

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC375
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Name of Service:	Springbrook Montessori
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Address of Service:	13 Springbrook, Donnybrook Hill, Douglas, Co. Cork
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Eircode:	T12 VP99
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Name of Registered Provider:	Joy Marshall
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	02/12/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	35	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	2 nd Floor, Estuary House, Henry Street, Limerick, V94 XT5F
Inspection undertaken by:	S O'Brien
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

Springbrook Montessori is a privately owned early years service based in a residential area of Douglas, 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 8.45am to 12.30pm, Monday to Friday. The service consists of 2 care rooms and an outdoor area to the rear of the premises.

Staffing

There are nine staff employed in the service which includes the registered provider. The registered provider is not based in the service. On the day of inspection, six 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.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under:

- Regulation 9: Management and Recruitment
- Regulation 11: Staffing Levels
- Regulation 15: Record of a Pre-School Child
- Regulation 19: Health, Welfare and Development of Child

- Regulation 23: Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of child
- Regulation 25: First Aid
- Regulation 26: Fire Safety Measures

However, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under

- Regulation 24: Checking In and Out and Record of Attendance.

These findings are outlined within the relevant regulation within this report.

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 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.

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(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 of the service. The registered provider had appointed a manager as the named person who was able to deputise in the absence of the registered provider.
 - (b) The manager of the service was present for the duration of the inspection and also facilitated the inspection.

(c) There was a clear management structure in place in the service, and the staff were aware of the roles and responsibilities.

(2) Nine staff files were reviewed which included the file of the registered provider.

(a) Twelve of the references available were from a past employer and were validated.

(b) Six of the references available were from a reputable source. Five of the references were validated.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for the nine staff. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Four police vetting disclosures were available for staff who had lived outside of Ireland for longer than six consecutive months.

(4) All nine staff members held a relevant qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education from level 5 to level 8 or a qualification deemed equivalent by the minister.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)

(b) One of the references available had not been validated.

(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 country.

(3) The procedures outlined above were not carried out prior to two staff members being appointed, assigned, or allowed access to the children.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Corrective Action

(2)

(b) A validation for the reference was submitted.

(d) On 02 December 2025, an application was made in relation to obtaining the required police vetting. The service is awaiting a response.

(3) The missing reference validation was submitted.

Preventive Action

(2)

(b) The service will ensure that all references are on file.

(d) the service will ensure to carry out a more in-depth review of curriculum vitae going forward to ensure the correct vetting is in place for all staff.

(3) The service will ensure that all references are completed for all staff members prior to appointment.

Supporting documentation submitted

Documented evidence of the reference validation and police vetting application was submitted to the inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The registered providers response and documented evidence was submitted to the inspectorate. 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 out 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.

(3) Subject to paragraph (5), a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 2 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) therefore at that reference number is satisfied.

Compliance Information

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

(3) The following adult to child ratios were observed:

- In the Explorers room, there were 17 children aged between 2 and 3 years, being cared for by 4 staff.
- In the Inventors room, there were 18 children aged between 3 and 4 years, being cared for by 2 staff.

Therefore, the minimum adult to child ratio was being adhered to throughout the inspection.

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:

- (a) All records reviewed contained the names and dates of birth of each child.
- (b) All records reviewed contained the date on which each child first attended the service.
- (c) All records reviewed had the capacity to record the date on which each child ceased attending the service.
- (d) All records reviewed had a record of the names and contact numbers of parents and guardians if needed.
- (e) All records reviewed had a record of those authorised to collect each child.
- (f) All records reviewed had a record of any illness, disability or allergy each child may have.
- (g) All records reviewed had a record of a registered medical practitioner for each child.
- (h) Three of the 12 records reviewed had a record of the immunisations, if any, received by each child.
- (i) All records reviewed had a written record of parental consent for the service to provide appropriate medical treatment if required in the event of an emergency.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)
(h) Nine of the 12 records reviewed did not have a record of the immunisations, if any, received by each child.

Not having children's records complete may hinder the care and safety of the children in the service if this information is needed for care provision.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Corrective Action

All parents have been asked to submit up to date immunisation records for their child, if they were not already on file.

Preventive Action

As part of the enrolment policy going forward the service will require parents to send full immunisation details for their child.

Supporting documentation submitted

Documented evidence of immunisations for the nine children was submitted to the inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The registered providers response and documented evidence was submitted to the inspectorate and has met the regulatory requirements.

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

(1)
(a) **Basic needs**

- The children were observed to freely move around the care rooms and outdoor area partaking in activities of choice.

- The children were observed eating snack that was provided by their parents and guardians. Snack consisted of yoghurts, fruit, crackers, cheese and sandwiches.
- Water beakers were available to the children throughout the day to promote hydration.
- All children had an opportunity to spend time in the outdoor area.
- Children were supported with toileting and handwashing when needed.

Supporting relationships

- Staff were aware of each child's needs and listened to their voice. This was observed in the Explorers room when a child was showing signs of emotion, and a staff member reassured the child.
- The staff were observed sitting with the children at snack time and made it a relaxed experience for the children to sit and enjoy their food.
- A family wall was on display in the care rooms which promoted identity and belonging.
- Communication with parents was promoted through the electronic application that the service used. Pictures of the children's day was sent to the parents. The staff outlined the importance of partnership with parents. The staff were observed communicating with the children's parents and guardians on drop off and collection.

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 and prevented a child from exiting the service unsupervised or allowing any unauthorised access.
- The outdoor area was observed to be safe and secure area for the children to play in on inspection.
- The toys and equipment were observed to be in good condition during the inspection.
- Cleaning products were observed to be stored out of reach to the children in the care rooms on inspection.
- Cables were observed to be out of reach to the children during the inspection.
- On inspection, the floor covering on the stairs was in good condition, adequately lit and a suitable handrail was available.

Infection Control:

- Perishable food items from the children's lunches were observed to be stored in a refrigerator in each care room to prevent food spoilage.
- Children were observed washing their hands after outdoor play and before snack time. Warm water, hand soap and paper towel was available to the children in the sanitary areas. Water temperatures were recorded between 26.8°C and 32.3°C.

Fire Safety:

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

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. A trampoline was observed in the outdoor area and was available to the children. On discussion with the service manager, it was outlined that no child had a specific care plan for the trampoline, and it was not for therapeutic use. This posed a safety risk to the children.

Infection Control:

2. Children in the Explorers room were observed touching the lid of the swing lidded bin after washing their hands to dispose of the used paper towel. This posed a risk of cross infection to the children in the care room. Used paper towels should be placed in foot operated pedal bin.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

Corrective Action

1. The trampoline has been removed from the service following the inspection

Preventive Action

2. The service will not have a trampoline in the service except for therapeutic use.

Infection Control:

Corrective Action

1. Swing lidded bins have been removed and replaced with foot operated pedal bins.

Preventive Action

2. Foot operated pedal bins will only be used in the service.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. Photographic evidence of the trampoline removed from the outdoor area was submitted.

Infection Control:

2. Photographic evidence of the pedal bins purchased was submitted.

Summary Comment

The registered providers response and documented evidence was submitted to the inspectorate and has meet the regulatory requirements.

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.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) In the Inventor room, the inspector observed 18 children present. A written record of the number of children checked in to the care room on the day of inspection was reviewed and it was found that no child had been checked in. On discussion with the room leader, it was outlined to the inspector that the 18 children had been checked in on an electronic application used by the service. It was outlined that the electronic application would be used for fire drills and in the event of an emergency occurring in the service to ensure all children were evacuated safely. On discussion with other staff in the care room, it was outlined that they would use the written record to carry out fire drills or in the event of an emergency. This posed a safety risk to the children as all staff were not fully aware of which method of recording attendance was to be used to ensure all children were evacuated in the event of an emergency.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Corrective Action

The topic was reviewed with management and staff, and it was decided that the electronic application will be used to check children in and out of the service, carrying out fire drills and in the case of an emergency.

Preventive Action

The services fire safety policy has been updated to reflect the decision.

Supporting documentation submitted

Documented evidence of the updated fire safety policy was submitted to the inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The registered providers response and documented evidence was submitted to the inspectorate and has meet the regulatory requirements.

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

(2)

(a) The first aid boxes in the care rooms were easily accessible to the staff and staff were aware of its location in each care room.

(b) The first aid boxes were stored out of each to the children and were available if required.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)

Three staff members held an in-date certification in First Aid Responder (FAR) training. However, on review of the staff roster and checking in and out records, it was noted that there was no trained staff member rostered between 8.45am and 9am. On discussion with the service manager and the staff, it was outlined that a trained First Aid Responder was present in the service and would be available if required. It is noted that the service manager outlined that the staff roster would be updated accordingly.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Corrective Action

The service manager submitted an updated staff roster on the day of inspection to the inspectorate. It clearly outlined that a trained member of staff was present in the service at all times while the service was in operation.

Preventive Action

The staff roster will always reflect First Aid Responder certified staff on the premises at all times

Supporting documentation submitted

Evidence of the updated staff roster was submitted.

Summary Comment

The registered providers response and documented evidence was submitted to the inspectorate and has meet the regulatory requirements.

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) A written record of the fire drills carried out in the service was reviewed. The last fire drill that took place was on 13 November 2025. Records outlined that fire drills were carried out on a monthly basis.
- (b) A record of maintenance for the smoke alarms in the service was reviewed and were last serviced on 13 October 2025.
- (4) Fire evacuation notices were clearly displayed in the service.

Non-Compliance Information

- (1)
- (b) The service had no records available of maintenance carried out on the firefighting equipment since January 2023. This posed a safety risk to the children and staff present in the service in the event of a fire.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Corrective Action

The service contacted the relevant company to carry out the servicing on the firefighting equipment. The servicing of the firefighting equipment was carried out 13 January 2025.

Preventive Action

The company will now oversee all fire alarm and firefighting equipment servicing.

Supporting documentation submitted

Documented evidence of the servicing certificate was submitted to the inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The registered providers response and documented evidence was submitted to the inspectorate and has met the regulatory requirements.