

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier: TU2015CE062

Name of Service: Josies Montessori Pre School

Address of Service: Carnanes, Doonbeg Road, Kilrush, Co. Clare

Eircode: V15 XF20

Name of Registered Provider: Josephine Marie Cleary Thornton

Service type: Sessional

Date of Inspection: 06/11/2025

No of pre-school children:	AM	15	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate: Early Years Inspectorate
Tusla Child and Family Agency
Primary Care Centre
Station Road
Ennis
County Clare.

Inspection undertaken by: A. McCarthy

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

Josie's Montessori Preschool is located on the outskirts of Kilrush town, in County Clare. A sessional service is provided Monday to Friday from 09:15 to 12:15. A Montessori play-based programme of care and education is facilitated for children ranging in age from two to six years. The purpose-built service is located in a spacious room in a building adjacent to the registered provider's home. Enclosed outdoor play areas are located at the side and rear of the service

Staffing

Three adults are employed by the service. On the 06 November 2025, the registered provider and two adults were present. The registered provider works directly with the children and provides an administrative and a managerial role.

The adults working directly with the children hold Early Childhood Care and Education qualifications on the National Framework of Qualifications. Evidence of continuing professional development was available for the adults working in the service.

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

These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations 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. 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, 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)

The registered provider was the person in charge, and a person was available to deputise in their absence.

(b)

The registered provider and the deputy were available during the inspection.

(2)

Three files were available in respect of the registered provider and the adult working in the service. The findings included the following:

(a)

Three written and validated references were obtained in respect of adults working in the service.

- (b)
Three written and validated references were obtained from a source other than a past employer in respect of adults employed by the service.
- (c)
Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for the three adults currently working in the service. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d)
International police vetting was not required in respect of the adults working in the service as the adults had not lived in another state for a period longer than six months as an adult.
- (4)
The adults working directly with the children held Early Childhood Care and Education qualifications ranging from Level 5 to Level 7 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)
During the inspection, an adequate number of adults worked directly with the children in attendance.
- (3)
On the 06 November 2025, the ratio of adults caring for children was maintained. Three adults cared for the fifteen children attending the service.

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.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

The children's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the service through the provision of appropriate activities, interactions, materials, and equipment having regard to the age and developmental stage of the children.

Basic Needs of Children:

The programme of care and education was facilitated in one, large open plan room and in the outdoor play area. The adults interacted with the children in a caring, kind and respectful manner. The adults listened attentively and conversed with the children at their level and responded promptly to their cues for assistance. Positive behavioural strategies were used during interactions, and the children were offered praise and encouragement. The adults demonstrated an awareness of the children's personal interests and capabilities. An informal communication approach was observed during interactions with parents/guardians. The adults discussed the children's day and observations with the parent/guardians during departure times.

The children were encouraged to be independent while caring for their belongings, their play materials and equipment, at mealtime and whilst using the toilet. Areas were used by the children to rest and relax. The children were encouraged and supported to manage their own personal care appropriate to their age and level of development. Parents/Guardians provided the children lunches. The lunches observed included various types of fruit, wraps, sandwiches, crackers and yoghurt. The children and adults sat together and conversed amicably during mealtimes. Mealtime was observed to be a relaxed and sociable occasion.

Physical and Material Environment:

The children engaged in open ended play and educational Montessori based activities in the indoor and outdoor environments. The open plan, care room was bright and spacious and was adequately resourced for the age range and stage of development of the children. The transitions in the changes of activities in the room were facilitated with ease, as the adults notified the children in advance of any changes in the programme of care and learning. The children played individually and as part of a group and chose their individual activities throughout the session. The adults engaged in open ended discussions, played individual and group games with the children and sat with the children as they engaged in constructive, manipulative and pretend play. Designated areas of interest with appropriate and accessible supporting materials and equipment for the children. The defined areas included a home corner, rest and reading area, low level shelving units with a large quantity of imaginative, constructive and manipulative equipment and toys.

The outdoor play area offered a large space for the children to freely move and engage in a range of challenging, diverse, creative and enriching experiences for children. Defined areas included: a covered section with seating and storage for the children's play equipment, a playhouse accommodated sand boxes and supporting play equipment and two wooden houses included wooden benches for tabletop play. A separate wooden activity area included a tunnel which could access two huts and ball play unit. A planting area was available where strawberries, daffodils, potatoes, lettuce and flowers were planted by the children and were brought home once ripe. The main outdoor play area had a synthetic rubber surface with play equipment such as activity units, sea-saws, slides, pretend playhouse and a large range of ride on vehicles, balance bikes and buggies. The children thoroughly enjoyed their time transitioning from the indoor to the outdoor play areas.

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 and exit to and from the service was secured by a key coded system 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 a record book, and the children were supervised at all times during the inspection.
- Cleaning agents were stored in a secured area out of reach of the children.

Infection Control:

- The service was maintained in a clean and hygienic condition.
- The sanitary facilities were equipped with running water, liquid soap, hand paper towels and lined, lidded pedal operated bins.
- The children washed their hands at regular intervals during the day. This included after using the toilet, messy play activities and prior to mealtime.

Administration of Medication:

- The registered provider stated that medication is not routinely administered by the service.
- An administration of medication policy is available to inform the adults of the service’s procedure should medication be required.

Fire Safety:

- A fire drill took place during the inspection, and the adults and children readily identified the fire assembly point. A discussion took place in relation to fire safety between the children and adults.
- The fire exits and routes were clear from obstruction throughout the service.

Outing:

- An outing did not take place during the inspection.
- An outings policy was available to inform the adults working in the service and parents/guardians of the service’s outings procedure.

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)

An adult working directly with the children held 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 adults 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)

A record of completed monthly fire drills was available. The most recent fire drill took place on the 06 November 2025.

(b)

Up-to-date records of the number, type and maintenance service were available for the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarm system. The most recent service of the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarm system maintenance service took place respectively in September and November 2025.

(4)
Fire action notices demonstrating the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were displayed at both entry/exit points in the building.

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 children attending the service. The policy is valid until 27 November 2025.