

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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| TUSLA Identifier: | TU2015DY116 | | |
| Name of Service: | Little Acorns Montessori | | |
| Address of Service: | St Gabriels Community Centre, Clontarf, Dublin 3, Co. Dublin | | |
| Eircode: | DO3 P6F6 | | |
| Name of Registered Provider: | Ashling Neligan, Dara Nolan | | |
| Service type: | Sessional | | |
| Date of Inspection: | 26/09/2024 | | |
| No of pre-school children: | AM | 21 | PM N/A |
| 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: | Á Dunne, E Saini | | |
| 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

This sessional service is located in Clontarf, Dublin 3. A service is provided to children aged between 2 and 6 years. The service is one of three childcare facilities which is located within a mixed-use community centre. The service consists of a large open plan room with sanitary accommodation attached to the room. There is a secure outdoor play area to the rear of the premises.

Staffing

The two registered providers work in the service with one staff member, all three were present on the day of 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 regulations as follows:

Regulation 8 Change in circumstances (1)(3)

Regulation 9 Management and recruitment (2)(a)(b)(c)(d), (4).

Regulation 11 Staffing Levels (1)(2).

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

Regulation 21 Equipment and Materials

Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of child

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

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

Regulation 29 Premises (e)

The scope of the inspection included the sessional service large classroom.

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 providers, staff member and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Part II - Registration and Register

Regulation 8 - Notification of change in circumstances

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a temporary pre-school service shall, subject to paragraph (3), notify the Agency in writing of any proposed change in the details in relation to the pre-school service contained in the register pursuant to section 58C(2) of the Act or Regulation 7(2) at least 60 days before it is proposed that the change would take effect.

(3) Where a registered provider has been unable for good and proper reason to notify the Agency within the time specified in paragraph (1) or (2), as the case may be, of a change in the details in relation to the pre-school service contained in the register pursuant to section 58C(2) of the Act or Regulation 7(2), the registered provider shall notify the Agency in writing of the change as soon as possible thereafter.

Non -Compliance Information

(1) The service is currently registered to operate as a sessional service. On the day of inspection, the service was observed to operate from 9am-1pm, with 18 children present in the service when the inspectors entered the service at 9.20am. The service was operating outside the sessional service type hours of operation of 3.5 hours.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The service corresponded with the National Registration Enforcement Panel and documentation including a change of circumstance application were received and processed by the agency. The service is approved to operate as a part-time service from 09:00-13:00hrs.

Summary Comment

The corrective action taken by the service has addressed the non-compliance identified on 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 of three adults were reviewed as part of the inspection, to include the two registered providers who work in the service and one staff.

(2)(a)(b) The registered providers had 2 written references each and ensured that two written and validated references were available in relation to the staff member employed.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for three 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 not required as no adult had lived outside of the state for a period of more than 6 months.

(4) Documentation was available to show that the three adults 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 and Youth Affairs

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) On the day of inspection, there were three adults working with 21 children, aged 2 years 8 months to 5 years old, in the morning up to 1pm, with ratios being maintained.

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

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(a) One child was observed to have their soother in their mouth from time of arrival at 9.25 am to 10am and another child had their soother in their mouth from time of arrival at 9.25 am to lunch time at 10.45 am. Soothers use limits the opportunity for language development and should only be used as a source of comfort if a child requires them.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The Service is highly experienced and very aware of the importance of encouraging the policy of not bringing soothers to the class or where applicable the early removal of soothers in the class. On the day of inspection, the service was dealing with children who were going through challenges with sleeping through the night and the service were working in co-operation with the parent in regard to the use of soothers. The policy for soothers use is in the class and, staff have an awareness of this policy.

Supporting documentation submitted

Policy for soother use.

Summary Comment

Under Regulation 19, the non-compliance outlined above, has been addressed.

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 room was bright and an inviting play space to enable children to explore their environment, with play materials on low level accessible shelves which promoted independence of choice for selection of materials.
- The range of play materials and equipment to include a large variety of Montessori materials were suitable to the age and stage of development of the children attending the service enabling exploration and develop their play opportunities.
- The furniture provided in each care room was low level and suitable to the needs and age of the children. There were sufficient number of low tables and chairs to accommodate children whilst they played and ate in the care room.
- A cosy area with chairs, cushions and a soft rug were present for rest and relaxation.
- The outdoor area consisted of a soft artificial surface and provided opportunities for the children to 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 entrance to the service was secure with a locked door for access on the inspector's arrival, preventing a child from exiting the building unsupervised and an unauthorised adult from entering.
- Emergency exits in the service were clear and unobstructed.
- The pre-school children were supervised at all times during the session.
- The play equipment and materials observed in use by the children on the day of inspection were safe and in good working order.

- The temperature of the care room was recorded as 20.1°C at 9.58am, within the recommended ambient temperature of 18-22°C.
- The outdoor area was enclosed securely for safe and suitable use by the children.

Infection Control:

- The premises and equipment were visually clean.
- Handwashing facilities for hand hygiene included thermostatically controlled warm water, liquid soap, and paper towels.
- Handwashing was completed before lunch, after a gluing activity and after toilet visits.
- Children's snacks and lunches which were brought from home were refrigerated on arrival to the service to prevent spoiling of perishable items.
- Pedal operated lidded bins were available for waste disposal

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

(2) (a) (b) A first aid box was stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position in the service and in the event of an emergency was available to the children in the service.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) On the day of inspection, there was no adult available to the children with valid First Aid Responder training. A sufficient number of adults must be trained with First Aid Responder training and available to children at all times to include cover of breaks, leave and appointments.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (1) One staff member immediately started First Aid Responder training and it was completed on 1 October 2024. The Service have highlighted the expiry date in a visual area to make sure the next application is made before expiry date.

Supporting documentation submitted

- (1) Copy of First Aid Responder training certificate.

Summary Comment

The non-compliance as outlined above, under Regulation 25 has been addressed.

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) The last recorded fire drill of the 38-week sessional service was carried out in the service was 12 June 2024
- (b) A record was available of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment demonstrating it was last serviced on the July 2024 and for the number, type and maintenance of the mains powered smoke alarms in the premises, which were last serviced on the 30 April 2024.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was conspicuously displayed on the premises

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

*A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-
(e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

Non-Compliance Information

(e)

The registered providers did not ensure the premises was equipped with an adequate number of wash hand basins for the number of children attending.

| No. of Wash hand basin's present | No. of Children attending | No. of Wash hand basins required |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1 | 22 | 2 |

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(e) The service has received permission from the Parish to put in extra sink in bathroom. Parish have contacted their plumber and the service is waiting for confirmation of date for commencement of works for a sink to be installed in the bathroom.

Supporting documentation submitted

(e) No evidence.

Summary Comment

Under Regulation 29(e), the non-compliance remains outstanding until the sink has been installed. It is acknowledged that there is a plan in place to have this work completed.