

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015GY120		
Name of Service:	Kilnadeema Montessori & Afterschool		
Address of Service:	Kilnadeema NS, Loughrea, Co. Galway		
Eircode:	H62 DK53		
Name of Registered Provider:	Monica Gardiner		
Service type:	Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	19/11/2025		
No of pre-school children:	AM	16	PM No.
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Quality and Regulation Directorate, Child and Family Agency. 2 nd Floor St Mary's HQ, Castlebar, Co Mayo. F23HP58		
Inspection undertaken by:	B Lavin		
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

This sessional pre-school service operates from a new purpose-built ground floor prefabrication unit, on the grounds of the national school in the village of Kilnadeema, Co Galway. There is a designated secure outdoor play area located at the rear of the premises. The children have access under supervision to the national school facilities- an impact absorbing pitch, green spaces and playground areas. The children also have access under supervision to an adjacent sporting organisation community pitch. A sessional care programme is offered from 09.30 to 12.30. The pre-school caters for a maximum of 22 children at any one time, for children aged between 2 and 6 years, from Monday to Friday.

Staffing

There are 3 staff employed to work in the service including the registered provider who works directly with the children. There is also a student aged under 18 years on work placement in the service.

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 and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

On inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 23. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulation(s) within this report.

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

(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 registered provider was the designated person in charge and there was a named person who was able to deputise as required.

(b) During the period of inspection, the registered provider was on the premises and facilitated the inspection.

Following a review of the service files and discussion with the registered provider, it was confirmed that there were 3 members of staff employed in the service and 1 student aged under 18 years on work placement.

2) (a) There were 5 of the required 8 written and appropriately validated references available from their most recent employer.

(b) There were 3 written and validated references available from a source other than the recent employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for all the staff working in the service. The service adhered to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew garda vetting every 3 years.

(d) Police vetting disclosures were not required for the adults working in the service as none had lived outside the jurisdiction for a period of over 6 months.

(4) The 3 adults working directly with the children, had evidence of an award in Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) at a Level 5 on the National Framework of Qualifications in Early Childhood Care and Education or qualifications deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured that the following policies and procedures were in place as per schedule 5 for the service. The policies, procedures and statements were consistent with the service practices.

- (a) Statement of purpose and function
- (b) Complaints policy
- (d) Policy on infection control
- (e) Policy on managing behaviour
- (j) Accident and incident policy

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 were 2 adults working directly with children on the day of inspection.

The minimum adult to child ratios were provided on the morning of inspection in accordance with the required ratios considering the ages of the children and the length of time each child spent in the service.

There were 16 children attending the service on a sessional basis with 2 staff members.

The registered provider ensured that the minimum ratio of adults to children specified was maintained.

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.*

(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) to (i)

The inspector reviewed a random sample of 10 children’s records. The records contained the required details as laid out under the regulation.

(3) (c)

The required information was made readily available for inspection in the service by the registered provider on request.

(4)

The registered provider confirmed that the records were retained for the required period of 2 years.

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

- Drinking water was available to all children in individual beakers throughout the day.
- Children were observed eating their snack provided by the parents/guardians which consisted of fruit, yogurt, cheese and sandwiches. Children were supported during mealtimes with opening food items when needed. Independence was encouraged with self-help skills.
- Children sat at tables and chairs which were appropriate for their height and/or stage of development.
- The staff were observed sitting at the child's level and chatted in a respectful manner.
- The privacy and dignity of each child was respected during toileting.
- Appropriate rest facilities were available in the care room and children were observed spending time in this area for short periods of rest throughout the day.
- Children had easy access to the outside areas throughout the day. Children moved freely between indoors and outdoors.
- The adults working with the children were sensitive and responsive in promoting positive behaviours and supported children to find positive solutions to sharing toys, equipment and turn taking.
- Children had plenty of opportunities to move themselves, to practice and improve their emerging skills, such as co-ordination and balance.

Supporting relationships

- The service supported the children in forming and sustaining positive relationships with staff.
- The staff were actively involved in children's play, where appropriate initiating games and joining in when invited to by children.
- The staff behaved in a way that created a positive atmosphere, having frequent social conversations, joint laughter and showing affection.
- The staff listened to the voice of the child as they communicated their needs, thoughts and experiences both verbally and non-verbally, by reading children's cues, gestures and body language.

- Soft tones were used with the children, along with the child's individual name, getting down to their level and making eye contact.
- The atmosphere in the learning environment was encouraging and unhurried.
- Staff communicated with parents and guardians by sharing knowledge and observations of the child's interests, strengths, developmental and care needs, approaches to learning, changes in their life and any other concerns at drop off and collection times, by phone and by text.

Programme of activities

- There was a varied programme of activities offered to the children daily. This programme was developed with both short term and long-term goals. An autumn theme was currently in place within the room. Previous themes included all about me, three little pigs, Halloween, farm safety, farm animals and science week.
- Children's choice was included in the development of play activities and emerging interests was developed within the care room. The children were given choice in participating in larger group activities or to play in smaller groups. Children had a choice in the games they participated in. Staff members were observed to create play opportunities such as arts and crafts and board games following the lead of children's own ideas.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service's insurance with an expiry date of 27/03/2026, was for a sessional service, for a maximum number of 22 children. The insurance covered the following,

- public liability,
- personal accident,
- insurance against fire and theft,
- buildings,
- outings undertaken as part of the service provision.

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.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

Whole grapes were present in three children's lunch boxes. Whole grapes are a choking risk to preschool children.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

A copy of the service policy on healthy eating was sent to all parents along with a reminder message to cut up all grapes. Staff will monitor and check all children's lunchboxes before serving food to children.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

A copy of the healthy eating policy was submitted to the Inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The actions and evidence submitted were reviewed and the noncompliance identified under Regulation 23 has been adequately addressed.