

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015GY149			
<b>Name of Service:</b>	Little Stars Creche & Montessori			
<b>Address of Service:</b>	Cappagh Road, Knocknacarra, Barna, Co. Galway			
<b>Eircode:</b>	H91 T6D9			
<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Audrey Hogan, Cathy Quine			
<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional			
<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	04/04/2024			
<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	23	PM	23
<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	TUSLA - Child and Family Agency, Early Years Inspectorate, Quality Assurance Directorate, Clinical & Administration Building, Block A - (1st Floor- Green Corridor), Merlin Park, Galway.			
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	F Nic Dhonnacha			
<b>Title:</b>	Early Years Inspector			
<b>Authority to Inspect</b>				
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

This pre-school service is in a detached ground floor premises, on the outskirts of Knocknacarra, in West side of Galway City. The service operates a full day care service from 8.00hrs to 18.00hrs. The service caters for children aged between 0 to 6 years. The preschool is registered for a maximum number of 40 pre-school children, at any one time.

There are four playrooms, namely the Baby room, (for Wobbler children aged 1 to 2 years), the Toddler room, (for Toddlers children aged 2 to 3 years), and Montessori 1 room, The Den (for children attending Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) pre-school care programme aged 4 to 5 years), and the Full time Montessori room ( for children attending Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) pre-school care programme in the morning and for the school aged children's afterschool programme in the afternoons and during holidays.

There are two designated sleep rooms with seven cots for younger children's sleep provision and stackable beds are available for older children's sleep provision. There is a designated kitchen where the snacks and main meals are prepared, cooked, and stored on site. There is a large outdoor play area to the rear of the premises.

### Staffing

One of two registered providers works in the service daily. There are ten staff including the registered provider. Eight staff hold a Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) at a Level 5 to 8, in Early Childhood Care and Education. These staff have documentary evidence of ongoing training and education. There is a designated chef who solely works in the service kitchen and two staff who work and care for the school aged children.

### 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 9, 11, 19, 23, 25 and 28; however, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 9. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulation within this report.

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 one of two registered providers, 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) There was a designated person in charge and there was a named person available to deputize in the service.
- (b) The person in charge and on the premises when the early years inspector arrived and remained on site for the duration of the inspection. The registered provider assisted with the administration parts of the inspection and acted as childcare relief. Documentary evidence in the form of staff rotas indicated that either the designated person in charge or deputy were available, on the premises, when the pre-school children were present.
- The ten staff files including the registered providers were reviewed.
- (2)(a)&(b) Twenty of the twenty validated written references on file, in respect of the ten staff, were from a past employer or a source other than a past employer.

- (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available in respect of the ten staff.
- (d) Documentary evidence indicated that four of five staff had lived outside the jurisdiction, for longer than 6 consecutive months, while over the age of 18 years, and had the required police vetting. It is acknowledged that where applicable these vetting's were translated by a reputable source.
- (4) Ten staff working directly with the children had evidence of Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) Level 5 to Level 8, in Early Childhood Care and Education.

### Non-Compliance Information

(2) (d)

The correct documentary evidence was not available for 1 of the 5 adults who had lived outside the jurisdiction for longer than 6 consecutive months while over the age of 18 years and therefore required police vetting. It is acknowledged that this person had a private disclosure and barring check however an International Child Protection Certificate was not provided.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

On the 26/04/2024 and 30/04/2024 the registered provider advised of the following.

#### **Corrective and Preventive Action**

The preschool will ensure that the correct required police vetting is obtained for future staff members.

#### **Supporting documentation submitted**

A copy of the police vetting was reviewed on the 06/06/2024

### Summary Comment

The non-compliance has been 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) At all times during the period of the inspection, the registered provider ensured that an adequate number of staff were working directly with the children.
- (2) Documentary evidence in the form of attendance records and staff rosters indicated that adult child ratios were adhered to.
- On the morning of the inspection, there were 23 children present. All children were aged between 1 to 5 years. There were five staff directly caring for these children. Additionally, the registered provider acted as childcare relief and assisted with the administrative part of the inspection. Six school aged children attended the afterschool programme and two staff cared for these children.
- (8)(a) The registered provider ensured that there were 2 staff on the premises at all times while the pre-school was operating.

### 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

- Each child was given enough time to eat and enjoy their snacks and meal without being rushed. The atmosphere during mealtimes was relaxed, with pleasant social interaction among the children and staff.
- The crockery, cutlery and drinking utensils used were suitable for the children's ages and stage of development.
- The staff responded to children's individual personalities, sensitivities and needs in relation to nappy changing and toileting and toilet training.
- On the day of the inspection, ten children between the Baby room and Toddler room required nappy changing and were changed in a sensitive manner while having their dignity and privacy maintained.
- The older children had unrestricted access to the toilet and did not have to wait to use the toilet. Children were allowed to take their time during toileting. Staff encouraged and supported children to become more independent in toileting practices.
- Children were encouraged and supported to manage their own personal care appropriate to their own level of independence, and to develop self-help and personal hygiene skills.
- Children had plenty of opportunities to move themselves, to practice and improve their emerging skills, such as co-ordination and balance. There were cosy areas with soft seating, in each of the playrooms. The service had two designated sleep rooms with seven cots and stackable beds for older children's sleep provision.

#### Supporting Relationships

- Visual aids (picture and word reminders) and instructions were displayed and used with the children to support their learning. The atmosphere in the learning environment was encouraging and unhurried.
- The children were supported to be confident about their identity and to have a strong sense of belonging, each day, while in the service.

- The service provided parents and guardians with daily information, including significant events or activities involving their child, for example, verbal communication at drop of and collection times, a social media communication application, a bespoke childcare application, and via profile scrapbooks.
- The service had a designated childcare application with interactive communication with parents and guardians. There was section with photographs and a description of the child engaged in activities. Staff observations, a child's milestones and individual learning stories were captured. The childcare application showed details of sleep provisions, meals, nappy changing / toileting, special activities, and a child's likes, needs and preferences and general observations / comments. There were learning template and developmental checklists showing the child's strengths, interests, and developmental care needs.
- Staff collated for each child a profile scrapbook my learning journal, showing the 'child's journey' using observations and including samples of a child's work. The themes to date included dinosaurs, the solar system, earth, identity and belonging, the zoo, our families and many more.
- On the day of inspection, the children were observed to free play, at story time, at circle time, at construction building, connecting, at sensory play, at pretend kitchen / house, and sorting stacking materials. The children painted dinosaurs, played games, and puzzles. The children enjoyed playing with a selection of transport vehicles. The children fed, and dressed baby dolls, played with small world furniture, little people, cuddly toys, and dolls.
- On the day of inspection, in the outdoor areas, the children were observed on the swings, climbing the tractor, playing football, at role play, playing on transport vehicles, at sand play, running, chasing, sorting, and exploring. The children played predominately in the outdoor play area.
- The staff listened to children in a caring, gentle way when they expressed emotions, and reassured them that it is normal to experience positive and negative emotions at times. The staff acknowledged and accepted children's feelings and the relationships between children's actions and other's responses. In all the playrooms, the children were given choice on what to do next.
- The staff were observed helping children to find solutions, supporting them, and talking to the children in a variety of ways, discussing, questioning and commentating, extending a child's activities and initiating games and activities. The staff provided significant opportunities for the child to decide their play activities and experiences.
- Staff used positive strategies to support children's inclusion. For example, the inspector noted that the staff acknowledged a child's engagement in an activity 'that is great' 'well done' and used questions such

as ‘what should we do next?’, ‘is there any other way to do this?’, to allow children to critically think and explore.

- The staff supported children to enter social groups, and to learn to help and positively engage with other children. They encouraged and praised children for specific, positive, and appropriate behaviours.

### Physical and Material Environment

- The five playrooms were designed and arranged to: maintain a space that is clean, organised, and free of clutter; accommodate children individually, in small groups and in a large group; the rooms were divided into areas that were supplied with materials organised in a way to support children’s play and learning.
- give children with additional needs access to the same facilities, activities and play opportunities as the other children, to promote their welfare and development.
- The design, organisation and resourcing of the environment supported each child’s wellbeing, learning and development, within the ethos and philosophy of the service.
- The environment was comfortable, inviting and laid out to accommodate the needs of all children and staff in the pre-school.
- The service had safe and comfortable spaces for infants, toddlers, or children not walking, to lie, roll, creep, crawl, pull themselves up, learn to walk, and to be protected from children who were more mobile.
- Staff had a comfortable place to sit, hold, and feed infants, and to read with, interact with and comfort them if necessary.
- There were role play areas such as kitchens, shops, houses with utensils and furniture. There were hairdressing stations, accessories and dress up clothing. There were creative play areas with a selection of art and craft materials including paints, glue, pencils, crayons, and paper. There were soft toys, shapes, books, farm animals, action figures, and doctors’ sets. There were library book areas.
- Displayed on the walls were visual aids, posters, educational materials, and children’s artwork. Displays included birthdays, my families, numbers, transport vehicles, mirrors, on the farm and days of the week. There were daily schedules and little helper systems in each playroom.

### 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:

- There was a secure access system, into the main entrance front doors.
- The staff only areas, kitchen, staff sanitary area and storage areas were secure and thereby inaccessible to a pre-school child.
- The external outdoor play area was secure so that children could not leave the area unsupervised and unauthorised persons could not enter the area.
- New secure doors and windows were installed since the previous inspection.
- All cleaning agents were stored inaccessible to the children.
- A system was in place to ensure that daily records of attendance were kept for all of the children, attending the pre-school on the childcare application.
- Leads, cables, and flexes were secured and or inaccessible to prevent any trips or strangulation hazard.
- The playroom temperatures were thermostatically controlled, to ensure the temperatures were maintained between 18°C to 22°C.
- Radiators were thermostatically controlled not exceeding 50°C to prevent potential burning.
- Visibility stickers, artwork, and or posters were on the long windows/ doors as a safety precaution.
- All toys and play equipment were observed to be safe and in good condition.
- There was a documented risk assessment system for the indoor and outdoor play areas, for checking that toys and equipment were not broken, in a clean condition and maintained in a good state of repair.
- There were no pits or ponds in the outdoor area to cause any hazard or potential risk to the pre-school child.

##### Infection Control:

- Hand washing facilities were provided with a supply of warm water, liquid hand soap and disposable paper hand towels.
- During the inspection, the children were assisted and encouraged to wash their hands prior to eating, after nappy changing, after toileting, after using a tissue, and after playing outdoors.

- There was a designated nappy changing area with a designated wash hand basin. The children in nappies were changed in a timely manner, on a regular basis. Staff involved in nappy changing wore a disposable apron and gloves. There were a foot pedalled airtight sealable bins for the disposal of nappies.
- The playrooms were observed to be kept adequately ventilated with the windows and doors left open whilst maintaining the room temperatures at the required levels.
- The service had cleaning records for the materials, equipment, and furnishings.

### Administration of Medication:

- Through discussion with the inspectors, the staff demonstrated that they were aware of the correct procedures for the administration of medicines.

### Safe Sleep:

- Children were observed sleeping on demand following cues / signs of tiredness. Four infants were observed sleeping in cots in the designated sleep rooms.
- There was a safe sleep policy that detailed temperature, lighting, ventilation, space between cots and child safety requirements, as per the 'safe sleep for under 2's best practice guidelines for childcare services policy'.
- Sleep records were kept for each child's sleep on the 'childcare app', recording the time an adult physically checks a child, and their signature. Additionally, the records included a sleeping child's colour, position, breathing and the temperature of the sleep room with the opportunity to document any necessary remedial actions taken.
- A room thermometer was available in the sleep rooms and used as the method of recording the sleep room temperature and therefore taking remedial action when temperatures were above 20 °C and below 16 °C.
- All linen provided was clean, dry, and stored in labelled containers.

### Fire Safety:

- Exit doors throughout the premises were unobstructed.
- Records were maintained of the monthly fire drills.

## 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) Two staff working in the pre-school service had evidence of a current paediatric first aid qualification.

(2)(a) A suitably equipped first aid box was available and in an easily accessible conspicuous position.

(b) The first aid box was readily available, with content items within date.

## 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 with an expiry date 1st of April 2025, which was for a full day care service for 47 pre-school children included the following: -

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