

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CE082		
Name of Service:	Little Einsteins Montessori Preschool		
Address of Service:	Cúsheáin, Belkelly, Ogonnelloe, Co. Clare		
Eircode:	V94 R9YV		
Name of Registered Provider:	Anita Sheedy		
Service type:	Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	02/04/2025		
No of pre-school children:	AM	7	PM 6
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:	Á.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

Little Einsteins Montessori Preschool is a childcare facility on the outskirts of the rural village of Ogonnelloe, County Clare. The service operates Monday to Friday, offering a morning and afternoon session from 08:45 to 11:45 and 12:00 to 15:00 for children ranging in age from two to six years of age.

A programme of care is facilitated on a sessional basis in a one care room adjacent to the owners domestic dwelling. The children have access to a secure outdoor play area adjacent to the preschool room. A larger outdoor area is also available for the children to use to the rear of the service.

Staffing

On the 02 April 2025 the registered provider worked alongside an adult to care for the children in attendance.

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)(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, 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)

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)

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

(a)

Two written and validated references from past employers in respect of the adults working in the service were available.

(b)

Two written and validated references from a source other than past employers in respect of the adults working in the service were available.

(c)

Garda vetting disclosures were available in respect of the two adults employed by 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 two adults working in the service, who had not lived in another state for a period longer than six months.

(4)
The adults working directly with the children held Early Childhood Care and Education qualifications at Level 6 and Level 8 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 02 April 2025 the ratio of adults caring for children was maintained. Two adults cared for seven children attending in the morning and two adults cared for six children in attendance in the afternoon.

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 adults treated the children in a kind and caring manner and positive behavioural strategies were used during interactions. The adults praised and encouraged the children, conversed with the children at their level, used soft tones of voice and responded promptly to their cues for assistance. The children were encouraged to be independent in play and learning, whilst caring for their belongings, at mealtime and whilst using the toilet. The adults supervised and treated the children in a sensitive manner during toileting. The children transitioned from the indoor to the outdoor environment engaging in play-based activities. Mealtime was observed to be a relaxed and sociable occasion. Parents provided healthy and nutritious food and beverages for the children. The children predominantly played in the outdoor area located to the side and rear of the care room. The play areas were enclosed and located to the side and rear of the building directly accessible from the care room. The outdoor equipment included: a scooter, tricycles, bikes, swings, a slide, a climbing frame, a goalpost and footballs, a tree house, pretend play kitchen, diggers, tractors and chalkboards. The children also engaged in running and chasing games in the outdoor play area.

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 area was secured with fencing, walls and gates to protect the children within.
- The children were signed in and out on arrival and departure to the service and were supervised at all times during the inspection.
- Storage facilities were inaccessible, and cleaning agents were stored out of reach of the children.

Infection Control:

- The service was maintained in a clean condition.
- The sanitary facility was equipped with warm running water, liquid soap, hand paper towels and lidded, lined pedal operated bins.
- The children washed their hands at appropriate intervals during the programme of care.
- The children's personal belongings were stored individually on a rail.

Administration of Medication:

- The registered provider stated that medication is not routinely administered in the service.

Fire Safety:

- The fire exit routes and passageways were clear from obstruction.
- The fire assembly point and fire exits were readily identifiable.
- The service demonstrated evidence of completing monthly fire drills to prepare the service to respond in the event of fire.

Outing:

- The registered provider stated that outings are not undertaken by 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)

The registered provider had a record of up to date First Aid Responder (FAR) training.

(2)(a)

A suitably equipped first aid box was stored in the care room.

(b)

The first aid box was available in the care room 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)

Records were available to demonstrate that monthly fire drills were carried out by the service. The last fire drill took place on the 21 March 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 respectively took place in December 2024 and April 2025.

(4)

A fire action notice was displayed at the entrance to the service demonstrating the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire.

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 eleven children. The insurance policy for the sessional service is valid until the 27 March 2026.