

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DS214
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Name of Service:	Chestnut Montessori T/A Chestnut Daycare
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Address of Service:	1A Butterfield Avenue, Rathfarnham, Dublin 14.
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Name of Registered Provider:	Laura Higgins
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	24/10/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	16	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
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Inspection undertaken by:	C. Harte
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Title:	Early Years Inspector
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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

Chestnut Montessori is a privately owned service located in a predominately residential area of Rathfarnham. Established by the current registered provider in 2017, the service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme. Chestnut Montessori is open during the school year from Monday to Friday and the service is registered to provide sessional childcare to pre-school children between the hours of 9:00am and 12:30pm. On the morning of the inspection there were 16 children present in the service. The service operates from a single storey building which has been adapted for use as a pre-school. This premises features a bright well-presented room used as the main pre-school room, children's toilets, staff toilet, kitchen, office and an entrance hall/cloakroom. An elevated outdoor play area fitted with soft surfacing is situated in front of the building's main entrance.

Staffing

The registered provider currently employs three staff who work directly with the pre-school children including the designated person in charge. On the morning of the inspection three staff and two students who were completing a work placement programme were present in the service.

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(2)(a)(b)(c)(d), (4) Management and Recruitment
- Regulation 11(1),(3) Staffing Levels
- Regulation 15(1)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(g)(h)(i) Record of a Pre-school Child
- Regulation 19(1)(b) Health, Welfare and Development of child
- Regulation 23 Safeguarding the Health, Safety and Welfare of the Child
- Regulation 25 First Aid
- Regulation 28 Insurance

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 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.

(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 a named person to deputise as required. The person in charge was in the service when the inspector arrived.

(2) A discussion with management and review of staff files showed there are currently three staff members employed who work directly with the children. On the day of the inspection two students were also present. All files were reviewed as part of the inspection.

(a) Five written references were available from a past employer.

(b) Five written references were available from a source other than a past employer.

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

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

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(d) Police vetting was not available in relation to one adult who had lived in countries other than Ireland for a period of six months or more as an adult.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Action

Police vetting has been obtained for the staff member.

Preventive action

We have added a note to our staff checklist to check all CV's and to check with new members of staff if they have resided in another country.

Supporting documentation submitted

- Police vetting documents.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions taken and supporting documents submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 9 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 three adults available to 16 children aged between 2 years 6 months - 5 years 10 months old when the inspector arrived unannounced to the service.

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 record forms of children who currently attend the service were reviewed. These records contained all the information required under (a) to (i) above.

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) The following practices were observed to be in place to support the children attending:

- The overall atmosphere within the service was calm and pleasant, staff engaged with children in a respectful manner using soft tones and age-appropriate language.
- Children moved around the care room freely accessing a wide variety of material on low level shelving. Staff were knowledgeable of the individual children and discussed with the inspector children's preferences for how they like to spend their time in the service.
- Children were actively reminded by staff about self-care practises such as hand hygiene. Images displayed at a low level in the care room offered guidance and reminded children to wash their hands when playing with playdough, sand and water.
- Staff engaged in children's discussions about their interests and then informed them of resources available in the service linked to their interest.
- A visual daily routine was displayed, and staff gave the children notice before a transition took place supporting the children's understanding of the routine.
- Lunches were supplied from home, and the service supplied milk which was offered to the children during their meal. Lunch was observed to be a social experience as staff and children sat together and engaged in conversation. A drinks station was available in the care room throughout the morning positioned at the children's level.
- Staff discussed how the service places on emphasis on mindfulness and emotional regulation. They demonstrated to the inspector the materials used to support a variety of techniques to aid the children.

Approaches used included a combination of visual images, plush toys, stories, a selection of sensory toys and yoga and breathe work. A visual aid in a small frame was present to assist nonverbal children to communicate their need for support to regulate.

- Throughout the morning children transitioned in and out of the garden under the supervision of staff. As children showed an interest in playing outdoors, they were assisted to put on outdoor clothing and were brought outside to play. All children were observed to access the outdoor 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 service entrance was secure when the inspector arrived unannounced, and staff attended the door to allow access. This prevented children from exiting the premises unsupervised and prohibited unauthorised persons from entering the service.
- Equipment and resources were observed to be in good condition and suitable for use.
- The kitchen door remained securely closed during the inspection and was only accessed by adults.
- Grapes were cut in half.

Infection Control:

- Children washed their hands after returning from outdoor play.
- Lunches including perishable items were refrigerated.
- Soap and handtowels were hygienically dispensed and foot pedal bins were present in the sanitary area supporting effective hand hygiene practices.
- Windows were open in the care room which allowed for ventilation and air to circulate.

Non-Compliance Information

Administration of Medication:

1. Expired antifebrile medication was present in the service. This posed a risk that the medication may not be as potent and may not provide the required effect. It is acknowledged that the medication was removed when brought to the attention of the person in charge.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Action

Administration of Medication:

The expired medication was disposed of and new medication has been purchased.

Preventive Action

We have added 'Check Expiration on Anti Febrile medication' to our monthly checks list and to our First Aid Checklists.

Supporting documentation submitted

Administration of Medication:

- Photographic evidence.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions taken and supporting documents 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) Suitably equipped first aid boxes were stored safely out of reach of children, readily available and easily accessible to staff if required at any time.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured that the service was adequately insured for the children in attendance. The policy commenced on 28th March 2024 and expires 27th March 2025