

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CN063
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Name of Service:	Tir na nÓg Montessori Pre School
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Address of Service:	Woodlands, Arva, Co. Cavan
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Eircode:	H12 YA03
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Name of Registered Provider:	Carmel Mulligan
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	11/10/2024
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	No. 18 The Grange Plantation Walk Monaghan
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Inspection undertaken by:	S. Skinnader
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Title:	Early Years Inspector
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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
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Description of service

Tir na Nóg Montessori Preschool is a privately run service in operation since 2009. The service provides sessional care to children aged 2 to 6 years of age and caters for a maximum of 22 children. The service operates Monday - Friday from 9am – 12pm. The service is located in a purpose-built building on the outskirts of Arvagh Co. Cavan. The service consists of 2 preschool rooms, with kitchen area and sanitary accommodation. There is an enclosed outdoor area to the rear and side of the building.

Staffing

There are 2 staff members employed in the service who work directly with the children and 1 additional staff member who helps occasionally in a supernumerary capacity.

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/ premises and facilities. 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, staff member 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) & (b) The service had a designated person in charge and named deputy person to deputise as required. Both were on the premises when the inspector arrived and were present throughout the inspection.

Three staff files were reviewed.

(2)(a) & (b) There were two written and validated references from a past employer or an alternative source available for 3 staff members.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all 3 staff members however the service had not adhered to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years as specified in Regulation 23.

(d) Not applicable as from the documentary evidence available international police vetting was not required as none of the staff had resided outside the Irish jurisdiction for a period of 6 months or more as an adult.

(4) Documentary evidence was available to confirm that the 2 staff members working directly with the preschool children had a childcare qualification which met the minimum qualification required to enable them to work directly with the preschool children. This was not required for the 3rd staff member who works in a supernumerary capacity and whom it was reported did not work directly with the children.

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) On the day of inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly at all times with the children attending the early years' service.
- (3) When the inspector arrived for an unannounced inspection, the adult to child ratios were correct.
- The following adult to child ratios were observed:
- In the Senior Room there were 5 children aged between 3 years and 11 months to 4 years being cared for by 1 staff member.
- In the Junior Room there were 8 children aged between 2 years and 9 months to 3 years being cared for by 1 staff member.

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

There were 2 care rooms in operation on the day of the inspection - the Senior Room and Junior Room.

(1)(a) The following examples demonstrate how the registered provider ensured that children's learning, development, and well-being was facilitated in the service:

Basic Needs:

- The children who were toilet trained were encouraged to be independent with toileting. Discreet supervision and toileting reminders were also provided by staff as required. Gentle handwashing reminders were given to the children after toileting.
- The children brought in their lunches and they were observed to consist of sandwiches, fruit, yogurt, crackers and wraps. The children all had access to their drinks. Staff were observed to sit with the children at mealtimes and this time was used to encourage conversations between the children including their plans for the weekend.
- The children had free movement in the care room and spent a period of time outside practicing road safety for "Beep Beep" day.

Supporting relationship around children

- Communication between the parents and staff was informal, at drop off and pick-up. The staff also confirmed that a phone messaging application was used to communicate with parents.
- The staff members in the service were observed to interact with the children in a warm and supportive manner. Soft tones, positive and respectful language were observed in interactions between the children and the staff members for example "thank you" "good girl", "please". The children were observed to seek out the staff for assistance.

Physical and Material Environment

- The service had a supply of Montessori equipment available in both rooms.

- A variety of age-appropriate toys and equipment were available in the care rooms on low level shelving which promoted independence and facilitated choice for the children. There was dress-up clothing for role play, art supplies and painting easels, a sand tray, small world items, a kitchen, dolls, buggies, and books.

Programme Of Activities.

- A daily plan the “Morning Care Plan” was available in each room.
- A Montessori curriculum was used in addition to short and long-term planning themes which were displayed. The service also observed the emerging interests or “big life interests” of the children and these were on display in the rooms. For example the local GAA football team were playing in a final at the weekend which the children were very excited about. They had made blue and white flags to take with them to the game and had photographs taken of them cheering for their team.
- “All about me” scrapbooks had been commenced with observations and samples of artwork to be sent home each term, so that parents could see some of the activities that the children engaged in during their day at preschool.
- Seasonal artwork was on display such as “Our Autumn Trees”, “Hickory Dickory Dock” clocks, collage art and football flags.
- Transitions between activities and care practices were smooth, an alarm was sounded and verbal instruction indicated time to change activities such as tidy up or get ready for lunchtime or “Treat time”. Egg timers were available in the room if required.
- An individual education plan was available for a child that required additional supports.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

(1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day,

(4) Where outdoor space to which the pre-school children attending the service have access is provided on the premises of a sessional pre-school service other than such a service to which paragraph (2) applies, a temporary pre-school service or a pre-school service in a drop-in centre, the registered provider shall ensure that such outdoor space is suitable, safe and secure.

Compliance Information

(1)(b) Soft comfortable areas were available in each room. In the Junior Room there was a wooden bench with cushions and blanket and in the Senior Room there was a long-padded window seat and a wooden tent with cushions in it. Both rooms also had access to a daybed if required, for a child to lie down and rest.

(4) There was an outdoor area to the front, the rear and side of the premises which was securely fenced and gated. Outdoor surface areas included tarmac, grass and a swing and slide set on a barked surfaced area with rubber safety matting. There were balancing tyres, wooden beams, a seesaw, covered sand pit, gravel pathways, a tunnel from hedging, wooden stumps and table and outdoor blackboards on the fence.

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.

Non-Compliance Information

The registered provider did not 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.

General Safety:

1. Garda vetting was reviewed for the 3 staff members and these vetting disclosures were not dated within the previous three years in adherence to with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

The registered provider submitted the three staff members garda vetting forms and received the updated vetting disclosures.

The registered provider will keep note off when they need to be reapplied for and will apply for them 3 Months in advance off the garda vetting going out of date approximately August 2027.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Updated Garda Vetting disclosures x 3

Summary Comment

The Inspectorate have reviewed the registered provider's response and is satisfied 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) On review of the documentation and First Aid Responder (FAR) certificates available - there was 1 First Aid Responder (FAR) certificate and a person trained with FAR available at all times in the service.

(2)(a) and (b) There was a first aid box available in the service which was accessible to the children at all times.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

There was adequate insurance cover in place to cover up to a maximum of 22 children which expires on the 27/3/25.