

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015CC411
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	The Childrens Lodge Montessori School
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	New Road, Bandon, Co. Cork
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<b>Eircode:</b>	P72 HN25
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Sinéad Brady
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<b>Service type:</b>	Part Time, Sessional
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<b>Date(s) of Inspection:</b>	24/09/2024
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	30	PM	26
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate Child & Family Agency Hospital Grounds, Coolnagarrane, Skibbereen, West Cork P81 PD78
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	M.O' Reilly
<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
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### Description of service

The Children's Lodge Montessori first notified in 1996. It is a registered part time and sessional service and caters for children attending the Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme (ECCE). The service caters for children aged 2 to 6 years and currently caters for children aged 2 years and 8 months to 6 years. The service has two playrooms and an enclosed outdoor play area. The opening hours for the service are 9.00 hours to 17.30 hours daily. Sessional service is from 09:00 to 12:00 and from 12:30 to 15:30 hours each day Monday to Friday

### Staffing

There were five staff employed to work directly with the early years children plus the registered provider who is the person in charge. All the staff work directly with the early years children and hold a recognised qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education. Additionally, the service had in attendance three students. One adult was on placement as part of her early years course and two were international students that will attend the service for four weeks.

### 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 is a person in charge and a deputy to deputise as required.

(b) The registered provider/ person in charge was present for the duration of the inspection.

(2)

The adults present in the service included the registered provider, five childcare staff, one third level student on work placement and two international students.

(a) There were ten references on file from past employers in respect of the adults.

(b) There were eight references from sources other than past employers in respect of the adults.

(c) A Garda vetting disclosure was available on file in respect of seven of the nine adults. As the two international students were from a high school and in the service for a short period of time, a processed Garda vetting record was not required. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Two of the four police vetting records were available on file for the two adults who had lived outside the jurisdiction for a period of six months or more, while over the age of eighteen years.

(4)

The five adults who worked directly with the children and the registered provider all hold a major award in Early Childhood.

### Non-Compliance Information

(2)(d)

The registered provider was not aware that the two international students who were on work experience from their school for four weeks were required to have police vetting from the country of origin.

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

The registered provider in her written response has stated the following:

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

The two international students are no longer in the service. The registered provider will ensure going forward that all international students on work experience, aged over 18 years, will have completed a police vetting record from the country of origin prior to commencing in the service.

#### **Supporting documentation submitted**

The statement from the registered provider is accepted as evidence.

### Summary Comment

Correspondence forwarded to the Early Years Inspectorate was examined and deemed to meet the requirement of Regulation 9 (2)(d) of the Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

### 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 registered provider/person in charge ensured that there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children in each room 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 in each playroom.

#### Top Room

There were 13 children in attendance during the morning sessional service and 3 of these children attended the part time service. The children were aged between 2 years and 8 months to 6 years with 2 adults in attendance and 1 third level student and 1 international student were present at time of inspection. The registered provider/person in charge worked between the two rooms

### Bottom Room

There were 17 children present during the morning sessional service and 5 of these children attended the part time service. The children were aged between 3 and 6 years with 3 adults in attendance. There was one international student present at time of inspection.

### 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's families provided their children with all food and drink requirements. The children were afforded ample time to eat and drink at a relaxed pace. Water was the preferred drink option on day of inspection. The mid-morning meal was observed to be a social occasion, as the children chatted freely in a relaxed environment and were offered appropriate assistance by the adults. Staff ensured that suitable crockery and cutlery were available.
- The children appeared confident in their surroundings and demonstrated familiarity with several aspects of the daily routine, lining up in preparation to go outdoors and lining up in preparation for washing their hands after outdoor play and before mid-morning snack.
- The adults were observed to demonstrate patience and kindness in their interactions with the children, as was noted when the children's efforts were readily acknowledged and when children were calmly assisted to resolve conflicts.
- The adults were observed to support the children to interact positively with each other working in large and small groups and individually. There was a calm and pleasant atmosphere in place. The children were supported to manage their behaviour and to self-regulate with an emphasis on sharing, kindness, and patience in the setting.
- There was adequate space in the care rooms to accommodate a variety of play activities. Outdoor play was also observed during the inspection.

### Physical and Material Environment

- Both rooms in operation were child friendly, bright, with materials largely accessible to the children around the periphery of the rooms.
- The rooms had a range of play-based materials and equipment that offered stimulation, exploration, and imagination. They were positioned at an accessible level with open shelving which nurtured independence, facilitated choice, and encouraged curiosity, spontaneous play and movement.
- There was adequate space in both rooms to accommodate a variety of play activities that was observed when the inspector arrived at the service at free play time. Play activities included pretend play, tabletop activities like jigsaws and colouring and block building. There was an adequate number of child sized tables and chairs available in each room.
- There was a partially covered outdoor play area provided beside the premise. Play equipment in the outdoor area included a climbing frame with a walking wall and a slide, playhouses, a sturdy wooden structure in the shape of a bus and a designated area for a selection of tricycles that all promoted gross motor 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

- All food and snacks consumed on the premise is provided by the parents/guardians.
- The food in general observed at mid-morning snack time on day of inspection was healthy and nutritious, with appropriate portion size for the age group in attendance.
- Perishable foods and the children’s water bottles were stored in a large fridge located in the Top room.

### 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:

- Upon the inspectors' arrival at the service, the main entrance door was found to have been adequately secured and was maintained secure when not in use.
- First aid boxes were appropriately stored and inaccessible to children.
- Emergency fire exit doors were unobstructed.
- The outdoor area was noted to be fully enclosed and secured.

#### Infection Control:

- The service had a supply of thermostatically controlled hot water in each of the four wash hand basins in the children's toilet as it was recorded at 30 degrees Celsius. There was liquid soap and an electric hand drier available in the toilets. Handwashing by the children was observed before mid-morning snack and after toileting and outdoor play.
- Tables were observed to be sanitised after snack time.
- Pedal operated lidded bins were in place for the disposal of paper towels.
- Cleaning records were in place.

#### Safe Sleep:

- There were an adequate number of stacking beds with accompanying bed linen for the children that required a sleep while attending the service. No child required a sleep at time of inspection.

#### Outing:

- Not applicable, as an outing was not observed.

### Non-Compliance Information

#### General Safety:

The children had access to the following cables that were considered a potential safety risk.

1. There were phones and phone cables charging and located within easy reach of children on the countertop in the Top room on the day of inspection which had the potential risk of causing injury to a child.
2. There was an electric sandwich toaster stored in an unsecured low cupboard in the Top playroom.

The following are considered trip hazard in their present state:

3. A section of the timber border around the surface of the outdoor play area was in poor repair and needed to be repaired or replaced.

- The children had access to a long water hose located on the surface on the outdoor play area near the ride on toys. When not in use the long rubber water hose should be adequately and safely stored out of children's reach during the hours of operation.

### Infection Control:

- There was no thermostatically controlled hot water in the wash hand basin in the staff toilet on day of inspection increasing the potential risk of cross infection.

### Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider in her written response has stated the following:

#### Corrective & Preventive Action

#### General Safety:

- The phones/phone cables have been removed from the countertop located in the Top Room.
- The electric sandwich toaster was removed from the cupboard at child height and is now stored in a closed press over the sink that is located at adult height in the Top Room.
- A builder is booked to complete, the section of timber border in the outdoor play area in poor repair. He will remove and replace during the Christmas Break.
- The long water hose has been removed from the area where the ride on toys are located in the outdoor play area.

#### Infection Control:

- In the written response the registered provider has stated the tap is fixed. There is thermostatically controlled hot water in the wash hand basin in the staff toilet.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

#### General Safety:

1.2.3.4.

- The statements from the Registered Provider are accepted as evidence.

#### Infection Control:

- The statement from the Registered Provider is accepted as evidence.

## Summary Comment

Correspondence forwarded was examined and deemed to meet the requirement of Regulation 23 General Safety issue 1. 2. 4. and Infection Control point 5. of the Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016. As the work on a section of the timber border in the outdoor play area will not be completed until the Christmas holidays 2024, compliance with regulation 23 General Safety non-compliance Number 3. has not been reached therefore will be reviewed on the next inspection of the service.

## 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) On day of inspection, there was one adult present with a current certified First Aid Responder certificate (FAR).

Another adult was currently attending First Aid Responder training which will be completed early October 24

(2)

(a) The first aid boxes were safely stored out of children's reach in the service.

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

## 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 record of monthly fire drills carried out was available and indicated that the last fire drill took place on the 6th September 2024
- (b) A record of the number, type and maintenance record of firefighting equipment was maintained. It was recorded that the fire equipment was last serviced in August 2024 and the emergency fire alarm system was last tested and serviced in September 2024.
- (4)
- The fire evacuation procedure for the service which contained details in relation to the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in each playroom and in the lobby.

### 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 35 children until 27/11/2024. The records detailed the category of service covered which was part time and sessional, the name and address of the premises and details regarding public liability cover, fire, theft, buildings, and outings cover.

### Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

#### Regulation 29 - Premises

*A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-*

- (a) of sound and stable structure,*
- (b) safe and secure,*
- (c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated*
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

### Compliance Information

(b) From visual inspection the premises appeared safe and secure. The entrance door was adequately secured to prevent unauthorised entry and unsupervised exit of children from the service.

(c) The two playrooms were provided with a combination of natural light, through windows and artificial lighting. Adequate lighting was in place in the sanitary facilities as supplied through artificial lighting.

The openable windows in the playrooms allowed for a supply of fresh air. Children's toilet area was ventilated by means of wall vents. The air temperature reading of the two rooms were within the normal range of between 19°C to 20°C.

(d) The service was well maintained and clean on the day of inspection.

(e) There were 4 toilets and 4 wash hand basins available for the children's use. The 4 toilets were enclosed in cubicles, each with a partial swing door affording the dignity of the child. Each of the four toilets were in good working order and there was thermostatically controlled hot water, liquid soap and a wall mounted electric dryer for children to dry their hands

Staff had access to one designated toilet, wash hand basin and wall mounted electric hand dryer.