Cork P81 PD78
Inspection undertaken by:	M. O' Reilly
Title:	Early Years Inspector

Authority to Inspect

The Tusla Early Years Inspectorate carries out inspections of Early Years Services under Section 58(J) of the Child Care Act 1991 (as inserted by Section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013).

Conditions if applicable	N/A
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Description of service

Seskin Montessori & Pre-School is an established early years service that first opened in 1996. It is registered to accommodate a maximum of 22 children aged from 2 to 6 years. At time of inspection the service was catering for children from 2 years 8 months to 6 years offering a morning sessional service to the children including the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme. Daily opening hours are from 08:45 to 11:45 hours each day Monday to Friday.

The service operates from a single storey, detached, purpose-built property, located beside the registered providers own private residence. The service is located in a rural area in the outskirts of Bantry town in Co Cork. The premise consists of an entrance hall/lobby area, two interlinked spacious playrooms, administration room and storage rooms. There were adequate children's and adult sanitary accommodation. The children have access to an outdoor decking area beside the service. In addition, the children have access to a large front grass covered lawn and a hard surface area for gross motor skill play. The service offers adequate parking space to allow for the safe arrival and collection of the children.

Staffing

There were 3 staff employed to work directly with the early years children including the named registered provider/the person in charge in the service The staff who work directly with the early years children all hold a recognised qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education.

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) There was a named person in charge and a deputy available to deputise as required.

(b) The person in charge and the deputy were present on the premises on day of the inspection.

(2) Documentation was assessed in relation to the requirements of Regulation 9 for 3 staff members. The following records were available for the three adults:

(a) Of the required 6 references, 4 references were from previous employers with records of validation on file.

(b) Of the remaining references, 2 references were from another source other than a previous employer with the required validation on file.

(c) A Garda vetting disclosure was available on file in respect of the 3 adults. 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 record was on file for the one staff member who had resided outside the jurisdiction for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months.

(4)

There was evidence that the 3 staff members had attained a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education on the National Framework for Qualifications, or a qualification deemed to be equivalent.

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

(2)
During the period of inspection, the ratio of staff to children was maintained as per the regulations and an adequate number of adults were working directly with the children
There were 15 children present with 3 adults in attendance at all times. The adult child ratios were correct.

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) to (i)

A sample of 12 of the children's registration forms were reviewed and found to contain all of the elements of information as required by Regulation 15 (a) to (i) inclusive.

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 service promoted healthy eating and the food provided by the parents and guardians for the mid-morning snack was observed to be healthy and nutritious. The tables were set by the children with assistance of the adults and the lunch boxes distributed.
- The mid-morning food break was eaten in an unhurried manner with the children sitting with their friends in a companionable and sociable manner.
- The staff members were calm and relaxed whilst facilitating play opportunities and carrying out caring duties. Only low tones were used, and good eye contact was maintained with the children during one-to-one engagement.
- The staff members were observed to work well together and the children were familiar with the daily routine.
- Children's toileting and hygiene needs were promptly and sensitively attended to. The staff members were observed to assist where required each of the children when hand washing and hand drying, and the children were supported and encouraged prior to eating and post toileting.

- Children’s coats and bags were stored on child height hooks in the lobby of the school so as to encourage independent dressing and organisation of their arts and crafts for home time.
- Staff were observed to interact in a caring manner with the children building their confidence and communication skills within the setting. A large group play activity was observed where the roll call, numbers, the weather, seasons, days of the week, the Irish words for Christmas and Santa and singing Christmas songs were practised. The children were observed waiting their turn, sharing the experience, which fostered the children’s confidence in communicating in a group setting and promoted socialisation. The children’s language skills, emotional, cognitive and social skills were all enhanced during this group activity.
- During observed tabletop activities the children were supported and encouraged by the staff, who acknowledged their efforts and achievements for example completing jigsaws, colouring and arts and crafts.

Physical and Material Environment

- The interlinked playrooms afforded children the ability to move freely, as they participated in various activities, such as painting, imaginary play and Montessori play equipment.
- The interlinked playrooms were airy and bright with many windows to allow for natural ventilation and light.
- The rooms were furnished with enough child sized tables and chairs for the children to enjoy tabletop activities and eat their lunches.
- Fixed open shelving units were anchored to the walls to display the wide range of Montessori resources and play materials in an accessible way to the children, providing the children with choice in their chosen activities.
- There were multiple tabletop activities to encourage fine motor skill play such as peg boards, threading and small construction bricks.
- The smaller room was laid out to offer arts and crafts and small construction.
- A rest area was situated in a designated corner of the playroom to allow the children to opt out of scheduled activities if they so wished. It was furnished with soft seating, matting, and a recessed built-in unit displaying a wide range of age-appropriate picture books to entice the children to take a book of their choice, as seen on day of inspection.
- There were outdoor play areas provided beside the premise. The outdoor play areas had a combination of a decking, natural grass and tarmac surface. The children had direct access to a large outdoor play area

to the front of the premises, this included a hard surface area and lawn so that ball games and ride on play equipment could be enjoyed safely. A small decking area was situated to the side of the playroom which allowed for water and sand play.

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 children’s parents and guardians provided all food items. A drink station in the smaller playroom allowed the children to access their water bottles at all times while the service was in operation.
- Lunches were stored in snack boxes and stored in the service fridge.
- Healthy, nutritious lunches were observed being eaten at the mid-morning snack such as sandwiches, rice cakes, rolls, yogurts, a selection of fruits and chopped and diced vegetables.
- The service provided crockery and cutlery as required.

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:

- On the inspector’s arrival at the service, the main entrance door was found to have been secured and was maintained secure when not in use.
- The premise was clean, bright and well maintained and there were no cleaning agents accessible to the children.
- Restrictive opening devices were in place on the low-level cupboards located under the sink in the playroom.
- The first aid box was appropriately stored and inaccessible to children.
- Emergency fire exit doors were unobstructed in the service.

- Water temperatures at the wash hand basins were thermostatically controlled, so as not to exceed 43°C. Recorded water temperatures in the wash hand basins in the children’s toilets were 29°C on day of inspection.
- There were no cables or trailing flexes within the children’s reach in the service.

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Infection Control:

- Suitable handwashing facilities was available in the toilet facilities. Warm water, liquid soap and paper towels were in place.
- Handwashing by the children was observed before mid-morning snack and after toileting.
- Pedal operated bins were in place for the disposal of paper towels.
- The premises was maintained in a clean and hygienic condition and corresponding cleaning records were available.
- Tables were observed to be sanitised before and after snack time.

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 did ensure that there were staff available at all times with appropriate first aid responder (FAR) training. The FAR certifications on file indicated that one staff member held current up to date training. A basic first aid certification on file indicated that one staff member held current up to date training.

(2)

(a) The first aid box was safely stored out of children’s reach in the service. The first aid box was stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position on the premises

(b) The fully equipped first aid box was available at all times to adults if in the event that a child may require treatment.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

- The registered provider ensured the service was adequately insured, with insurance for a maximum of 22 children until 27 March 2026. The records detailed the category of service covered which was part time and sessional care, the name and address of the premises and details regarding public liability cover, fire, theft, buildings, and outings cover.