

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015FL158
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Little Boots Montessori
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	29 Dal Riada, Portmarnock, Co. Dublin
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<b>Eircode:</b>	D13 YR66
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Mairin O' Donovan
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<b>Service type:</b>	Part Time, Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	14/01/2025
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	13	PM	Not applicable.
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor, Unit 4/5 The Nexus Building Blanchardstown Corporate Park Ballycoolin Dublin 15
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	Y. Kelly and A.M. Coyle
<b>Title:</b>	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).	
<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not applicable.

### Description of service

Little Boots Montessori is a privately owned early years service that provides a part-time and sessional service to children aged from 2 to 6 years of age. The service caters for a maximum of 14 children and opening hours are from 9am to 1pm Monday to Friday. The preschool is situated in a mature residential setting in Portmarnock in north County Dublin. It is purpose built and located to the rear of the registered providers private residence and consists of one care room; the Montessori Room, a sanitary area and an enclosed outdoor play area.

### Staffing

The registered provider employs two staff members, including the person in charge who work directly with the children and a staff member to provide cover as needed. The registered provider works in the service overseeing the day to day operation of the service and also works directly with the children. There were two adults present on the day of the inspection including the registered provider and the person in charge.

### 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 the child and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required. The following regulations were reviewed:

Regulation 9 (1)(2)(4) Management and Recruitment.

Regulation 11 (1)(2) (8) Staffing Levels.

Regulation 15 (1) (a-i) (3) (c) Record of a Pre-school Child.

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

Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety, and Welfare of Child.

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

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

As a result, the scope of the inspection included the Montessori room. 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 inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, the person in charge, 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
- (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-

- (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 had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as needed.
- (b) The registered provider was present and in charge of the service when the inspectors arrived unannounced to the service and was present for the duration of the inspection.
- (c) The service had a clear management structure in place with clear roles and responsibilities outlined.
- (2) Conversation with the registered provider and review of the staff files showed that the registered provider employed two adults to work in the service. The files of the registered provider and two adults were reviewed, and the following was recorded.

(b) Six written and verified references were available from a reputable source other than a past employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all staff, the registered provider and for the two adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring service to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) International Police vetting was not required as no adult had lived outside of the state for a period of more than six months.

(4) Documentation was available to show that the registered provider and two adults who work directly with the children 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, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth.

### 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.*

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

*(a) a registered provider of a pre-school service other than a child-minding service or a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that there are at least 2 adults on the premises at all times,*

### Compliance Information

(1) On the day of the inspection there was an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the service. There were 2 adults caring for 13 children on the morning of the inspection.

(2) The registered provider ensured that the correct adult to child ratios were maintained in the service.

The following adult to child ratios were observed during the inspection:

- In the Montessori Room there were 2 adults, the registered provider and the person in charge caring for 13 children aged 2 to 5 years of age.

(8) (a) The registered provider ensured that there are 2 adults on the premises at all times.

### 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-*  
*(c) an authorised person.*

## Compliance Information

- (1) A sampling process was used in relation to the children’s records. All of the 7 sampled registration forms were appropriately completed with the required information as specified in sub-sections (a) to (i) in this regulation.
- (3) The children’s records were available and open for review by the inspector as 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) Each child’s learning and development and wellbeing was facilitated within the preschool in the following ways:

### **Basic needs:**

- Snacks are provided for the children by the registered provider. Snack consisted of crackers, cheese, ham and fruit including pears, apples and blueberries. The children were offered water to drink with their snack. The mealtime experience was observed to a leisurely sociable occasion, where children sat together with the registered provider and chatted. The menu was displayed on a chalk board and real plates and napkins were provided and children were given choice about what they would like to eat. The registered provider sang songs with the children during this time.
- Identity and belonging were promoted in the service. For example, there was a ‘Family Tree’ display, birthday chart display, and the children’s artwork was displayed in the Montessori room. In addition, each child had their own cubby for their pictures to be stored during the session.
- There was a cosy area, the ‘Reading Garden’ observed in the Montessori room for the children to relax in as required. The cosy area was equipped with cushions and a selection of books for reading and relaxation.
- Children’s independence was supported. Children were encouraged to put on coats and hats before going outside to play. Throughout the session, children were given responsibilities such as handing out the snacks to each child and calling children for circle time.

### **Supporting relationships:**

- Staff demonstrated warm and caring interactions with the children. Peer interactions were warm and caring. There was a welcoming atmosphere in the service.
- At collection time, parents were greeted at the door by the registered provider.
- Transitions were observed to be well managed; children were involved in transitions such as calling children for circle time. The children engaged well with tidying up, putting items away independently.
- There was a monthly plan and the routine was reflected in practice. Routines provided for predictability and comfort for young children.

### **Physical and Material Environment:**

- There was a sufficient number of low tables and chairs to accommodate children whilst they played and ate in the Montessori room.
- There were many Montessori materials; rods, cylinders, cubes and numbers which provided opportunities for early numeracy learning. In addition, there were art materials such as paint, paint brushes, glue, crayons and pens, scissors and copybooks, to support children's creativity and mark making. There were tabletop materials such as threading and jigsaws to support fine motor development. Small world items included a dolls house, farm, farm animals, wild animals and dinosaurs. There was a theme table displaying items to introduce the 'solar system' theme with figures of astronauts and rockets and books about space. There were spacesuits hanging up in room. Children were observed at tabletop activities including threading and colouring in.
- Children were observed playing in the outdoor play area. In the outdoor play area, there was a house which provided opportunities for dramatic play and a slide and bicycles which promoted gross motor and fundamental movement skills. Children were appropriately dressed for the cold weather.

### **Programme of Activities:**

- There is a Montessori curriculum in place and the registered provider and person in charge have training to implement the Montessori method.
- There was a monthly plan which outlined the following: the solar system, shapes, numbers in Irish and Lámh signs.

- Adults facilitated circle time and read stories to the children which linked in which the solar system and space theme.
- Adult's facilitated music and movement and action songs with the children and the children danced to 'sleeping bunnies' song. This promoted gross motor development and fundamental movement skills.

### 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:

- On arrival to the service, the inspectors observed that the door was secure and monitored by staff using a bell.
- The blind cord on the door in the care room was observed to be secured.
- Cleaning agents were stored safely and not accessible to children.
- The outdoor play area was securely gated and fenced. The surface of the outdoor area was covered with artificial grass.

##### Infection Control:

- Children's lunches provided by the registered provider were refrigerated to prevent spoiling of perishable items.
- The sanitary area was equipped with liquid soap and warm water and individual cloth towels for children's use. Children were observed to hand wash before lunchtime, and this was encouraged and supported by staff.
- Pedal operated bins were available for disposal of contaminated items.

##### Administration of Medication:

- There were forms available to record the details of any medication administered should the need arise. No child required medication to be administered on the day of inspection.

##### Fire Safety:

- The fire drill was displayed on the wall. Monthly fire drill reports are kept.
- Fire exits were clearly labelled and 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) The registered provider ensured that an adequate number of staff were trained in First Aid Response (FAR) and a staff member trained in FAR was available on the premises throughout the opening hours of the service.

(2)(a)(b) An adequately stocked first aid box was observed in the care room of the service. This was stored out of the reach of the children but available to staff as needed.

### 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 record of monthly fire drills was available on the premises with the last drill dated as having been carried out on 9 January 2025.

(b) The number, type and maintenance record for firefighting equipment and smoke alarms were available.

Firefighting equipment was last serviced in September 2024. Smoke alarms were last serviced in September 2024.

(4) Fire evacuation procedures were displayed in the service.