

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015GY150
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Little Stars Creche & Montessori
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	An Fúrán, Moycullen, Co. Galway.
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<b>Eircode:</b>	H91 V634
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Cathy Quine, Audrey Hogan
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<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	08/02/2024
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	55	PM	37
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<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

### 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
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### Description of service

This privately operated pre-school service is in the village of Moycullen, West of Co. Galway. The pre-school caters for children aged between 0 months and 6 years, from Monday to Friday between 8.00hrs and 18.00hrs. The pre-school offers the option of full day-care, part-time care service, an Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) from 9.00hrs to 12.00hrs and sessional care programme. Additionally, an afterschool programme from 13.30hrs to 18.00hrs is offered, for school aged children. A play based preschool curriculum focusing on emerging themes and interests is provided with elements of Montessori. This pre-school service consists of 4 childcare playrooms namely the Toddler / Playgroup room which was subdivided into 2 sections this is located on the ground floor. The full day Pre-Montessori room, Pre-Montessori room and Senior Montessori room / Afterschool room were located on the first floor. The service has two designated sleep rooms namely Sleep room 1 with 3 cots and Sleep room 2 with 4 cots. Twelve stackable beds are available for older children requiring sleep provision. Quiet rest areas are available in each of the playrooms for children to rest and relax. The service has its own kitchen, where children's meals and snacks are prepared, cooked, and stored on site. To the rear of the main building, there are secure outdoor play areas for children's play, exploration, and activities.

### Staffing

The registered provider is not on site on a daily basis. There is a named person in charge and a named designated deputy. The staff have documentary evidence of on-going training and education. Twelve staff hold at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework. Additionally, 1 chef was designated to kitchen duties, preparing, cooking, and serving the service meals. An additional staff member was designated to the care of the school-aged children and an administrator works remotely.

### 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.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 11, 15, 19, 23, 25 and 26; 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.

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 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 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 arrived on the morning of the inspection and remained onsite 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 and documentary evidence indicated that there was a clear management structure in the service, that identified the lines of authority and accountability within the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and unpaid worker.

- (2)(a)&(b) Twenty-eight written validated references on file, in respect of the fourteen staff, were from a past Employer or a source other than a past employer.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available in respect of the fourteen staff.
- (d) Documentary evidence indicated that six of the seven staff, who had lived outside the jurisdiction, for longer than 6 consecutive months, while over the age of 18 years, had the required police vetting.
- (4) Twelve adults working directly with the children had evidence of Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) Level 5 to Level 9, in Early Childhood Care and Education.

### Non-Compliance Information

- (d) Police vetting was not available for 1 adult who had lived outside the jurisdiction for longer than six consecutive months while over the age of 18 years.

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

On the 4/03/2024 the registered provider advised of the following.

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

A submission was made for police vetting. The adult is no longer working in the preschool service.

#### **Supporting documentation submitted**

No evidence submitted.

### Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 9 (2)(d) has 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) At all times during the period of the inspection, the person in charge 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 55 pre-school children were aged between 1 to 5 years.
- Up until 13.00hrs, there were 11 pre-school children attending the services part time programme.
- There were ten childcare staff working directly with the children. Additionally, the registered provider assisted with the administration function of the inspection and acted as childcare relief.
- (8)(a) The registered provider ensured that there were 2 staff on the premises at all times while the pre-school was operating.

### 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.*

#### Compliance Information

- (1) A sample of twenty two of sixty-eight completed for the number of children enrolled in the service were reviewed by the inspector. These forms were reviewed and detailed the required particulars outlined in (1) (a)-(i).

### 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

(1)(a)(b)

#### Basic Needs of Children:

- The adults sat together with the children during mealtime and conversed amicably. Mealtimes were observed to be relaxed, unhurried, and sociable occasions. Appropriate crockery and utensils were provided during snack and mealtime. Healthy and nutritious food and drinks were provided on the day of inspection. A three-week menu plan was displayed in the service kitchen. Water was freely accessible to the children throughout the day.
- The inspector observed the children's learning, development, and well-being to be supported by the members of staff.
- Speech sound development was promoted by staff through conversations, rhymes and songs. The children were encouraged to be independent while caring for their personal belongings, using the toilet, during mealtimes and participation in tasks.
- The children's individual sleep needs were responded to appropriately. The infant's nappies were changed on a regular basis and the staff carried out these procedures in a sensitive manner. The children were encouraged and supported to manage their own personal care appropriate to their age level of development.
- Open ended play-based activities predominated for the duration of inspection. The children freely moved and chose their activities in the spacious indoor and outdoor environment and the staff responded appropriately to their cues for assistance.

#### Supporting Relationships Around Children:

- An informal communication approach was observed during interactions between staff and the children's parents. Parents conversed with staff during the children's arrival and departure from the service.
- The children's daily activities and observations were shared with parents on the service's electronic application device. The staff treated the children in kind and respectful manner. The inspector observed the staff conversing with the children at their level, listening attentively during interactions and responding promptly to their cues for assistance. The staff used positive behavioural strategies during situations that arose and offered continuous praise and encouragement.

- The staff worked in collaboration with each other to deliver the programme of care. The members of staff demonstrated a good knowledge of the children’s individual preferences, capabilities, and personal interests.
- The children were consulted in advance of the changes in the programme of care and learning. The staff provided significant opportunities for the child to decide their play activities and experiences. The themes of the week were The Earth, Sharks and Sea life.
- Children were observed naming sea life animals and talking and discussing what they had learnt during the week. The children sang action songs for the inspector. The children in the Senior Montessori room discussed the Universe and showed the inspector where they lived on Earth with the various geographical books that were available on display.

### Physical and Material Environment:

- The four playrooms were individually designed, colourful, bright and spacious and provided a space for the children to freely move and explore. The layout of the rooms was carefully considered to encourage children to make choices and initiate self-directed play and activities.
- Resources were easily accessible, and the children demonstrated familiarity with navigating their environment to independently access the toys, equipment and materials they chose to play with.
- A range of challenging and developmentally appropriate play materials, equipment and activities were available in each room to support gross motor, fine motor, cognitive, language expressive arts and design development.
- The walls of the rooms displayed numerical, alphabetical and literacy aids, a family area, children’s birthday displays, a post box, emotion charts, little helper charts, curriculum planning and the children’s creations.
- The children chose their individual activities and had the freedom to move around the rooms and freely access their chosen toys and play materials and equipment.
- The children attending each playroom were afforded an opportunity to access the outdoor environment on a daily basis.
- The large outdoor was located to the rear and side of the building. The sectioned areas had a range of surfaces, these areas were enclosed by high concrete walls and a lockable gate.
- The play materials and resources included picnic tables, balance beams, playhouses tricycles, footballs, sand basins, planter boxes, a slide, mud kitchen, toy blocks and seating.

## Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

### Regulation 22 – Food and drink

*A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.*

#### Compliance Information

- There was a healthy eating policy available on request.
- The registered provider advised that healthy eating was promoted within the service by ongoing staff training, visual aids, and adherence to best practice guidelines.
- For children attending part time care and full day care, food was prepared, cooked, and stored on site in the service kitchen.
- Nutritious meals and snacks were served at regular times, but there was flexibility.
- At 10.30hrs, the children attending the sessional service had their snacks provided by parents and guardians which included cheese, ham, crackers, sandwiches, fruit pieces and yogurt. The service provided the children attending on a part time or full day care basis with waffles and beans with milk or water.
- At 12.30hrs all children had fruit pieces and raisins for snack time with water to drink.
- At 14.30 the children chilli con carne and rice, which was cooked on site.
- Water was readily available at drinks stations for the children to access as required.
- There was a designated fridge for the safe storage of perishable foodstuffs from children’s lunch boxes in the service kitchen and Senior Montessori room on the first floor upstairs.
- The registered provider advised the inspector of a safe system where all food and drinks brought from the child’s home were labelled and identifiable to the child.

## 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:

- Upon the inspector's arrival the entrance to the service was appropriately secured with a keypad and a bell operated system. The internal and external entry and exit points prevented children exiting or unauthorised persons accessing the service.
- The outdoor area was secured with a concrete wall, fencing and a gate.
- The children were supervised at all times during the inspection and their arrival and departure to the service was recorded on the service's electronic recording system.
- The materials and equipment throughout the service were maintained in good condition.
- Medication and cleaning agents were stored in a secured area out of reach of the children.
- The highchairs were maintained in good condition and fitted with safety harnesses.
- All blinds on windows were secured.
- All fire doors were unobstructed throughout the premises.

##### Infection Control:

- The service was maintained in a clean and hygienic condition.
- The sanitary facilities were equipped with warm running water, liquid soap, hand paper towels and lidded, lined, pedal operated bins.
- Both the children and the adults washed their hands at appropriate intervals after activities, toileting and before mealtime.
- The nappy changing procedures were completed in an adequate manner in accordance with the service's infection control policy.
- An appropriate method was available to sterilise the infant's soothers. The soothers were stored in individually labelled containers.
- The children's bedlinen and personal care items were labelled and stored individually.
- Cleaning records were maintained and signed by staff following completion.

##### Administration of Medication:

- The staff demonstrated a good knowledge of the service's policy.

- Adequate documentation was recorded for prescription and non-prescription medications that had been given to children.

### Safe Sleep:

- The sleep rooms accommodated seven standard cots for the babies to sleep. Stackable beds were available for children over two years of age sleep provision. Relaxing areas with soft furnishings were provided in each playroom.
- The sleep rooms temperatures were maintained between 16-20 degrees Celsius during inspection.
- Staff demonstrated a good knowledge of the service's safe sleep policy. The children's sleep observations were recorded by staff every ten minutes on the service's electronic application device. These observations included children's colour, position, and breathing, room temperature and any remedial actions taken.

### Fire Safety:

- Monthly fire drills are carried out in the preschool service and records maintained.
- The fire exit routes, and fire assembly points were readily identified with clear signage.

### Outing:

- An outing was not undertaken during the inspection. A service policy was available to inform practice.

## 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 provided evidence that a person trained in first aid for children was available at all times to the children attending the pre-school service.
- (2)(a) There was a first aid box with content items within date, safely stored, easily accessible and stored in a conspicuous position.
- (b) The service demonstrated that the first aid boxes 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 firefighting 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 in 15.01.2024.
- (b) Records were available in relation to the number, type, and maintenance of fire- fighting equipment with the annual service dated 14.04.2023.  
  
The smoke and fire detection alarm system for the premises had the last annual service dated 13.04.2023.
- (4) Notices were displayed within the service of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire in the premises.