

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DY078
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Name of Service:	The Montessori Circle Clontarf
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Address of Service:	St. Gabriel's Parish Hall, Gabriel Road, Clontarf, Dublin 3, Co. Dublin
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Eircode:	D03 P6F6
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Name of Registered Provider:	Veronica Yeomans
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Service type:	Part Time
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Date(s) of Inspection:	10/12/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	36	PM	Not Applicable
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Child and Family Agency, Unit 4&5 Nexus Building Block 6A, Blanchardstown Corporate Park, Dublin 15
Inspection undertaken by:	L. Jameson and N. Ruddy
Title:	Early Years Inspector and Inspection Registration Manager

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

The Montessori Circle Clontarf is a private service which provides sessional and part time education and care to children aged between 2 to 5 years of age. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme and operates from 9am to 1pm Monday to Friday.

The service operates from two care rooms namely; Room 1 and Room 2 in a multi-use community parish centre on the North side of Dublin City. A shared outdoor play area is available to the rear of the building.

Staffing

The service employs seven staff members including the registered provider and six childcare staff. Staff from another service operated by the registered provider are available to provide support when required.

On the day of the inspection, the registered provider, 5 staff members and a relief staff member worked directly with the children. A support person, employed by a child's family, was also present on the day to support this child's induction into 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, safety and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations as follows:

Regulation 9 Management and Recruitment (1)(2)(3)(4)

Regulation 11 Staffing Levels (1)(2)

Regulation 19 Health, Welfare and Development of Child (1)(a)

Regulation 21 Equipment and Materials

Regulation 25 First Aid (1)(2)(a)(b)

Regulation 26 Fire Safety (1)(a)(b)(4)

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 and inspection registration manager 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
- (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 has a designated person in charge and a named person who is able to deputise as required.
- (b) The person in charge and designated person in charge were on the premises at all times on the day of inspection.

(c) There was a clear management structure in place in the service. All staff knew their own roles and were clear about who were in positions of responsibility.

(2) The files of eight adults employed to work directly with children were reviewed.

(a)(b) The registered provider demonstrated that she had validated two references for each staff member.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for eight 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 two adults who had lived in a country other than Ireland for a period of six months or more as an adult.

(4) Eight staff who worked 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 or a qualification deemed eligible by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth Affairs.

Non-Compliance Information

(3) The review of documentation available demonstrated the following had not been considered prior to staff commencing within the service:

- A review of start dates showed that three staff members commenced in the service prior to references being obtained and validation checks being carried out by the registered provider.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(3) The registered provider revised the recruitment policy and noted that all references must be obtained and verified Prior to the new employees starting date. Prior to any future employees starting date, references will be obtained and verified.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photo of the service's recruitment policy.

Summary Comment

The registered provider has addressed the non-compliance under Regulation 9(3).

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) The registered provider ensured that an adequate number of adults were working directly with the children on the day of inspection. Six staff members including the registered provider were working with 35 children when inspectors arrived unannounced in the service. One adult employed through a home tuition scheme was working with 1 child who was attending the service on a trial day.

(2) The following adult to child ratios were observed during the inspection:

- In Room 1, three adults were caring for 16 children aged 2 years 6 months – 3 years.
- In Room 2, five adults were working with 20 children aged 3 – 5 years.

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

Compliance Information

(1)(a) The following observations were made on how each child's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the daily life in the service:

Basic Needs:

- Children were encouraged to be independent when washing hands and preparing for snack time. This promotes personal hygiene and self-help practices.
- Children's water bottles were readily accessible to them within the care rooms.
- Appropriate nappy changing procedures were observed on the day of inspection. Nappies were changed at scheduled times and more frequently when required. The children who were toilet trained used the toilet independently with discreet supervision provided by staff.

Supporting Relationships Around Children:

- The children were supported to follow their own interests, decision making was encouraged by staff who were observed to actively supervise and guide the children throughout the day.
- The staff were observed to positively reinforce the children's achievements with praise and recognition through positive and encouraging interactions.
- There was a clear sense of familiarity between the staff, the children and their peers. Children appeared content and comfortable in their environment with staff attending to the children's individual and specific needs as required. A child was observed to be upset at intervals on the day of inspection. The staff attended to the child's needs promptly, offering additional support and comfort where required.

Physical and Material Environment:

- The care rooms were designed to support the age and development of the children attending, providing areas of interest such as a home corner with supporting toys and props. Children were provided with opportunities for sensory play, for example, a sand table was set up in Room 1 and accessible to the children on the day of inspection.
- The registered provider stated that children have access to the community hall, providing opportunities for gross motor activities such as yoga. On the day of inspection, the children from Room 2 were accompanied to the hall to rehearse for their Christmas show.
- Children have scheduled outdoor time of up to one hour every day, supporting imaginative and spontaneous play.

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;

- Toys and materials were grouped into defined areas of interest with adequate props and supporting equipment to support engaging spontaneous play experiences.
- Tabletop and Montessori materials were accessible on low level shelving which allowed children to access them independently.
- Child sized tables and chairs were available to the children, facilitating a comfortable area to eat meals and take part in tabletop activities.
- Rest areas were accessible to the children in both care rooms, providing the children with a comfortable place to rest or engage in quiet activities.
- A selection of books were available to the children in both care rooms, supporting language development.

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) One staff member who was observed to work directly with the children on the day of inspection held in-date certification for First Aid Response (FAR) training which ensured that a person with FAR training was immediately available to the children attending the service at all times.

(2)

- (a) The first aid boxes were suitably equipped and easily accessible to the staff
- (b) The first aid boxes were available for the adults caring for the children attending the service at all times.

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 fire drills which had been completed in the service. The records indicated that fire drills were carried out on a regular basis. The last recorded fire drill took place on 23 October 2024. The service was closed to facilitate elections on the date planned for the November fire drill.
- (b) A record was kept of the maintenance of the fire extinguishers in the premises which was certified as having been serviced most recently in July 2024.
- (4) The evacuation procedure was conspicuously displayed on the premises which contained details in relation to the procedure to be conducted in the event of a fire or emergency in the service.