

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015DY365
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Little Steps Montessori
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	14a Beech Hill Estate, Donnybrook, Dublin 4, Co. Dublin
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<b>Eircode:</b>	D04 YR53
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Elaine McGrath
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<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	16 January 2023
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	10	PM	n/a
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	The Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, St. John's Road West, Dublin 8
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	R. Brien
<b>Title:</b>	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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not applicable
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### Description of service

Little Steps Montessori is registered to provide sessional care for children from 2 to 6 years of age. The service operates from 09:00 to 12:30, Monday to Friday.

The service operates from an adapted unit adjacent to a domestic dwelling in a residential area of Dublin south. There is a fully enclosed outdoor play area to the rear of the premises.

### Staffing

The service currently employs two staff including the registered provider. There were two staff working directly with the children on the day of 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/ health, welfare and development of child/ safety/ premises and facilities. The inspections may also focus on other areas as required.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 16 Record in relation to Pre-school service (k).

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 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

(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

(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)(b) The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required who were both on the premises throughout the inspection.

(2) Following a discussion with the registered provider it was confirmed that one new member of staff commenced working in the service since the last inspection on 21 January 2020. Documentation was reviewed in respect of this adult and met regulatory requirements as follows:

(c) A Garda vetting disclosure from the National Vetting Bureau of An Garda Síochána was available for the adult.

(4) A record was available evidencing that the staff member who was employed to work directly with the children had a letter of eligibility to practice from the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and & Youth (DCEDIY).

## Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a)(b) It is acknowledged that one validated reference from a reputable source was available. However, there was no evidence to show that a second reference from a past employer had been validated.

(3) The registered provider did not take appropriate measures to ensure that all employees were suitable to work in an early years service prior to their commencement. The registered provider did not ensure that references were validated for this staff member prior to them commencing work in the service.

## Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

### **Corrective and Preventive Action**

The second reference was available on file but omitted provider's signature. This has been rectified. From now on all staff files will have an up-to-date list including staff references which will be ticked off so this error won't occur again. Ensure all staff are suitable and references signed off on.

### **Supporting documentation submitted**

No supporting documentation submitted.

## Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions as stated by the registered provider have been deemed to address this non-compliance. This action will be assessed on the next inspection.

### 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.*

*(8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-*

*(c) a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that, where the person in charge operates the service single-handedly, a second person familiar with the operation of the service and in a position to provide assistance to the person in charge in operating the service is, at all times, within close distance of the service and available to attend the service to assist the person in charge in the event of an emergency.*

#### Compliance Information

(1) An adequate number of adults were working directly with the children at all times during the inspection.

(3) The minimum ratio of adults to children for sessional care services was adhered to at all times during the inspection. There were ten children attending the service being supervised by two adults on the day of inspection.

(8)(c) Not applicable, the service is not operated single-handedly.

### 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 record was available in writing in respect of each pre-school child registered to attend the service which contained the information required in (a) to (i) above.

## Part IV – Information and Records

### Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

*(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:*

- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

### Compliance Information

(h) Details of the attendance of each child in the service were recorded at the time of entering and leaving the service.

(i) The staff roster was available and accurately reflected the adults working in the service on the day of inspection.

(k) A sample of accident and incidents records were reviewed. These records were signed by staff and parents and were completed appropriately.

## 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
- (b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.

### Compliance Information

The service had a healthy eating policy in place and staff reported that children bring in their lunch from home. Lunch took place at 11:00. The service had a helper system in place for a number of responsibilities, one of which was handing out lunches. Each child had a place mat with art work that they had completed. Children were observed engaging in conversation with their peers and staff during their meal and staff supported children who needed assistance with their lunch.

Children were encouraged and supported to be independent including using the toilet independently and cleaning up after their play and meal.

The service had a key person system in place and staff demonstrated a good awareness of the needs of each child in their care and responded to children's cues promptly. Staff interacted warmly with the children in their care throughout the inspection and were observed supporting children in their play. Staff were observed to use distraction, gentle tones and praise when promoting positive behaviour in line with the service's positive behaviour management policy. The atmosphere in the service appeared calm and relaxed.

Transitions within the service were managed well and children appeared to be familiar with the daily routine. An egg timer was used to manage the transition between play and lunchtime. The service had a visual routine in place which was displayed at the children's level.

The staff described how they communicate with parents daily about their child at arrival and collection time. The service also uses an online messaging system to communicate with parents.

Children's language development was supported through one to one and group discussions, songs and storytelling which were observed during the inspection. Children's choices were respected with children given the opportunity to choose their own play equipment and activities during free play and outdoor play.

The care room was arranged into defined areas of interest providing children with the freedom to play and explore. Designated areas of interest included a home corner, construction toys, jigsaws, a rest area with books, Montessori equipment and mark making stations. The care room provided a range of developmentally appropriate play experiences for the children and was adequately resourced with a variety of materials. Low level tables and chairs were available in the care room. Family photos and a birthday wall with children's photos were displayed in the care room.

A fully enclosed outdoor area was located to the rear of the premises and had artificial grass surfacing. A range of developmentally appropriate play equipment was provided in the outdoor play area. Children were observed accessing the outdoor play area on the day of inspection and engaged in energetic and imaginative play, including running and sand 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

The inspector found by observation of practice, review of documentation, discussion with staff and inspection of the premises that the registered provider had taken the following steps to safeguard children attending:

#### General Safety:

- The entrance door to the service was adequately secured to ensure the safety of the children within and to avoid unauthorised persons accessing the service or children exiting unsupervised.
- Hand sanitisers, medicines and cleaning agents were stored safely out of reach of children.
- All storage facilities were inaccessible to children.
- The toys and play equipment observed in use by the children on the day of inspection appeared in good working order.

#### Infection Control:

- Liquid soap, warm water and paper towels were available to facilitate hand washing. Staff were observed to carry out hand washing as appropriate. The children were supported to wash their hands at regular intervals including after using the toilet and before meals.
- The service had an Infection Control policy in place. A cleaning schedule was in place to ensure the service, equipment and materials were regularly cleaned.

#### Non-Compliance Information

#### Infection Control:

1. The pedal operated bin in the care room was not working and staff and children were observed lifting the lid of the bin to dispose of waste.

#### Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective & Preventive Action

#### Infection Control:

1. The pedal bin was replaced the next day. Circle time and a lesson was planned around the bin and infection control to remind children and staff. This will be continued throughout the year.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

### Infection Control:

Photographic evidence was presented to demonstrate the corrective and action submitted by the registered provider.

### Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions as stated by the registered provider have been deemed to address this non-compliance.

## 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) A person trained in first aid was immediately available to the children at all times on the day of inspection.

(2)

- (a) A first aid box was safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous location within the service.
- (b) A first aid box was available to the adults and children in 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 written record was available detailing monthly fire drills that had taken place in the service. The last fire drill had been recorded as undertaken on the 05 December 2022.
  - (b) The number, type and maintenance record of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises was available. The maintenance records for the fire equipment and smoke alarms were dated 12 December 2022.
  - (4) The procedures to be followed during a fire drill and in the event of a fire were displayed in a conspicuous location within 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 evidence of insurance cover valid until 27 November 2023. The insurance provides cover for a sessional service accommodating 22 children.