

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DL120
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Name of Service:	Ray Montessori
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Address of Service:	Ray, Falcarragh, Co. Donegal
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Eircode:	F92 R298
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Name of Registered Provider:	Mary Harkin
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	12/11/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	20	PM	-
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Donegal Early Years Inspectorate, St. Conal's Campus, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal. F95 XK94
Inspection undertaken by:	L Mc Glynn
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
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Description of service

Ray Montessori is a privately owned and operated preschool service located in a rural area outside the coastal town of Falcarragh. The service is registered to provide sessional care for children aged 2-6 years and operates between the hours of 9.30am and 12.30pm each weekday. The premises consists of one preschool room in a detached building located on the grounds of a domestic dwelling. An outdoor play area is directly accessible from the care room.

Staffing

The registered provider works in the service on a daily basis alongside three staff members. All four staff members were working with the children on the day of inspection.

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 announced and focused on the area of governance/ health, welfare and development of child/ safety. 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 and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

(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

The vetting files of the four staff members working in the service were reviewed and the following was deemed to meet the requirements of the regulation.

(9) (2) (a) (b) There were two references on file for the four staff members from a past employer or a source other than a past employer as appropriate.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for the four staff members. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(4) Certification evidence of a Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) minimum Level 5 qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education or equivalent was on file for all four staff members.

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) The minimum number of adults were working with the children at all times during the inspection.

(3) On the morning of inspection there were four adults caring for 20 children aged 2 to 5 years.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:

- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;*
- (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;*
- (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;*
- (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;*
- (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;*
- (f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;*
- (g) the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner;*
- (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;*
- (i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.*

in that behalf by the registered provider, and

(c) an authorised person.

Compliance Information

The records of all 22 children registered to attend the service were available and reviewed on this inspection.

The details required at points (a) to (i) of this regulation were maintained for all 22 children.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

There was a sufficient quantity of play materials for the number of children attending the service which was available on low level shelving and was observed to be easily accessible to the children. Additional resources and equipment were stored in various locations within the service to allow for toy rotation. The materials available for children’s use were reflective of the age and stage of development of children attending. They were developmentally appropriate, challenging and provided opportunities for meaningful play experiences. Play items were observed to be made of durable, easy to clean material which was easy to maintain. Large items were secured to prevent the risk of injury by toppling over and there were no hazards observed on the equipment available to children both indoors and outdoors. The equipment was laid out and adequately resourced to allow children to play together in pairs or small groups. Comfortable adult seating was available in the room. There was an adequate quantity of tables and chairs provided in the service which were suitable for the age and stage of development of the children.

There was a designated outdoor play area on site which contained a range of equipment and resources that provided for the play, development and movement of children. There was adequate space for children to move around the area and play together in large groups. The equipment was well maintained, developmentally appropriate and safe for use by the children attending 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) There were three staff members with documentary evidence to demonstrated they had in date training in first aid for children.
- (2) (a) An adequately stocked first aid box was stored on a high-level box in the room.
- (b) The box was readily accessible to the staff if required.

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 written record of fire drills was documented as having taken place in the service. A sample of these records were reviewed which showed that the last recorded fire drill carried out for the service was dated in October 2024.
- (b) A record was kept of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms located in the pre-school. Firefighting equipment was last serviced/inspected in September 2024 and the service had a written record confirming that the fire alarm system was serviced and tested in November 2024.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was prominently displayed in the playroom.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

There was written documentation to evidence that there was adequate insurance in place for the type of service provided and the number of children attending.