

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DY118
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Name of Service:	Little Footprints Montessori
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Address of Service:	130th Priorswood Scout Den, Clonshaugh Shopping Centre, Clonshaugh, Dublin 17, Co. Dublin
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Eircode:	D17 KW62
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Name of Registered Provider:	Ashling Fitzmaurice
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Service type:	Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	15/05/2023
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No of pre-school children:	AM	17	PM	9
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, 180-189 Lakeshore Drive, Airside Business Park, Swords, Co. Dublin
Inspection undertaken by:	M. McDonnell
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.
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Description of service

Little Footprints Montessori provides a part time and sessional service from 9.00am to 1.00pm Monday to Friday, for children aged between 0 to 6 years old. The service is located in a Scout's hall which comprises of a large open plan space, in which a Montessori is set up on a daily basis. There is an outdoor area at the side of the building. The registered provider also has a registered school age service in operation on the premises on the conclusion of the part time service.

Staffing

The registered provider works in the service on a daily basis and employs 3 staff members who work directly with the children. There were no new staff members employed since the last inspection in September 2020.

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/ premises and facilities. The inspections may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9 – 9 (1)(a)(b)(c)(2)(c)(4), 11, 19, 20,22, 25, 26 and 28. On inspection an additional non-compliance was identified under Regulation 8. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 9 - management and recruitment, 9 (1)(a)(b)(c)(2)(c)(4); Regulation 19 – Health, Welfare and development of a child; Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play; Regulation 22 –Food and Drink; Regulation 25 – First Aid; Regulation 26- Fire Safety Measures; and Regulation 28 – Insurance. Regulation 11- staffing levels was assessed in the care room that was in operation on the day of inspection.

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 registered provider, staff 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.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider failed to notify the Agency in writing of a change to the operational hours of their pre-school service. The service is registered to operate from 9.00am to 1.00pm. However, on the day of inspection attendance records showed, and the registered provider confirmed, that children attend the service until 2.00 pm.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The service has decided to revert to 9am until 1pm instead of changing hours in writing. In future any change of times will be provided in writing.

Supporting documentation submitted

Attendance log showing hours of attendance as 9 am to 1 pm.

Summary Comment

The actions submitted by the registered provider, in their corrective and preventive action plan, have addressed the non-compliance identified on 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-

- (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,

(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) On the inspector's unannounced arrival the person in charge of the service was available.

(b) A roster was available to demonstrate that the person in charge or designated deputy was available on the premises at all times.

(c) There was a clearly defined management structure in the service.

There were no new staff members working with the pre-school children since the last inspection in September 2020.

(2)(c) All three staff members and the registered provider had a Garda Vetting disclosure in place.

(4) The inspector reviewed documentation which showed that the three staff members and the registered provider, who worked directly with the children, held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education above Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework.

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 there were sufficient staff working with the children.

(2) The registered provider and two staff members were working with the 17 children, aged 3-5 years old, attending on a sessional basis. The roster showed that two staff members were then available for the 9 children attending on a part-time basis.

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 inspector observed staff interacting with children in a kind and gentle manner. Throughout the period of inspection staff sat with children and engaged with them whilst they played and ate. On the inspector's arrival staff and children were in small groups, building blocks, completing construction and playing with small toys. The children played outdoors on the day of inspection and staff played games with them at this time and were heard chatting with them about friends and family.

The children were observed to be confident in their environment, choosing and replacing items and toys independently. Whilst they ate lunch children were given choices for where they sat and after lunch children were given choices of listening to a story or playing.

Staff discussed regular communication with parents and were aware of children's individual needs and supports. They described work with allied health professionals and had documented observations to support individual children's development.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

(1) *Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-*

- (a) *having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child 19 to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day, and*
- (b) *there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.*

(2) *A registered provider-*

- (a) *of a full day care service, a part-time day care service, a sessional preschool service or a childminding service that is registered for the first time on or after 30 June 2016, or*
- (b) *of a full day care service, a part-time day care service, a sessional preschool service or a childminding service that moves premises on or after 30 June 2016,*

shall ensure that a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the preschool children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises.

(3) *A registered provider of a full day care service, a part-time day care service or a childminding service, other than such a service to which paragraph (2) applies, shall ensure that-*

- (a) *a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the pre-school children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises, or*

(b) Where no such space is provided, the pre-school children attending the service have access on a daily basis to a suitable outdoor space.

Compliance Information

(1)(a) The inspector observed that the layout of the room supported children's play. There were tables available for the children to complete activities at such as jigsaws, sorting activities and drawing. Picture floor mats were available for children to play comfortably on the floor with items such as construction blocks. There was open floor space available for children to play with dolls and buggies. A home corner was available with a kitchen set, small table and accessories. The children had access to an outdoor play area on site.

(b) Two rest areas were available to the children. One was a small tent with soft mats by the reading area and the other comprised of soft mats with small toys. Whilst the registered provider stated no children had required sleep, sleep facilities in the form of mats were available to the children should they be required.

(3) An outdoor play area was provided to the side of the property. A grass area surrounded by secure fencing was available to the children. A small, paved area, with fencing was also available should the grass area become inaccessible. The children had access to slides, basketball net and balls in the outdoor area.

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 inspector observed that the equipment in the room was suitable to the stage of development of the children. There were defined interest areas to support imaginative play. For example, there was a home area with a kitchen, table and chairs and food items, babies and prams. A mat with road marking provided the opportunity for play with the cars and trucks that were available. The equipment was easily accessible to the children to promote independence, with children being observed to take and replace items of their own choice throughout the inspection.

Sufficient sized tables and chairs were available for the children to play and eat their snacks and lunch provided from home at. Children were observed to be sitting comfortably whilst they ate. Adult sized chairs were available for staff to sit with children during play and whilst they ate.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 22 – Food and drink

A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.

Non-Compliance Information

- (1) The registered provider did not ensure adequate meals and snacks were offered to the children. The children were offered one meal and snack whilst attending the service. Two meals and one snack are required for children attending on a part time basis.
- (2) The registered provider's healthy eating policy did not adequately support a balanced and nutritious diet. The policy did not contain the following information;
 - The service provided part time and sessional care.
 - A menu is referenced but no menu is required as the main meal is provided by parents.
 - Food is appropriate to the age, stage and development of the children.
 - That food is available to children should they become hungry between meals.
 - Food portion size are appropriate to the ages of the children.
 - Parents are advised if their child has not eaten well.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider stated that they will provide sessional children with a snack in the morning and main meal provided by parents. Part time children will have a snack in the morning and a meal provided by parents and a meal provided by the service.

The registered provider stated that they have updated the healthy eating policy in line with guidelines provided to the service.

Supporting documentation submitted

Updated healthy eating policy

Summary Comment

The actions submitted by the registered provider, in their corrective and preventive action plan, have addressed the non-compliance identified on inspection. The actions stated will be reviewed on the next inspection.

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) Suitably equipped first aid boxes were easily accessible to adults and available on the premises.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider did not ensure that there was a staff member with certification in First Aid Responder (FAR) training available at all times to the children attending the service. The roster demonstrated that the member of staff with FAR training was not available between 12.00 to 13.00pm on a daily basis.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The service has booked two staff members on FAR courses to cover all breaks and absences.

Supporting documentation submitted

Attendance records showed reduction in hours of attendance, delayed break time.

FAR course booking confirmation

Summary Comment

The actions submitted by the registered provider, in their corrective and preventive action plan, have addressed the non-compliance identified on inspection.

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 written record was available of the fire drills completed in the service. The last recorded fire drill took place on 24 April 2023.
- (b) A record was maintained of the number, type and maintenance record of the firefighting equipment and mains powered smoke alarms on the premises. The firefighting equipment was last serviced on the 26 October 2022 and the mains powered smoke alarms were last serviced 4 July 2022.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider had insurance for 26 children attending on a part time basis from 28 March 2023 to 27 March 2024.