

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CE117		
Name of Service:	Rockmount Montessori		
Address of Service:	21 Rockmount Manor, Ballybeg, Kilrush Road, Ennis, Co. Clare		
Eircode:	V95 A2WY		
Name of Registered Provider:	Edel O'Callaghan		
Service type:	Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	18/06/2024		
No of pre-school children:	AM	21	PM N/A

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Quality and Regulation Directorate, Tusla Child and Family Agency Ennis Primary Centre Station Road Ennis County Clare V95TY4E
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

Rockmount Montessori was established in 2007, as a privately operated sessional service. The service is located in a residential area on the outskirts of Ennis town. The pre-school room was located in an extension to the home of the registered provider. The service operates Monday to Friday from 09:00 to 12:00 and accommodates children ranging in age from two to five years. An enclosed outdoor play area is available to the rear of the premises.

Staffing

On the 18 June 2024 the registered provider operated the sessional service assisted by two adults. There was evidence on the staff files of engagement in continuous professional development.

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 9, 11, 19, 23, 25 and 28. 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 designated person in charge and a named staff member is available to deputise as required.

(b)

Both the designated person in charge and the person who is assigned as deputy were available throughout the inspection.

Three files were available in respect of the registered provider and the two adults employed by the service. The findings included the following:

(2)(a)

Four validated references were available from past employers.

(b)

Two validated references were available from a source other than a past employer.

(c)

Garda Vetting disclosures were available and reviewed in respect of the registered provider and the two adults 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 as the adults working in the service, had not lived in another State for a period longer than six months as an adult.

(4)

The adults employed by the service held Early Childhood Care and Education qualifications ranging from Level 5 to 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)
An adequate number of adults worked directly with the children attending the service.
- (2)
An adequate number of adults cared the children at all times during the inspection. On the 18 June 2024 three adults cared for twenty-one 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)
The children's learning, development and well-being was facilitated in the indoor and outdoor environment through the provision of appropriate activities, interactions, materials, and equipment, having regard to the age and level of development of the children. One preschool room was in operation during the inspection.

Basic Needs of the Children:

The adults treated the children with positive regard and used positive behavioural strategies during interactions. This was observed by the staff using soft, gentle tones of voice at the children's level and use of praise and encouragement during individual and group interactions. The programme of care and learning was facilitated in a relaxed and calm manner and the activities were guided by the children's personal interests and preferences. The children were notified in advance of transitions in the programme, the changes in activities were completed with ease. On arrival the children were engaged in song and rhyme in preparation for their school concert, the children then transitioned to open ended play-based activities, mealtime, meditation practice and outdoor playtime. The children were observed to enjoy the morning activities.

The children were encouraged to be independent with their personal belongings, while having their lunches and drinks and while using the toilet. The children's individual cues for assistance were responded to promptly and in a sensitive manner. Mealtime was observed to be a sociable and unhurried occasion. The adults and children conversed amicably together.

Physical and Material Environment:

The indoor area was bright, spacious and well planned with distinct interest areas that offered different types of play and learning activities. Low level tables and chairs were available for tabletop activities and for dining at mealtime. The well-resourced areas of interest included a construction area, a shop corner, a home corner, a shelving unit with a large range of reading materials and adjacent seating areas. A dress up area and shelving units were accessible with Montessori based and play based materials and equipment. The outdoor area offered a space for the children to play and move freely. The outdoor area was well resourced with a large range of play equipment and materials. A large wooden ship provided an area to climb, use as a slide an imaginative play. Ride on cars, balance bikes, scooters, a pretend ice cream truck, a sand table and basketball area were used by the children to engage in gross motor and pretend play. A wooden bench, table and chairs were available for use by the children to rest and relax when required.

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 prevent unauthorised persons from entering or unsupervised children exiting the premises.
- The children’s arrival and departure times were recorded in a logbook and the children were supervised at all times in the indoor and outdoor environment.
- Cleaning agents were stored safely out of reach of the children.
- The outdoor play area was adequately secured with a concrete wall and gated access.

Infection Control:

- The service, equipment, and materials within were maintained in a clean condition. Cleaning schedules were available demonstrating the areas that are cleaned and the frequency of the cleaning procedures.
- The children washed their hands at appropriate intervals during the sessional period.
- The sanitary facilities were equipped with running hot water at the wash hand basins, liquid soap, hand paper towels and lined, lidded pedal bins were available. Child friendly illustrated posters were available to prompt children to wash their hands.

Administration of Medication:

- The registered provider confirmed that medication is not routinely administered in the service. A policy is available to inform practice.

Fire Safety:

- The staff and children conducted a fire drill in a calm and prompt manner during the inspection. A record of completed monthly fire drills were available.
- Fire exits and passageways were clear from obstruction and signage was available to identify exit routes.
- Signage was available identifying fire exit routes within the service and demonstrating the fire action notice.

Outing:

- The registered provider confirmed that outings are undertaken once a year. A service policy was available to inform practice.

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 held a record of up to date First Aid Responder training. The certificate was valid until 08 September 2025.

(2)(a)
A suitably equipped first aid box was readily accessible and stored in a conspicuous position in the care room.

(b)
A first aid box was available for use by the adults in the event of an emergency.

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 attending the service. The policy is valid until the 27 March 2025.