

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DS103
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Name of Service:	Montessori Matters
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Address of Service:	108 Esker Manor, Lucan, Co. Dublin
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Eircode:	K78 AE93
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Name of Registered Provider:	Sharon Smyth
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	01/05/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	50	PM	22
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Floor 7, Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, Kilmainham, Dublin 8
Inspection undertaken by:	F Carty
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

Montessori Matters is a privately owned childcare service which provides full time, part time and sessional care and education for preschool children from 2 years to 6 years. A sessional service is provided to children availing of the ECCE scheme for 38 weeks of the year. Three sessions operated daily from 9.15am to 12.15pm, 9.30am to 12.30pm and 1.15pm to 4.15pm.

The service operates from 9.00am to 5.00pm, Monday – Friday.

The service operates from a purpose built single-storey building located in a residential area in Lucan, Co Dublin.

There are 3 care rooms available to the children. An outdoor area is located to the side of the building.

Staffing

The service employs eleven people. The service has a designated person in charge and a manager who were not assigned to care rooms. An administrator was also employed in the service. The registered provider arrived subsequent to the inspector's arrival and does not work directly with the children.

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, information and records, 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, 11, 15 (1), 16(1), 19 (1)(b) and 23. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation (number and name of regulation) ...As a result, the scope of the inspection included rooms name rooms...

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 children, staff, registered provider and person in charge 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 files for all adults who had access to children were reviewed. A total of thirteen staff files were reviewed.

- (2)
- (a) There were twenty one written validated references available from previous employers for eleven adults employed in the service.
- (b) Five suitable references from other sources were available for three adults who had only one or no previous employers.
- (c) Garda vetting was available for all 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 for three adults who had lived outside the State for a period longer than six consecutive months.

(3)
The procedures specified above were completed prior to the adults commencing in the service.

(4) There was evidence that eleven adults who required a qualification had attained at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 and above on the National Framework for Qualifications.

Non-Compliance Information

(4)
There was no evidence that one person had attained at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 and above on the National Framework for Qualifications.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Certificate of Qualification for staff member.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copy of the outstanding qualification certificate.

Summary Comment

The corrective actions together with the supporting documentation has met the requirements of Regulation 9.

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 children at all times during the inspection.
- (2) The minimum ratio of adults to children was adhered to at all times during the inspection. There were fifty children attending the service being supervised by nine adults on the day of inspection.

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.

Compliance Information

- (1)
- A sample of ten records were reviewed by the inspector. The registered provider ensured that a record in writing was kept of the details relating to (a) – (i) of the above Regulation for all of the records reviewed.

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:

(h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;

(i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;

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

(k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.

Compliance Information

(h) Details of the attendance of each child attending the service were recorded at the time of entering and leaving the service.

(i) The staff roster was available on both days of inspection and reflected the adults working in the service on each day.

(j) A sample of five medication administration records were reviewed. These records were signed by staff and parents and were completed appropriately.

(k) A sample of ten accident and incidents records were reviewed. These records were signed by staff and parents and were completed appropriately.

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-

(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

(1)(a)(b)

The service had a healthy eating policy in place and all snacks were provided by the parents or guardians of the children. A variety of foods were provided to the children including fruit, dairy products and sandwiches. Drinking water was available to children throughout the session. The service provided a hot meal which was sourced from an external company and regenerated on site to children attending on a full time and part time basis.

Children's care needs were observed to be met promptly. Staff were observed encouraging children to wash their hands after using the toilet and before snack. Children's noses were cleaned as required.

The children spent the morning engaging in activities together including building and imaginative play games. An emergent curriculum was evident in the service. Ongoing observations and assessments were documented which informed curriculum planning.

The atmosphere in the care room was calm, friendly and supportive. The staff demonstrated warmth and sensitivity in their interactions with the children by using soft vocal tones, listening attentively, and offering praise and encouragement. Staff were observed to be responsive to the children providing assistance as required.

The staff spent some time practising songs and poems with the children which helped to develop the language skills of the children present as they sung a variety of songs including ones with actions.

There were three playrooms available to the children, each room contained a variety of Montessori materials from all areas of the curriculum available to the children, low level shelving with puzzles, small world, construction play, a home corner and a rest area. Low level tables and chairs were provided to meet the children's age.

A large outdoor area to the side of the premises was available to the children for outdoor play, each group of children had access to the outdoor area during the inspection.

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:

Access to the service was secure ensuring no unauthorised access to or from the building. Cleaning materials were stored out of reach of children. Heavy furniture was secured and cables were out of reach of children.

Infection Control:

Children washed hands before their snack and after using the toilet. Thermostatically controlled warm water was available to the children along with liquid soap and paper towels. Pedal bins were available throughout the service. All perishable food items were refrigerated when the children arrived to the service.

Administration of Medication:

Written parental consent was available for administration of medication. No medication was required to be administered on the day of inspection. Staff were aware of the procedures required when administering medication.

Fire Safety:

Fire drills were carried out regularly and all fire exits were kept clear.