

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DY125
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Name of Service:	Little Stars Montessori
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Address of Service:	Clontarf Rugby Club, Castle Avenue, Clontarf, Dublin 3, Co. Dublin
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Eircode:	D03 K4K3
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Name of Registered Provider:	Aoife Caulfield, Paula Lynch
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	03/10/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	12	PM	No.
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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:	E Hosford
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 Stars Montessori is a private childcare service which provides sessional education and care to children aged from 2 to 6 years of age from 9am to 12:30pm Monday to Friday and participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme. The service operates from a room in a multi-purpose building owned by Clontarf Rugby Club on the Northside of Dublin city. The service has access to an enclosed outdoor play area to the front of the premises.

Staffing

The service employs three staff to include the two registered providers, and a staff member employed under the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) scheme. Three staff were working with the children during the 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

The unannounced inspection focused on an examination of compliance under The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

- Regulation 9 Management and recruitment (2)(a)(b)(c)(d),(4)(6A),
- Regulation 11 Staffing Levels (1)(2)(8)(a),
- Regulation 15 Record of a Pre-School Child,
- Regulation 21 Equipment and Materials,
- Regulation 25 First Aid and
- Regulation 28 Insurance.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulation 15 Record of a Pre-School Child.

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

(6) Paragraph (4) shall not apply before 1 September 2021 to a person who-

(a) has signed a declaration on or before 30 June 2016 to the effect that he or she intends to retire from employment in a pre-school service before 1 September 2021, and

(b) is in possession of a letter from the Minister confirming that paragraph (4) shall not apply to him or her before that date.

(6A) is inserted by S.I. No.632 of 2016 CHILD CARE ACT 1991 (EARLY YEARS SERVICES) (AMENDMENT)

REGULATIONS 2016 which states; Regulation 9 of the Child Care Act 1991 (Early

Years Services) Regulations (S.I. No. 221 of 2016) is amended - in paragraph (4), by the substitution of “paragraphs (5), (6) and (6A)” for “paragraphs (5) and (6)”, and (b) by the insertion of the following paragraph after paragraph (6): “

(6A) Paragraph (4) shall not apply to an employee of a registered provider where - (a) the registered provider receives funding for the employment of the employee pursuant to a scheme funded by the Minister and known as the Access and Inclusion Model, and (b) the employment of the employee is for the purpose of providing support, pursuant to the scheme referred to in subparagraph (a), for a child attending the service to enable the child to participate in the programme known as the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) funding Programme.”

Compliance Information

(2) The staff files of three staff employed in the service were reviewed.

(a)(b) Two validated written references were available for the two registered providers and the staff member from recent past employers or a source other than a past employer.

(c) Garda Vetting disclosures were available for three staff members. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) International police vetting was not required as documentary evidence confirmed that the three staff members had not resided outside of the jurisdiction for more than 6 months as an adult.

(4) On review of documentation available the three staff members working with the children had evidence to demonstrate that they held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications.

(6)(A) One staff member was employed under the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) scheme.

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

(1) The registered providers ensured that there was an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the service.

(3) The correct adult/child ratio was maintained in the service throughout the inspection. There were 3 adults caring for 12 children during the session.

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) to (i)

On review of the documentation relating to a sample of 10 children's files within the service, the required information and detail was available and complete.

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 care room was spacious with equipment and materials appropriate to the age and development of the children. The tables and chairs provided for snacks and tabletop activities were low level and suitable for the children present.
- Areas of interest with associated play materials were accessible and available to the children to include, home area, construction space, montessori area, rest and relaxation corner, sensory tray and arts and crafts.
- The children had freedom of movement to explore the areas and undertake activities and games with the support and guidance of their teachers.
- The enclosed all weather outdoor play area consisted of an artificial grass surface. The children had access to balls and parachutes with space for games and running.

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) Two staff members held First Aid Responder (FAR) certification which expired in November 2025.

(2)(a) and (b) A first aid box was available in the service and suitably equipped and accessible to the adults responsible for caring for the children attending the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service was adequately insured to provide a sessional service to the children with an expiry date of 27 March 2025.