

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015FL284		
Name of Service:	Sticky Fingers Montessori		
Address of Service:	Skerries Community Centre, Dublin Road, Skerries, Co. Dublin		
Eircode:	K34 FX61		
Name of Registered Provider:	Sharon Guinane		
Service type:	Part Time, Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	08/12/2025		
No of pre-school children:	AM	47	PM 6
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate 2 nd Floor, Unit 4/5, The Nexus Building Blanchardstown Corporate Park, Ballycoolin Dublin 15 D15 CF9K		
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.		

Description of service

Sticky Fingers Montessori school is a community service that provides sessional and part-time care to children aged between two and six years of age from 9.00am to 1:30pm and 1:30-4:30pm Monday to Friday. The service operates from three care rooms located in Skerries community centre. The children had access to a secure outdoor area to the rear of the premises and all-weather pitches adjacent to the centre.

Staffing

The registered provider is the overall manager of the community centre and employs ten staff members to work in the three care rooms. This includes a designated person in charge, six childcare staff and three staff employed under the community education scheme. On the day of inspection, a student was present in the service on placement.

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.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 8,9,11,19,23,25 and 26.

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, person in charge, 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.

Compliance Information

(1) The service was operating within its registration status. The registered provider is aware of the requirement to notify the agency if they propose to change any details of the service.

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)(b) The service had a designated person in charge and named persons to deputise as required. The person in charge was present in the service when the inspector arrived unannounced and remained in the service for the duration of the inspection.

(c) There was a clear management structure in place and staff were aware of their role and responsibilities.

(2) The staff files of ten staff members employed in the service and one student on placement were reviewed. Garda vetting disclosures for all staff were also reviewed.

The registered provider had completed the following checks:

- (a) Twelve validated written references were available from a past employer.
- (b) Nine validated written references were available from a source other than a past employer.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for 11 staff members employed in the service and the student on placement. The service adhered to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years for all staff employed.
- (d) Police vetting was available from two countries in respect of two staff members who had resided outside the jurisdiction for a period of more than 6 consecutive months as an adult.
- (4) Nine staff members who work directly with the early years children had documentary evidence of 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, Disability and Equality.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a)(b)

A second validated written reference was not available for the student on placement.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(a)(b)

In response to the non-compliance the registered provider has stated that the required information has been obtained and going forward they will ensure that this is available for all students in the service.

Supporting documentation submitted

(2)(a)(b)

A second validated written reference was not available for the student on placement.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non compliances identified in regulation 9 have been adequately addressed.

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 inspection there was an adequate number of staff members working directly with the children attending the service.

(2) The adult to child ratios were correct in the service when the inspector arrived unannounced and remained so throughout the inspection.

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

- In Class 1 there were 3 adults caring for 18 children aged 3 to 5 years of age in the morning.
- In Class 2 there were 4 adults caring for 16 children aged 3- 5 years of age in the morning.
- In Class 3 there were 3 adults and 1 student caring for 14 children aged 2-4 years of age in the morning.
- In Class 4 there were 2 adults caring for 6 children aged 3 to 5 years of age in the afternoon.

(8)(a) The registered providers ensured that 2 adults were present on the premises at all times, as evidenced in staff rosters maintained in the service

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)

Basic Needs:

- Healthy eating was promoted within the service with staff working with parents and children to encourage healthy packed lunches. Drinking water was freely available to the children throughout the session. The staff members sat with the children at snack time encouraging conversations and extending interactions.
- The children were observed using the toilet under supervision, with assistance provided by the staff member when necessary.
- Children were observed moving freely within the care rooms and taking a break from activities and relaxing in a rest area in the care rooms which was equipped with soft matting, cushions and a library.

Physical and Material Environment:

- All equipment and materials in the care room were appropriate to the age and development of the children. The furniture provided in the room was low level and age appropriate with toys and play materials accessible. The layout of the care rooms reflected the Montessori ethos, in that different shelves had materials for specific purposes such as mathematic, sensorial, culture, language etc. They layout accommodated the safe movement as they took materials to and from the shelves. There was also floor space to accommodate children working on the floor on mats
- An outdoor area was available to the rear of the service and staff provided the children with games, chalk and balls. A larger all-weather pitch adjacent to the centre was also used by the children and enabled them to run and play games.

Supporting Relationships:

- The staff members demonstrated sensitivity and responsiveness to each child's individual needs, likes and preferences, and frequently initiated conversations with the children, responded meaningfully to their verbal and non-verbal cues and provided regular praise and encouragement using a gentle tone of voice.
- The children appeared confident and comfortable in their environment and were observed working well together during their play and chosen activities.
- Staff members were familiar with the children and their families and engaged with parents at drop off and collection. Staff used an electronic application to update parents on activities undertaken, planned curriculum and learning opportunities experienced by the children.
- Staff worked well together in providing care to the children and transitions between activities were observed to be calm and child led.

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:

- The main door of each care room was locked and was closely monitored by staff who granted access.
- The premises and outdoor play area was appropriately secured to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the service.
- The care rooms were observed to be suitable and safe with all cleaning agents and sharp implements out of children's reach.
- Low level windows and all blind cords in the care room were secured.
- The water temperature in the sanitary accommodation in the service did not exceed the recommended maximum water temperature of 43°C. This reduced the risk of scalding the children in attendance.

Infection Control:

- Adequate hand-washing facilities were available in the sanitary facilities used by the children, these included thermostatically controlled hot water, liquid soap, paper towels and bins.
Children were supported to clean their hands before lunch and after using the toilet.
- A refrigerator was available in the care rooms to refrigerate perishable food items from home.

- The service was observed to be clean and well maintained with cleaning schedules in operation within the care rooms and sanitary facilities. The care room and sanitary facility had open windows to extract any stale air.

Fire Safety:

- Documentary evidence was available to demonstrate that monthly fire drills were completed in the service and all fire equipment to include fire extinguishers and smoke detectors were serviced yearly. The designated fire exits were illuminated and clear of any obstructions throughout the 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

(1) The registered provider ensured that five staff members were trained in First Aid Responder (FAR) certification with an expiry date of 4 October 2026.

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

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) The last recorded fire drill that took place in the service was on the 28 November 2025 in the morning and afternoon session.

(b)

The number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms was present in the service, the fire extinguishers were serviced in April 2025 and the smoke alarms on the 2 December 2025.

(4)

A notice of the fire procedures to be followed in the event of an emergency were clearly displayed in the care rooms.