

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CE011		
Name of Service:	Bright Sparks Montessori		
Address of Service:	Doonane, Tulla, Co. Clare		
Eircode:	V95 F9T2		
Name of Registered Provider:	Ann Hanrahan		
Service type:	Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	25/11/2025		
No of pre-school children:	AM	8	PM N/A
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Quality and Regulation Directorate, Tusla Child and Family Agency Ennis Primary Care Centre Station Road Ennis County Clare V95TY4E		
Inspection undertaken by:	J. Hayes		
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	Not applicable
---------------------------------	----------------

Description of service

This service was first notified in 2005. The sessional service is a privately owned and operated service. It contains two pre-school rooms, a kitchen and sanitary accommodation which have a capacity to cater for up to a maximum number of 29 pre-school children, between the ages of 2- 6 years. The service operates Monday-Friday 09.10hrs - 12.10hrs.

Staffing

The service is currently operated by the registered provider. On 25 November 2025 the registered provider was present. The adult held an Early Childhood Care and Education qualification at level 6 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

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 and safety. The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations:

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment (1)(a)(b)(2)(a)(b)(c)(d) and (4)

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels (1) (3)

Regulation 19 - Health, welfare and development of child (1)(a)

Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

Regulation 25 - First aid (1) (2)(a)(b)

Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures (1)(a)(b)(4)

Regulation 28 – Insurance

Regulation 29 – Premises

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 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 registered provider was the person in charge of the service.

(b)

The registered provider was available for the duration of the inspection.

(2)

A file was available in respect of the registered provider, and the findings included the following:

(a)

The references were from sources other than past employers.

(b)

Two references from sources other than past employers were available.

(c)

A Garda vetting disclosure had been obtained for the adult working in the service. However, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. Please refer to the information outlined under regulation 23 of this report.

(d)

International police vetting was not required as the adult had not lived in another State for a period longer than six months.

(4)

The adult working directly with the children held Early Childhood Care and Education qualifications at level 6 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

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)
An adequate number of adults worked directly with the children attending the pre-school service.

(3)
The minimum adult to child ratio was maintained during the inspection. One adult worked directly with the eight children in attendance.

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 of Children:

The programme of care was provided in two care rooms and in the outdoor area to the rear of the building. The inspector observed the children's learning, development, and well-being being supported by the adult. The adult interacted in a kind and caring manner with the children, responded to their individual needs promptly and provided regular praise and encouragement throughout the programme of care. The adult cared for the children in a sensitive manner and responded promptly to the children's cues for assistance. The children were supported to be independent in play, whilst using the toilet, caring for their personal belongings and at mealtime. The children were treated with positive regard during all interactions, and the adult demonstrated a good knowledge of the children's

individual preferences and capabilities. The children were supported in accordance with their preference on an individual level and as part of the group. Speech and sound development were promoted by the adult during conversations and through games played. Mealtime was observed to be a relaxed and sociable occasion and the children sat together during mealtime and ate their healthy lunches and drank their beverages of water.

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 entrance to the service was secured to monitor the safe entry and exit of the children to and from the childcare facility.
- The outdoor play area was secured with fencing and a gate to protect the children within.
- The children's arrival and departure times were recorded in record books.
- Cleaning agents were stored in a secured area out of reach of the children.

Infection Control:

- The service was maintained in a clean condition.
- The sanitary facility was equipped with running water, liquid soap, hand paper towels and lidded, lined pedal operated bins.
- Handwashing by children was encouraged and supervised by the adult.
- The children's personal belongings were stored individually in a shelving unit.

Fire Safety:

- The fire exits and routes were clear from obstruction throughout the service.
- Fire drills were completed by the adults and children monthly.
- A fire assembly point to the front of the premises was readily identifiable and identified by the adult working in the service.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Garda vetting was available for the adult employed by the service. However, the vetting disclosure was not dated within the previous three years in adherence with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice. Evidence was available to indicate that an application for renewal of Garda vetting was in process.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

The Garda vetting process has been completed, and this will be renewed on a three yearly basis.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Evidence of renewal of Garda vetting.

Summary Comment

The non-compliance has been addressed.

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 adult working in the service had a record of up to date First Aid Responder (FAR) training.

(2)(a)

A suitably equipped first aid box was stored in an accessible and conspicuous position in the care room.

(b)

The first aid box was available in the service for use by the adult in the event of an emergency.

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)

Records were available to demonstrate that monthly fire drills were carried out by the service. The most recent fire drill took place on the 04 November 2025.

(b)

Up-to-date records of the number, type and maintenance service were available for the firefighting equipment. The most recent service of the firefighting equipment took place on the 17 September 2025.

(4)

Fire action notices were displayed demonstrating the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(b)

A record was not available for the maintenance of the smoke detection system.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The smoke detection system has been serviced, and this will be carried out on a regular basis.

Supporting documentation submitted

A record of the maintenance of the smoke detection system

Summary Comment

The non-compliance has been addressed.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

Up to date insurance cover was available for twenty-two pre-school children. The insurance policy for the sessional service is valid until the 27 March 2026.

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

- (a) The premises appeared to be well maintained with no visible defects.
- (b) The entrance gate to the service was closed and the entrance door was secured at all time.
- (c) The rooms in the service were well lit through natural and artificial lighting. Natural ventilation was provided through openable windows. The room was maintained at an appropriate temperature of 18.1°C
- (d) The premises was maintained in a clean condition and daily and weekly cleaning schedules were available.
- (e) One toilet and wash hand basin was provided for the eight children attending. Liquid soap, paper towels and warm water thermostatically controlled to a safe temperature of 32.5°C was provided. Additionally adult sanitary facilities were also available.