

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier: TU2015DS104

Name of Service: Kids Play Montessori School and Afterschool

Address of Service: 52 Ballyroan Crescent, Rathfarnham, Dublin 16, Co. Dublin

Eircode: D16 C9T8

Name of Registered Provider: Fionnuala Egan

Service type: Part Time, Sessional

Date of Inspection: 17/10/2024

No of pre-school children:	AM	26	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate 2 nd Floor, Unit 4/5 The Nexus Building Blanchardstown Corporate Park Ballycoolin Dublin 15 D15 CF9K
Inspection undertaken by:	C. Harte and Y. Kelly
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

Kids Play Montessori School and Afterschool is a private part time service which is located in an urban setting in south Dublin. It has been in operation since 1999 and is open thirty-eight weeks of the year. The service offers care and education to children between the ages of two years up to school going age. The service is open from 9.15am to 2.45pm Monday to Friday and offers the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme. The service can cater for up to twenty-eight children at any one time. The service also provides a registered school aged childcare service.

The service operates out of two rooms beside the registered providers home: the Montessori Room and the Playschool Room. The children have access to the garden at the rear of the house with has an all-weather surface.

Staffing

The service currently has five staff including the registered provider. All staff work directly with the children and four were present in the pre-school on the day 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;

- Regulation 9(1)(a)(b),(2)(a)(b)(c)(d), (4) Management and Recruitment
- Regulation 11(1),(3) Staffing Levels
- Regulation 19(1)(b) Health, Welfare and Development of child
- Regulation 23 Safeguarding the Health, Safety and Welfare of the Child
- Regulation 25(1),(2)(a)(b) First Aid
- Regulation 26 (1)(a)(b), (4) 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, 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

(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 persons to deputise as required. The registered provider was present in the service working directly with the children and remained in the service for the duration of the inspection.

(2) The files of all adults who work directly with preschool children were reviewed. The following was observed from a review of five files:

- (a) The registered provider had a reference from a past employer and four past employer references three of which had been validated, relating to 3 staff.

- (b) The registered provider had a reference from a source other than a past employer and four validated references relating to 3 staff from a source other than a past employer.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all five 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 one adult who had lived in a country other than Ireland for a period of six months or more as an adult.

(4) Documentary evidence was available to show that five adults who worked directly with the children held 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.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a) A second written reference for 1 staff member was not validated.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Action

The registered provider has obtained and validated another reference for the staff member.

Preventive Action

Staff will not be employed in the future without two validated references. It is included in the service policies and staff files are checked regularly throughout the year.

Supporting documentation submitted

- Email correspondence.
- Service policies.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions taken and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 9(2)(a) has been addressed.

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

The registered provider ensured the following:

(1)(3) On the day of the inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children. There were four adults available to 26 children aged between 2.5 - 5 years old when the inspectors arrived unannounced to the service.

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

(1)(b) Appropriate and suitable care practices were observed, as evidenced by the following:

- The staff interacted with the children in a respectful, warm and sensitive manner. The staff members engaged with children during play at the children's level. Staff engaged children in conversations about home life, their interests and activities within the room supporting the development of relationships and a sense of belonging.
- Children were observed to move freely around the care room which was laid out in thematic areas selecting materials of their own interest to play with. Children used the tables, small sofa and floor mats as play spaces throughout the morning.

- Children were responded to when they required attention and children were provided with comfort when needed. A staff member comforted a child who was upset after having a fall, offering a drink and reading a story until the child became calmer. The staff member offered reassurance until the child was happy to return to play.
- Care practices such as toileting were supported by staff with children in the group who had recently been toilet trained.
- Staff encouraged children to wash their hands after using the bathroom and before snack time which promoted self-care practices amongst the children.
- The children in the Playroom were observed having snack at 11.00am and the staff member sat with the children. This enhanced social interactions and conversations amongst the children. The children brought their own snack in from home which included items such as sandwiches, fruit and yoghurt.
- Children's individual water bottles were accessible throughout the morning and the staff encouraged the children to drink.
- Staff shared the approaches used to assist new children to settle into the service and how this is discussed with parents. Staff were observed to use a visual daily schedule displayed at the child's level to assist a child in their understating of the routine and give reassurance.
- The service uses a software application to share information with parents and staff demonstrated how images are shared and the use of a message function for updating parents.
- All children used the outdoor play area on the day of 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:

- The entrance to the service was secure when the inspectors arrive and was monitored by staff using an intercom system to restrict unauthorised access to the premises.
- The outdoor play area was fully enclosed.
- Cleaning agents were stored out of reach of the children on high shelves in the bathroom.
- The small kitchen area within the Montessori room was inaccessible to children and staff ensured the dividing gate was securely locked throughout the day.

- Toys and equipment were observed to be in good condition and suitable for use.

Infection Control:

- Warm water, liquid soap, a hand dryer and single use hand towels were available at wash hand basins used by the children.
- Care room windows were open for ventilation.
- Children's lunches including perishable item were stored in the refrigerator.

Non-Compliance Information

Fire Safety:

1. The children in the Playroom were not signed in when the inspector reviewed the attendance records at 10.20am. Contemporaneous accurate attendance of all children must be recorded and maintained to support the safe evacuation of children in the event of an emergency. The children's attendance records were retrospectively completed by a staff member on the day.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Action

Fire Safety:

The staff member has been instructed to call the roll at the beginning of the day and her attention drawn to the service policies.

Preventive Action

All staff have been briefed again on 17/10/24 about marking the attendance record first thing when the children arrive each day and the policies and procedures have been outlined and reinforced to everyone on the staff again.

Supporting documentation submitted

Fire Safety:

- Service policies.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions taken and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 23 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) A review of available documents and conversation with management showed that a staff member trained in First Aid Response (FAR) was rostered to be on the premises and available to the children at all times during the opening hours of the service.

(2) (a)(b) A suitably equipped first aid box was stored safely out of reach of children, readily available and easily accessible to the staff members if required at any time.

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 record was maintained of all fire drills which occurred in the service. The record showed that fire drills are conducted on a monthly basis. The last fire drill took place on the 7th October 2024.
- (b) A record of the number, type and maintenance record of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises was available. The certificates reviewed showed that the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms had been serviced on 14th November 2023.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire were clearly displayed in a prominent position by the doorway.