

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015FL044
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Name of Service:	Bualadh Bos Montessori
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Address of Service:	St. Patricks Hall, Ballyboughal, Co. Dublin
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Eircode:	A41 CF66
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Name of Registered Provider:	Bruce Higgins
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	10/10/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	29	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate, 180-189 Lakeshore Drive, Airside Business Park, Swords, Co Dublin K67 Y5C6.
Inspection undertaken by:	S. Cully & S. Early O'Brien
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

Bualadh Bos Montessori is a privately owned and operated sessional service which participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme. The service provides sessional preschool Monday to Thursday for 41 weeks of the year and caters for a maximum of 33 preschool children from 2 -6 years of age. The service is operated from a community hall in a village setting in north County Dublin and has exclusive use of the indoor facilities during the operational hours of the preschool service. The community hall is sub divided to make 2 distinct areas to facilitate 2 preschool groups for periods throughout the day. The rear of the premises opens onto the outer perimeter of a pitch and putt course, a portion of which is made available to the preschool for outdoor play.

Staffing

On the day of the inspection there were four staff working directly with the children, including the service manager. Two members of staff were on leave. The registered provider does not work on the premises on a daily basis and completes administration duties off-site. The registered provider was present for the closing meeting.

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 inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulation 15, Records of a preschool 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 inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, person in charge, 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
- (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

(1)(a) The service manager is the designated person in charge of the service and there is a named person appointed to deputise as required.

(b) The service manager was present and in charge of the service when the inspector arrived unannounced at 10.00am on the morning of the inspection and was present in the service for the duration of the inspection. The registered provider was present for the closing meeting when the preschool session had ended.

On the day of inspection, the files for 6 staff members including 1 staff member employed in a relief capacity were reviewed.

(2)(a) & (b) There were 2 written and validated references available for the 6 staff members.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for the 6 staff members who work directly with the children, including the relief staff member. 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 for the 6 staff members whose files were reviewed, according to their records and curriculum vitae.

(4) The Registered Provider ensured that all adults working directly with the children in the preschool service held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 - 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

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) There was an adequate number of staff working with the children on the day of the inspection.

(3) The adult to child ratio was correct and appropriately maintained in the service throughout the inspection. There were 4 adults caring for 29 children aged 2 years 4 months to 4 years 7 months.

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.*

(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-

- (a) a parent or guardian of a pre-school child but only in respect of the record relating to that child,*
- (b) an employee who is authorised in that behalf by the registered provider, and*
- (c) an authorised person.*

Compliance Information

(1) Eleven children's records were sampled and reviewed. The records contained the required information as set out in Regulation 15 (1) (a) to (i).

(3)(c) The records were available and open to inspection by the inspection, an authorised person.

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 are examples on how each child's learning, development and well-being was observed being facilitated during the inspection:

Basic needs:

- When the inspector arrived unannounced at the preschool the children were engaged in activities and there was a friendly atmosphere in the service. The children appeared to be familiar with their daily routine with an understanding of what was happening next such as a clean-up time, tabletop activity and snack time.
- Throughout the session the staff were observed providing the children with warm, caring and nurturing interactions.
- Mealtimes were relaxed with children given ample time to eat food at their own pace while chatting together and with staff. Staff provided the children with assistance when needed. Food was provided by parents of the children attending. Children's water bottles were available and accessible to the children throughout the session.
- Children's pull ups were changed if required and toilet trained children were provided with discreet supervision and support while using the sanitary facilities.
- The children had access to sensory and natural materials, and during the session engaged in activities with playdough and clay.
- The children have access to an outdoor space on a daily basis. However, on the day of the inspection the staff members explained how the daily plan was revised due to the weather and staff absence. An alternative physical activity, dance party, was planned and documented on the planning board.

Supporting relationships around children:

- The staff facilitated relationship building by bringing the children together as a large group to sing songs or tell stories of their choice. Children's confidence and self-esteem was nurtured through praise and feedback. One child requested to sing a song with 2 other children, and the staff and children sang along with them. Children's requests for songs at the dance party was responded to with enthusiasm. This practice supports children to feel recognised and valued in their learning environment.
- The children's photographs and work were displayed in the care room, reflecting the children's identity, and encouraging children's sense of belonging in the preschool.

Physical and material environment:

- There was a variety of materials, including Montessori materials, available to the children which were stored on low level shelving.
- Suitable furniture for children was available such as appropriately sized tables and chairs.
- The service had visual aids available in the room to support children's communication and participation such as a visual routines and emotions chart.
- There is access to an outdoor play space, with the perimeter set by cones. Toys and equipment is brought outside when in use.

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

Reasonable measures were taken to ensure the health, safety and welfare of the children was maintained in the following ways.

General Safety:

- The external doors and internal door of the service was appropriately service were appropriately secured to prevent an unauthorised person from gaining access to the children and prevent children from exiting the premises unsupervised.
- The water temperature in the wash hand basins did not exceed the recommended maximum water temperature of 43°C. This reduced the risk of scalding for the children in attendance.

- The kitchen was not accessible to the children.
- Cleaning agents were stored out of the reach of children.

Infection Control:

- The premises, furniture and play materials were in good hygienic condition and a cleaning schedule was on display in the service.
- Thermostatically controlled running warm water, liquid soap and single use paper towels were available at all wash hand basins to support effective hand hygiene procedures in the service.
- The staff were observed to follow the services nappy changing policy. Disposable aprons and gloves were available and in use.
- The children and the staff were observed to wash their hands prior to snack time and following nappy changing and toileting.
- Children's food from home was stored in the refrigerator.

Administration of Medication:

- Based on discussion with staff and review of files, no children in attendance required medication or a medical care plan.
- No children were observed having or requiring medication on the day.

Fire Safety:

- Emergency exits were unobstructed.

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 responder (FAR) training was immediately available to the children attending the pre-school service.
- (2)(a)(b) A suitably equipped first aid box for children was available and safely stored on the premises.

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.

Compliance Information

- (1)(a) A record was kept of fire drills that had taken place on the premises. The most recent fire drill took place 02/10/24.
- (b) A record was kept of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises. The fire extinguishers were certified as having been last serviced in February 2024. The smoke alarm system was certified as having been last serviced 01/07/2024.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured the service was adequately insured with a policy cover in place for 35 children attending the service with an expiry date of 27/03/2025.