

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier: TU2015DY044

Name of Service: Casa dei Bambini Montessori

Address of Service: 12 Kincora Ave, Clontarf, Dublin 3

Eircode: D03 K304

Name of Registered Provider: Catherine Devereux

Service type: Part Time, Sessional

Date of Inspection: 25/09/2024

No of pre-school children: AM 20 PM 19

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:	E. Finnegan Hayes
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.

Description of service

Casa dei Bambini Montessori is a privately operated service located in a residential area in North Dublin. The service operates from a converted retail unit encompassing one classroom with a small kitchenette and sanitary facilities. The service is registered to provide early childhood care and education to a maximum of 25 children aged 2-6 years. The service provides one part-time session from 8:30am-1pm daily and participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme offering sessional care from 9am-12pm daily, 38 weeks per year in line with the programme rules. A fully enclosed outdoor area is available onsite to the rear of the service

Staffing

The registered provider employs three staff to work directly with the children in the service and also works in the service herself. One adult from a local preschool support service also works in the service to provide support to a preschool child. Three staff were present in the service on the morning of the inspection including the registered provider.

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, safety and premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

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 was issued to the registered provider on 25th September 2024 in relation to concerns under Regulation 23 Safeguarding the Health, Safety and Welfare of Child. A response which adequately addressed the concerns was received on 26th September 2024. Further details are available under regulation 23 below.

Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes 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
- (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) The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise when required.
 - (b) Discussion with management and staff showed that the designated person in charge or the deputy was rostered to be on the premises during the opening hours of the service.
- (2) A review of the staff files and discussion with management and staff showed that there are currently five adults employed in the service who work directly with the children including the registered provider and one adult employed by a local preschool support service. The files of all five adults were reviewed as part of the inspection.
- (a) (b) Ten written and verified references were available for five adults currently employed in the service.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for five adults employed in the service. The service has also adhered to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(4) Evidence was available to show that five adults who work 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) Evidence of police vetting was not available for one adult who had lived in a country other than Ireland for a period of more than 6 months. This was a non-compliance on the previous inspection in 2021 and has not yet been obtained.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2) (d) Police vetting has been applied for and will be forwarded to Tusla on receipt as soon as received. Service now aware of process for international clearance / vetting and will apply for future vetting if required.

Supporting documentation submitted

(2) (d) An email confirming the application is in the process of being obtained was reviewed.

Summary Comment

The registered provider has attempted to address the non-compliance under Regulation 9. Regulatory compliance remains outstanding for Regulation (9)(4) as the vetting has not been obtained to date. The registered provider is required to submit the vetting to the inspectorate once it is processed.

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) (2) There were 20 preschool children aged 2.5-4 years old being cared for by three adults on the day of inspection and ratios were maintained in the care room throughout the inspection. Two adults were required to maintain the correct ratio.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 17 – Information for parents

A registered provider shall ensure that a parent or guardian of a child proposing to attend the service is provided with the information referred to in subparagraphs (a) to (g) of Regulation 16(1).

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured that a parent or guardian of a child proposing to attend the service is provided with the information referred to in subparagraphs (a) to (g) of Regulation 16(1) through in person induction meetings prior to the child's start date, a visual display of the staffing, as well as emails detailing the service policies.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured that an adequate supply of suitable materials and equipment were available to the children in the service. The following was observed;

- The furniture and equipment in the care rooms were observed to be well maintained, durable, easy to clean, and suitable for the age and stage of the children attending.
- A range of montessori equipment was available for use and staff advised that this will be increased throughout the year as children are introduced to new materials in line with the montessori method.
- Toys and equipment were available on low level shelving accessible to the children which facilitated choice, decision making and supported independent play experiences.
- The outdoor area provided a natural place space with a grass surface. Toys and equipment provided a range of play experiences including digging, role play, gross motor and sensory play.

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 secured throughout the day and staff were observed to attend the door to allow visitors access which prevented unauthorised persons entering the building without the knowledge of staff.
- The exit door was fitted with a thumb turn lock at adult height and a second door inside the main entrance door was fitted with a twist lock which prevented children leaving the service without the knowledge of staff.
- Toys and equipment were maintained in good condition free from hazards.
- A kettle in the kitchenette was secured out of reach of the children.
- Grapes which were brought from home were observed to be cut in half to prevent injury to the children.

Infection Control:

- Thermostatically controlled warm water and dispensed soap were available to support adequate hand hygiene.
- Handwashing was completed regularly throughout the day after toileting and outdoor play and before mealtimes in line with the service policy.
- Pedal operated bins were available for disposal of contaminated items.
- Windows were open in the care room to allow fresh air to circulate.

Fire Safety:

- Staff were aware of the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire emergency.
- Attendance records were observed to be completed in a timely manner and reflected the children present in the service. This supports the safe evacuation of the children in the event of a fire emergency.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

1. Paper handtowels were not hygienically dispensed in the sanitary area used by the children. On the day of inspection staff were observed to use a roll of kitchen paper for hand drying. Paper handtowels should be

hygienically dispensed to prevent cross contamination. This posed an infection control risk due to excess handling of the paper towels used.

2. Children's lunches which were brought from home and contained perishable items were not refrigerated on the day of inspection which posed a risk to the children. The service policy does not address refrigeration of lunches.
3. The easy clean surface on a shelving unit along the window of the care room was worn away in places presenting an infection control risk.

Administration of Medication:

4. Emergency medication for one child was observed to be stored in the child's schoolbag which was on the floor of the care room. An immediate action notice was issued to the registered provider during the inspection due to the risk posed to the children who were observed to access their bags throughout the day.
5. A care plan was not available for two children who require emergency medication. An immediate action notice was issued to the registered provider during the inspection due to the risk posed to the children who may not receive adequate care in the event of a medical emergency.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control:

1. Paper hand towel dispensers are being installed at the service during October Mid-Term. Dispensers will continuously be stocked with fresh paper towels.
2. Children's perishable lunches are now refrigerated on arrival and presented for lunch from the fridge. All perishable lunches will be refrigerated.
3. A sealant tape has been applied to worn area of shelf. New shelf is being installed on October mid-term break.

Administration of Medication:

4. Medication was removed from child's bag and stored with care plan at first aid station away from all children. Future medication and care plans to accompany all relevant children, to be checked and updated regularly with input from parents and the child's GP.
5. Care plan generated for two children. Future medication and care plans to accompany all relevant children, to be checked and updated regularly with input from parents and the child's GP.

Supporting documentation submitted

3. A photo of the children's lunches in the fridge was reviewed.
5. A copy of the children's care plans were received.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions taken by the registered provider are sufficient to address the non-compliances identified under Regulation 23.

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) The registered provider ensured that the following records were maintained;
- (a) A record of monthly fire drills showed that the last fire drill had taken place on 24th June 2024; the service is closed in July and August.
 - (b) A record of servicing and maintenance for the firefighting equipment was serviced on 30th April 2024 while the smoke alarms were serviced on the 11th July 2024.
- (4) Notices detailing the steps to take in the event of a fire were displayed throughout the service.