

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015GY067		
Name of Service:	Clarinbridge Montessori & Afterschool		
Address of Service:	Scoil Mhuire, Clarinbridge, Co. Galway		
Eircode:	H91 EFP7		
Name of Registered Provider:	Samantha Geaghan		
Service type:	Part Time		
Date of Inspection:	05/09/2023		
No of pre-school children:	AM	27	PM 7
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla – Child and Family Agency, Early Years Inspectorate, Quality and Regulation Directorate, Clinical & Administration Building, Block A - (1st Floor- Green Corridor), Merlin Park, Co. Galway.		
Inspection undertaken by:	S. Meehan.		
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

This privately owned preschool service is in the village of Clarinbridge in the local Scoil Mhuire, national school, Co. Galway. The preschool caters for children aged between 2 years and 6 years, from Monday to Friday between 9 am and 2 pm. This community operated preschool service offers the option of part time care service, an (ECCE) Early Childhood Care and Education and sessional care programme. This preschool service operates from two fabricated buildings which has two playrooms, sanitary area, and a kitchen. The pre-school children have an outdoor play area to the front of the premises for play activities, exploration and fresh air.

Staffing

The registered provider is on the premises daily. There is a named person in charge and a named designated deputy. On the day of inspection, there were 6 adults which included 2 students on the premises. Four adults work directly with the children and hold at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework and there was a student 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 an unannounced and focused on the area of governance/ health, welfare and development of child. The inspections may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 15, 19,25, 26 and 28. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 15.

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*
- (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) There was a designated person in charge and there was a named person available to deputise in the service.

(b) The registered provider was on the premises when the early years inspector arrived and remained on site for the duration of the inspection. Staff rosters indicated that either the designated person in charge or deputy were available, on the premises, at all times when the pre-school children were present.

(c) Staff rosters, policies and signage evidence indicated that there was a clear management structure in the service, which identified the lines of authority and accountability within the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and unpaid worker.

All 7 adult files were reviewed including the registered provider and 2 students.

(2)(a) &(b) Fourteen of the validated references on file in respect of 7 adults were from a past employer or a source other than a past employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available in respect of the 7 adults member.

- (d) Documentary evidence indicated that 1 adult who had lived outside the jurisdiction for longer than 6 consecutive months while over the age of 18 years and therefore required police vetting. The police vetting was available for inspection.
- (4) Five adults held a Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) at a minimum of Level 5, in Early Childhood Care and education and there was also 2 students.

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, 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) The preschool attendance records and roster for the previous 3 weeks were reviewed and indicated that an adequate number of staff were working directly with the children. On the day of inspection, the adult and child ratio were correct and maintained.
- (2) The minimum ratio of adults to children was adhered to, during the inspection.
On the morning of the inspection, 27 preschool children being directly cared for by 4 staff and 2 students.
 - 5 children were aged 2 to 3 years,
 - 18 children were aged 3 to 4 years,
 - 4 children were aged 4 to 5 years of age.

In the afternoon of the inspection, 7 preschool children being directly cared for by 4 staff and 2 students.

- 2 children were aged 2 to 3 years,
- 3 children were aged 3 to 4 years,
- 2 children were aged 4 to 5 years of age.

(8)(a) The registered provider ensured that 2 staff were on the premises during the operating hours of the service.

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.*

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) is retained for a period of 2 years from the date on which the child to whom it relates ceases to attend the service.

Compliance Information

(1)(a), (b),(c),(d),(e),(f),(g),(h) &(i).

There was a total of 27 children's records and a sample of 10 children's records were reviewed by the Early Years Inspectors.

The entries reviewed were factual, consistent, and accurate.

The 6 random records of children contain the following:

- The name and date of birth of the child.
- The date on which the child first attended the service.
- The date on which the child stopped attending the service (where relevant).
- The name and address of the child's parent or guardian, and a telephone number where that parent or guardian (or a relative or friend of the parent or child) can be contacted during the hours of operation.
- Written authorisation and permissions for collecting the child.
- Details are recorded of any illness, allergy, or additional need(s) the child had, together with all the information relevant to the provision of specific care or attention.
- The name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner.
- A record of any immunisations the child has had.
- Written parental or guardian consent was included to allow the child to have appropriate medical treatment if there was an emergency.

(4) The registered provider advised and documentary evidence from file review indicated, that all relevant children's records were kept for 2 years from the date a child stops attending 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

(1) A registered provider shall, in providing a pre-school service, ensure that-

(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

19 (1) (a) and (b)

BASIC NEEDS:

- Healthy eating was promoted within the service and the food observed was healthy and nutritious. The service had a rolling snack system in place for children, the snacks provided by parent and guardians consisted of a selection of sandwiches, fruit and yogurts. The hot meal of the day was served between 1pm and 1:30pm and on the day was spaghetti bolognaise.
- The children were afforded plenty of time to enjoy their snack in a relaxed and unhurried manner. Crockery and plates were given to children during snack times, laid out on low tables in the outdoor play area.
- The children had access to a water station on a low-level table, that allowed them the opportunity to take a drink if thirsty.
- Children were encouraged and supported to manage their own personal care appropriate to their own level of independence.
- Each child's privacy and dignity was preserved, while they were either toileted independently or with some assistance as required. All children were toilet trained that were in attendance on the day of inspection.
- The children had the opportunity to rest or relax with soft seating in the form of child size couches, in a designated rest and relaxation area, in the playrooms. Stackable beds were available for children attending on a part time of full day care basis.
- On the day of inspection, the children were observed playing in the outdoor area which had a variety of special interest areas.

SUPPORTING RELATIONSHIPS AROUND CHILDREN:

- A key person system was in place for each child to support their development and to inform curriculum planning. The role of the key person was to liaise with parents and guardians. Individual care programmes were in place where required.
- On speaking with staff, the inspector was informed that they verbally provided parents with daily information on their child's experiences in the pre-school including the child's likes, interests, preferences, and play activities engaged in. This information was provided at collection and drop off times, via text messages, multimedia application and by phone calls.
- Each child had a learning journal and scrapbook identifying their likes preferences and showing their art and craft work.
- The staff were observed to be caring and supportive in their interactions with the children. During observed interactions, the staff demonstrated that they knew the children well, recognising and valuing their individual interests, needs and learning. The staff were observed to be interested in the children, spoke in low tones, listened to them, and responded to their requests. The staff interacted in a positive way with the children e.g., they sat at children's level, maintained good eye contact, showed empathy and a good understanding of each child.
- Staff were observed helping children find solutions, supporting them and talking to children in a variety of ways, discussing, questioning, modelling, commentating, extending a child's activities, and initiating games and activities.
- The programme of care was flexible and guided by the children's choices. Children were supported by the staff during periods of individual and group-based activities, the staff sensitively supervised and intervened when necessary.
- On the day of inspection, the children played and interacted well with the staff and their peers. The children were observed at imaginative play, at water play, action songs, drawing, running, digging and using scoops, at sand play, riding on push cars, listening to music, playing in the mud kitchen and tabletop activities.

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 service did provide evidence that a person trained in first aid responder for children was available at all times to the children attending the pre-school service. There were 2 adults present on the day with a first aid responder in date cert. Seven in total had a first aid responder in date cert.

(2)(a) The first aid boxes were accessible and in a conspicuous position in the playrooms.

(b) The first aid box was fully equipped and available to the children attending the pre-school 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) A written record was available of the monthly fire drills completed in the service. The last recorded fire drill was dated 14th August 2023.
- (b) Records were available in relation to the number, type, and maintenance of fire-fighting equipment with the annual service dated 28th of August 2023.
- The smoke and fire detection alarm system for the premises had the last annual service dated 1st of September 2023.
- (4) Notices were displayed within the service of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire in the premises.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service had insurance for up to 44 preschool children and was valid to the 27/03/2024.