

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC448
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Name of Service:	Tricia's Montessori
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Address of Service:	Dromdiah, Killeagh, Co Cork
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Eircode:	P36 NT04
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Name of Registered Provider:	Patricia Treacy
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Service type:	Full Day, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	11/09/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	34	PM	21
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate, 13 Market Square, Mallow, Co Cork, P51 DD5Y
Inspection undertaken by:	N O'Donoghue
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

Tricia's Montessori is a privately owned early years service registered to cater for children aged from 2 to 6 years and to the children attending the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme. The service operates from 8.00am to 16.30pm, Monday to Friday.

The service is located in a purpose built detached single storey building, located in the rural outskirts of Killeagh village in Co Cork. The premise consists of two playrooms, children and adult sanitary facilities, and an outdoor area accessible by both playrooms.

Staffing

There are eight staff in total attached to the service that work directly with the children, including the registered provider, early years educators and relief worker.

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, deputy 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*
- (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 deputy person in charge on the premises on the day of inspection. In the event the person or deputy person in charge were not on the premises a named person able to deputise was available.
 - (b) A person in charge or named deputy person in charge were on the premises at all times during the operation of the service.
 - (c) There was a clearly identified management structure in the service. This included person in charge, deputy person in charge, and early years educators.
- (2) There are eight staff attached to the service; all eight staff files were open to inspection.
- (a) Of the 16 references required, 15 validated references were available from past employers.
 - (b) Of the 16 references required, 1 validated reference was available from a source other than a past employer.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures has been obtained for all eight staff. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
 - (d) Police vetting was deemed to be required for four of the eight adults working in the service and copies of the relevant documents were maintained on file for the four adults.
- (4) All eight staff working directly with children held relevant qualifications in Early Childhood Care and Education at least at Level 5 on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister 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.

(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,

Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider ensured that there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children.

(2) On the day of inspection, the adult to child ratios were in adherence to the requirements of the regulation.

- In Room A in the morning, there was 3 staff working with 18 children aged between 3 years and 1 month and 4 years and 9 months, of these 18 children, 8 were attending full day care and 10 children were attending sessional care. In the afternoon, there was 2 staff working with 12 children.
- In Room B in the morning, there were 3 staff working with 16 children aged between 3 years and 9 months and 4 years, of these 16 children, 6 were attending full day care and 10 children were attending sessional care. In the afternoon, there were 3 staff working with 9 children.

(8) The registered provider ensured that there were at least two adults on the premises at all times during the service operation hours. This was evident through the staff sign-in records.

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) On the day of inspection, the following information was obtained through:

- Direct observation and discussion with staff
- Examination of relevant documentation.

Basic needs:

- Children had access to their individually labelled water bottles throughout the day of inspection.
- During mealtimes, a relaxed social environment was evident. Staff allowed children to eat at their own pace and engaged in conversations with the children at snack time. Children were supported by staff with the opening of their snacks.
- There was a supply of tissues available to the children and staff supported children with cleaning their noses when required.
- Children's toileting and hygiene needs were attended to regularly and staff assisted children when they needed it. Staff were observed cleaning children's faces after mealtimes.
- Good handwashing routines were evident on the day of inspection. Staff supervised children to wash their hands before snack and after playing outside.

Supporting relationships:

- Staff spoke at the child's level in a calm, soothing tone. Children were at ease with staff and were comfortable in expressing their feelings and emotions to the staff members.
- Staff were observant of children's needs and were seen to comfort children when they were upset.
- Children had opportunities to play with their older siblings.
- Staff were observant of the children's needs and would remind children of toileting.
- Staff sat with children during mealtimes and engaged in conversations around the children's interests including tractors and foods they were eating.

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

- Parents/guardians provided the snacks and meals for the children attending the service.
- One staff member reheated meals prepared at home for children including pasta and chicken, potato, vegetables and meat.
- Drinks were available at all times and water was the main choice of drink.
- Additional food was available for children in the event they were still hungry. Additional snacks observed included beans and crackers.

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 to the service was secured to prevent unauthorised access or unsupervised exit of a child.
- All low laying cables were safely secured out of reach of the children.
- The outdoor area was secured to ensure no unsupervised exit of a child.
- Cleaning materials were stored out of sight and reach of children.

Infection control:

- Regular handwashing was observed by staff and children. Children's hands were washed prior to mealtimes and after outdoor play. Staff hands were washed prior to mealtimes, after outdoor play and after supporting children with toileting.
- Windows were open for natural air ventilation.
- Staff cleaned the tables between activities and mealtimes.
- Pedal operated bins were observed in the main room and sanitary facilities.

Administration of medication:

- No administration of medication was observed on the day of inspection. Discussion with staff ensured staff were aware of the correct process for administering medication in the event it was required.

Safe sleep:

- No children were observed sleeping on day of inspection. Children had access to stackable beds and linen if they required sleep.

Fire safety:

- Fire exits were clear of any obstruction and were clearly identified in the room.
- Fire equipment was available in the event they were required.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

A copy of the insurance certificate for the service was furnished to the inspector. The information provided on the insurance certificate included:

- The contact details for the insurance provider.
- The name and address of the service insured.
- The number of children covered by the insurance was 44 children.
- The categories of insurance cover for the service.

The expiry date of the current insurance cover was 27 March 2026.