

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DS045		
Name of Service:	Footprints Montessori & Afterschool		
Address of Service:	Clondalkin Sports & Leisure Centre, Nangor Road, Clondalkin, Dublin 22		
Eircode:	D22 E283		
Name of Registered Provider:	Sabrina Delaney		
Service type:	Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	22/10/2025		
No of pre-school children:	AM	39	PM N/A
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Floor 7 Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, St. John's Road West, Kilmainham, Dublin 8		
Inspection undertaken by:	H Sutherland, R Duff		
Title:	Early Years Inspectors		
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

Footprints Montessori & Afterschool is an early years service in Clondalkin Sports & Leisure Centre in Dublin 22. The service operates out of four rooms; two are situated on the ground floor and two on the first floor. Children aged 2 to 6 years are accommodated between 9am and 12pm Monday to Friday. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme.

Staffing

There are currently 11 adults employed to work in the service including the registered provider, a manager and an administrator. One adult is employed under the access and inclusion model (AIM). On the day of inspection there were eight adults working directly with the children along with three students, two of which were on a 2nd level transition year work experience program. The registered provider was not present during 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, safety and records. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under the below regulations however, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 27 Supervision. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulation within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulation 19 Health welfare and development of child. As a result, the scope of the inspection included the Blue Pod, Green Pod and Red pod.

Regulation 9 (1) (a-c), (2) (a-d), (3), (4) Management and recruitment

Regulation 11 (1), (3) Staffing levels

Regulation 16 (j) Records in relation to a preschool service

Regulation 19 (1) (b) Health welfare and development of child

Regulation 23 Safeguarding health safety and welfare of child

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.

Additional Information

An immediate action notice (IAN) was issued to the person in charge on the day of inspection in relation to a risk identified under Regulation 23 Health, Safety and Welfare of Child. Further details are available in the body of the report. The person in charge submitted a response on 23 October 2025 which was deemed to adequately address the non-compliance.

Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the 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.

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(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 service had a person in charge and a named person to deputise in their absence.
- (b) The deputy person in charge was present when the inspectors arrived unannounced to the service and remained present for the duration of the inspection.
- (c) There was a clear management structure in the service that identified the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee.

(2) Following discussion with the person in charge it was confirmed that six adults commenced employment in the service since Regulation 9 was last inspected on the 8 March 2023. Documentation required under Regulation 9 (2), (3), (4) was reviewed in respect of the six adults and 9 (2) (3) for the third level student as detailed below. The requirements of Regulation 9(2)(c) relating to Garda Vetting was reviewed for 12 adults. Documentation required in relation to the two students on the 2nd level transition year work experience program was available for review and met regulatory requirements.

- (a) Three written and verified references were available from past employers.
- (b) One written and verified reference was available from a source other than a past employer.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for 12 adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda Vetting every three years.
- (d) Police vetting was available in respect of two adults who had lived outside of the State for a period longer than six months as an adult.

(4) Documentation was available to show that five of the adults who work directly with children attending the service held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications. Two adults did not require a qualification.

Non-Compliance Information

(3) The registered provider did not ensure the following checks were carried out prior to six adults working in the service.

- Documentary evidence available indicated written and verified references were not available for six adults.
- Information was not available to ascertain whether one adult required International Police vetting.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

9 (3) All staff files were reviewed after the inspection. Written and verified references were obtained for the six adults, and additional information was provided for one adult confirming their requirements regarding Police vetting. A new staff checklist has been developed for use during the recruitment process, and no staff member will commence employment in the service until all required documents have been obtained. In addition, management will carry out a quarterly review of all staff files.

Supporting documentation submitted

Supporting documentation provided.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 9 (3) has been adequately addressed and the regulatory requirement has been met.

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 with the children to meet their care needs.
- (3) The minimum adult to child ratio requirement was maintained in accordance with the children's ages and type of service delivered. There were 39 children present in the service being supervised by 8 adults during the inspection. All children were aged over 2 years and 8 months and were attending on a sessional basis.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:

(j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;

Compliance Information

- (i) There were no documents available for review, staff and the person in charge reported that they have not had to administer medication. Records were available for use should they be required.

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-

(b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.

Compliance Information

The inspectors observed appropriate care practices in place in the service. Staff reported that children's lunches were provided by the parents. Drinking water was available in the care rooms and stored at a level that was accessible to children. Lunchtime was observed to be a pleasant, unhurried experience for children. Staff were observed sitting with children and encouraging conversation, supporting the development of the children's language and social skills. Children were supported to be responsible and independent for example, handing out lunches, tidying up after lunch and play, putting on their coats and using the toilet independently. Staff remained close by to support children when required.

Play was child led and children were observed to move freely around their environment without obstruction and child size furniture was used to support independence and easy access to learning materials. Staff were observed to actively engage with children during play promoting positive peer interactions. They addressed children by name and were observed to promptly meet children's needs. Children were given advanced notice that a change in activity was approaching supporting smooth transitions. Areas were provided in the care rooms for children to take a break from activities if required. Staff reported that parents have the opportunity to discuss key aspects of their child's day at drop off and collection.

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 service was adequately secured to prevent unauthorised entry or children leaving the service unsupervised.

- Toys and equipment observed on the day of inspection were in good condition and free from any pinch or crush points.
- Child locks were in place on low level storage.

Infection Control:

- Perishable items in children’s lunch boxes were stored in a fridge in the care rooms.
- Children were supported to wash their hands before lunch and after using the toilet.
- Pedal operated bins were available in children’s bathrooms.

Administration of Medication:

- Staff were aware of the procedure to follow if a child required antifebrile medication and administration of medication records were available for use if required.

Fire Safety:

- Fire exits were unobstructed for the duration of the inspection.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. An Immediate Action Notice (IAN) was issued as it was identified staff and managements knowledge regarding the medication requirements for a child was inconsistent. During discussions with staff the inspector was informed that one child had a serious allergy. Review of the child’s care plan evidenced the type of allergy the child presented with and symptoms of allergic reaction. No further documented details to support the child in the event of an allergic reaction were available. Review of the medication evidenced there was no prescribed medication with the child’s name in the service. Discussions with staff evidenced if the child had a reaction the staff would contact management, the child’s parents and use an auto adrenaline injector belonging to the service. On review this auto adrenaline injector had an expired in November 2024. Therefore, was out of date.

Discussion with the person in charge evidenced the child had a signed letter form the parents dated 9 September 2025 stating they no longer have an allergy. This information was not communicated with staff. This posed significant risk to the child in the event of medication being administered that was not prescribed for their use.

2. Trailing cables from an air conditioning unit and a tv were observed in the Blue Pod and a trailing cable from a tv was observed in the Yellow Pod. The service was found to be non-compliant for trailing cables in the Blue Pod on the last inspection on 8 March 2023. The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider did not prevent the reoccurrence of the non-compliance.

- The inspector observed that children's lunches were not checked to ensure vegetables were halved. One child was found to have whole cherry tomatoes in their lunch box which posed a serious risk to the child's safety. The inspector highlighted this with staff and the tomatoes were cut in half.

Infection Control:

- There was no single use paper towel available in one of the toilets used by the children. Children were observed using toilet roll to dry their hands following toileting.
- There was no cover available on the toilet roll dispenser in the children's bathroom in the Green Pod. Lack of appropriate hygiene equipment and supplies in children's bathrooms poses a risk of the spread of infection.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

- Following the inspection, the child's care plan was removed and the letter from the parents was stored on the child's file. A staff meeting was held to clarify the child's current medical status and ensure there was understanding across the team. The expired auto adrenaline injector which had been kept on site for training purposes was removed from the service. A full audit of all emergency medication was conducted to ensure that medication was in date. A new communication protocol has been introduced, requiring all medical updates from parents to be recorded immediately, signed, and shared with all relevant staff before being filed. In addition, all emergency medication will be checked and verified by management on a regular basis. Staff will receive documented briefings on any changes in children's medical requirements and each room has a folder allocated for care plans along with a list of the medical requirements and allergies of all children in the service.
- The air conditioning unit in the Blue pod was removed, and the television cables have been secured out of reach of children. A risk assessment for electrical equipment is carried out daily, and staff have been briefed on how to ensure cables are out of reach of children.
- Following the inspection, management sent a message to all parents reminding them to ensure children's lunches are appropriately prepared, including cutting vegetables in half. Staff will check to ensure children's lunches are prepared safely, and management will continue to communicate with parents and carry out routine audits to ensure adherence to the lunchtime procedures.

Infection Control:

4. Single use paper towels were immediately provided in all children's toilets, and going forward staff will carry out daily checks to ensure paper towels are available. In addition, the importance of hand hygiene was discussed with the team at a staff meeting.
5. The cover of the toilet roll dispenser was attached securely, and staff were reminded to ensure all bathroom equipment is fully functional. Staff will carry out daily bathroom checks and have been instructed to notify management immediately of any equipment requiring attention.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Supporting documentation received.

Infection Control:

Supporting documentation received.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 23 has been adequately addressed and the regulatory requirement has been met.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.

Non-Compliance Information

Children were not adequately supervised at all times during the inspection. It was observed during a transition from the care room to the hall, that one child was left behind in the classroom. Staff had taken the children down the stairs and completed a headcount at the bottom of the stairs when they realised one child was missing from the group. One of the staff members immediately returned to the room and found the child alone in the bathroom. Inadequate supervision of children poses a risk to their safety and wellbeing.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

A full briefing was held with staff to reinforce the importance of maintaining constant supervision of children, especially during transitions. Headcounts are now completed before, during and after transitions to ensure all children are accounted for. Management has developed a new risk assessment for transitions to the hall and will carry out daily checks to ensure children are continuously supervised.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report Pre School

Supporting documentation submitted

Supporting documentation received.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 27 has been adequately addressed and the regulatory requirement has been met.