

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DS025
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Name of Service:	Discoveries Creche & Montessori
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Address of Service:	Old Court Centre, Firhouse, Dublin 24, Co. Dublin
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Eircode:	D24 CX83
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Name of Registered Provider:	Lena O'Sullivan, Liz Mahon
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	30/01/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	45	PM	44
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Brunel building, Hueston South Quarter, Dublin 8
Inspection undertaken by:	J. Mayock and A. Byrne
Title:	Early Years Inspector and Inspection Registration Manager

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

This full day care service for children from 0 to 6 years old opens from Monday to Friday between 07:30 and 18:00 hours. A sessional programme is offered from 9:15am to 12:15pm for 38 weeks of the year. The service operates from a purposely adapted single-storey building located in a business centre in Firhouse, Dublin 24. Children are allocated to one of three rooms according to their age. There is also a dedicated sleep room. An outdoor area is located to the rear of the building.

Staffing

There were 18 adults present on the day of the inspection including the centre manager, a cook, a cleaner and two students. Of the 18 adults, 16 were working directly with the children. The registered provider arrived shortly after the inspectors arrived and remained on the premises for the duration of the 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 unannounced and focused on the area of governance, health, welfare and development of child and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations:

9 (1)(a)(b)(c), (2)(a)(b)(c)(d) Management and Recruitment.

11 (1),(2) Staffing levels.

19 (1)(a) Health Welfare and Development of the child

23 Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child.

25 (1), (2)(a)(b) First Aid.

26 (1)(a)(b) Fire Safety Measures.

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 inspectors wish 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
- (c) there is a clear management structure in the service that identifies the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and unpaid worker.

(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.

Compliance Information

(1)

- (a)(b) The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.
- (c) There was evidence of a clear management structure which outlined the roles of authority within the service.

(2)

Following a discussion with the person in charge it was confirmed that six adults commenced working in the service since regulation 9 was last inspected on the 15th September 2021. Documentation required under regulation 9(2)(4) was reviewed in respect of these six adults as detailed below.

- (a) (b) There were 9 references available from a previous employer and 3 references available from a reputable source for the six adults, all references had been appropriately verified.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for all 25 of the 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 for all adults.

(d) International Police vetting was available for two adults who required it.

(4) Each of the six adults held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework.

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.

(2) Subject to paragraphs (4) and (5), a registered provider of a full day care service or a part-time day care service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 1 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) thereof at that reference number is satisfied.

Compliance Information

(1) An adequate number of adults were working directly with the pre-school children attending the service during the inspection.

(2) The minimum ratio of adults to children was adhered to at all times during the inspection. There were forty-five pre-school children attending the service being supervised by sixteen adults during the inspection.

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 inspectors observed appropriate and suitable care practices within the service. The service had a healthy eating policy in place, meals and snacks were offered to the children regularly throughout the day. A hot meal of chicken, potatoes, carrots and cabbage was served for dinner. Suitable cutlery was provided. Mealtime was sociable, staff sat with the children, and they enjoyed their meal together. Drinks of water were available within the rooms and were offered at mealtimes. Staff were observed to sit with the children for mealtimes to support children who needed assistance with their food and engage in conversations.

The service had a designated sleep time after dinner. Staff told the inspector that they provide for the children to sleep outside of these times if they show signs of tiredness. The children were made comfortable for sleep with staff removing their outer clothing and shoes. Soothers were given to those who used them. Staff remained with children at sleep time and helped soothe them to sleep as they required. Children who did not require sleep were offered the opportunity to go outside and play in the garden.

The children were supported to be self-caring and independent suitable to their age and stage of development. For example, washing their hands before mealtimes, tidying away their plates and cups after mealtimes, cleaning up after play and using the toilet independently.

The atmosphere in the service appeared calm and relaxed. Staff demonstrated good awareness of the needs of each child in their care and responded to children's cues promptly. Staff interacted warmly with the children in their care throughout the inspection and were observed supporting children in their play and during Montessori work.

Transitions within the service were managed well and children appeared to be familiar with the daily routine. The care rooms were arranged into defined areas of interest providing children with the freedom to play and explore. The environments were observed to be accessible to the children and were adequately resourced with a variety of materials. Designated areas of interest including mark making stations, small world toys, construction toys and a rest area with books were laid out. Low level tables and chairs were available. Family display walls and topics of interest were displayed on the walls. There were journey books available in the rooms documenting the learning

and activities the children had recently experienced. The children's artwork and photos were displayed throughout the service.

A fully enclosed outdoor area was located to the back of the premises. A range of developmentally appropriate play equipment was provided 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 gate to the service was adequately secured to ensure the safety of the children within and to avoid unauthorised persons accessing the service.
- The care rooms had a numbered keypad outside with pin codes required to gain access.
- All the furniture, toys and equipment were observed to be in good condition in the rooms.
- All blind folds were secured.
- Hand sanitisers, hazardous materials and medications were stored safely out of reach of children.

Infection Control:

- An infection control policy was in place to inform practice. The service maintained a cleaning schedule and the environments were clean.
- Liquid soap, warm water and paper towels were available to facilitate hand washing.
- Children's hands were washed before meals, after play and at nappy changes.
- Staff were observed to wear aprons, hair nets and gloves when serving food to the children at mealtimes.

Safe Sleep:

- Staff were observed to check the children sleeping physically and documented their position and breathing every ten minutes. Through discussions with the staff, they were familiar with the safe sleep guidelines.
- Standard cots and low-level beds were available for children to sleep in line with their age and stages of development.
- The recommended sleep temperatures were observed to be maintained in the cot room and the playgroup room during sleep time.

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)

A person trained in first aid responder was immediately available to the children at all times on the day of the inspection.

(2)

(a) A First aid box was safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous location within the service.

(b) A first aid box was available to the adults and children in the service at all times.

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.

Compliance Information

(1)

(a) A written record was available detailing fire drills that had taken place in the service. The last fire drill had been recorded as undertaken on 20th January 2025.

(b) The number, type and maintenance record of fire fighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises was available. The maintenance records for the fire fighting equipment and smoke alarms were dated 21st November 2025.