

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015GY205
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Name of Service:	Tirellan Montessori
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Address of Service:	317 Tirellan Heights, Headford Road, Galway.
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Eircode:	H91 Y9W7
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Name of Registered Provider:	Louise Donnelly
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	12/03/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	21	PM	0
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla – Child and Family Agency, Early Years Inspectorate, Quality Assurance Directorate, Clinical & Administration Building, Block A - (1st Floor- Green Corridor), Merlin Park, Galway.
Inspection undertaken by:	F. Nic Dhonnacha
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

The service is in a purpose built preschool, in an urban residential area known as Tirellan in Galway city. The service operates a sessional service for pre-school children aged between 2 and 6 years of age and caters for a maximum number of 22 preschool children at any one time. The service offers an Early Childhood Care and Education sessional care programme from 09.00 to 12.00 and a second session from 12:30 to 15:30, Monday to Friday. There is one playroom, kitchen and sanitary facilities. The service has a secure designated outdoor play area at the side of the premises.

Staffing

There were three adults and one transition year student on a school placement working in the service which includes the register provider. The three adults working directly with the children in the service have completed a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at a minimum of a level 6 to Level 8 in Early Childhood Education.

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.

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On inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 16, 19 and 23. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 16 Record in Relation to Pre School Service

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, student and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

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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.*

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(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 were two additional adults who were available to deputise in the service if required.

(b) The registered provider and deputy person in charge were 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 person were available on the premises at all times when the pre-school children were present.

Four files were reviewed on the 12/03/2026, these included the registered provider, two childcare workers and one student on a school placement.

(2)(a) Five written validated references were available on file from a past employer.

(b) One written validated reference was available from a source other than the past employer.

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- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all staff. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew garda vetting every three years.
- (d) Police vetting was available on file for 1 staff member who had lived outside the jurisdiction, for longer than 6 months, while over the age of 18 years.
- (4) Three adults held a Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) at a minimum of a Level 5 to Level 8 in Early Childhood Care and Education. Copies of qualifications were on file for all five adults.

Non-Compliance Information

- (2)(b) Two written validated references were unavailable for one person under the age of 18 years of age on a school placement.
- (3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) were not completed for one person who was allowed access to the children attending the pre-school service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

On 13/3/2026 and the 17/4/2026 the registered provider advised of the following.

Corrective and Preventive Action

Written references were obtained and validated. Written references will be required in the future for all individuals working in the service including students.

The registered provider will ensure all staff and students have all the information specified in paragraph (2) on file prior to allowing access to the children attending the service.

Supporting documentation submitted

On the 13/3/2026 the registered provider submitted two written validated references.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 9 (2)(b) and (3) has been adequately addressed.

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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.*
- (8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-*
- (c) a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that, where the person in charge operates the service single-handedly, a second person familiar with the operation of the service and in a position to 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 attendance records for the previous 3 weeks were reviewed by the early years' inspector, indicating that an adequate number of staff were working directly with the preschool children.
- (3) The adult/child ratio was correct and maintained on the day of inspection. There were 3 adults including the registered provider and 1 student (on a transition year school placement) working directly with and caring for 21 children in the morning session. All the children were aged between three years and five years old. The registered provider advised that there was no afternoon sessional service session on the afternoon of the 12/03/2026 due to extenuating circumstances.
- (8)(c) The registered provider did not operate the service single-handedly. There were two additional staff members working in the preschool service.

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Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:

- (a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;*
- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*
- (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

Compliance Information

- (1) (h) Details of children's attendance was accurately recorded.
- (i) A staff roster was available which demonstrated how breaks were covered.
 - (j) Documentation was available to demonstrate that signed parental consent was required prior to administering medication to a child, should it be required and that administration of medication should be witnessed.
 - (k) Details of accidents and incidents were recorded and there was evidence available that parents were informed following an accident or incident involving their child.

Non-Compliance Information

- (1) (a) One curriculum vitae and identification were absent/unavailable for one student in the preschool service on the 12/03/2026.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

On the 13/3/2026 and the 17/4/2026 the registered provider advised of the following.

Corrective and Preventive Action

All curricula vitae and proof of identification for all staff and students will be requested and placed on file in the preschool service.

Supporting documentation submitted

On the 13/03/2026 the registered provider submitted a copy of the student's curriculum vitae and identification.

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Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 16 (1)(a) has been adequately addressed.

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

Basic Needs

(1)(a)

- The service promoted healthy eating and food and snacks supplied by parents and guardians were provided during the sessional service hours. The children were observed to have a mixture of sandwiches, fruit, crackers, chicken pieces, salami, wraps and yogurts.
- Children had the opportunity to feed themselves with supervision.
- The children's drinks and sippy cups were available within their reach throughout the session should they feel thirsty at any stage.
- The atmosphere during mealtimes was relaxed, with pleasant social interaction among the children and staff.
- The tables and chairs were suitable for the children's ages and stages of development.
- The children had unrestricted access to the toilet and did not have to wait to use the toilet.
- The children had the freedom to move around the room and play in various interest areas.

Supporting Relationships

- The children had an activity book for colouring and drawing, with the addition of a folder with all their artwork, themes and learning stories collated together. These folders were presented to the parents and guardians at the end of each year.

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- The registered provider communicated with the parents/guardians via a private phone application or via doorstep visits, appointments or by phone.
- The children had the freedom to move around the various interest areas on the day, they were observed preparing for Mother's Day, at tabletop activities, making puzzles, at connectors, threading and learning about St Patrick during circle time.
- Some children sat in the cosy rest area and looked at books together for a short period.
- The staff advised that the children play outdoors daily, weather permitting.

Non-Compliance Information

1. The children were observed to eat their lunch/snack at approximately 11.00 from their lunch boxes, tinfoil and the table surface. Plates were not provided when the children sat to eat their lunch.
It was acknowledged by the registered provider that they had the plates in the kitchen, but they had not been in use for some time. The registered provider brought the plastic plates to the playroom and gave them to the children for their snack.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

On the 13/3/2026 and the 17/4/2026 the registered provider advised of the following.

Corrective and Preventive Action

The plates and cutlery have been relocated to the playroom alongside the childrens drinks. This allows for easy access at snack time. The issue was discussed at a staff meeting on the 13/3/2026. A named staff member has the responsibility of issuing the children a clean plate and cutlery at snack time each day.

Supporting documentation submitted

On the 19/3/2026 the registered provider submitted photographs of the plates in use for snack time.
A copy of the topics discussed at the staff meeting on the 13/3/2026 were submitted.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 19 (1)(a) has been adequately addressed.

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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 system into the main entrance front door.
- The external outdoor play area was secure so that children could not leave the area unsupervised and unauthorised persons could not enter the area.
- The service had a system to ensure that equipment was maintained, cleaned, checked and removed if damaged or worn.
- There were no pits or ponds in the outdoor area to cause any risk to the pre-school child.
- Staff supervised all children by both sight and sound in all areas of the preschool.
- Fire doors throughout the building were unobstructed.
- All cleaning agents were stored inaccessible to the children and stored in secured areas.
- Leads, cables and flexes in the indoor playroom were secured and/or inaccessible to prevent any safety risks to a preschool child.
- Thermostatically controlled warm water not exceeding 43°C to facilitate hand washing was available.
- All toys and play equipment were observed to be safe and in good condition.
- A system was in place to ensure that daily records of attendance were kept for all the children, attending the preschool sessions.

Infection Control:

- The indoor and outdoor environments were maintained in a clean and hygienic condition.
- The sanitary facilities were appropriately equipped with warm running water, liquid soap and hand paper towels to promote good hand hygiene practices.
- Both the children and the adults washed their hands at appropriate intervals after activities, toileting and before snack time.
- Tissues were readily available and accessible to the children in the playroom.
- Windows were open to allow adequate ventilation in the playroom throughout the day.
- Active cleaning was observed in each playroom and records were maintained.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. At snack time approximately 11.00 one preschool child had whole grapes in their lunch box. The staff member observed the grapes but did not act at that time. This posed a potential risk of choking. The early years inspector brought it to the attention of the registered provider and staff member. The grapes were removed and cut into pieces.

Infection Control:

2. During the morning snack at approximately 11.00 the children's perishable items were removed from their bags in the playroom and were not stored in the service fridge as per best practice guidelines. This posed a risk of food spoiling and food contamination.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

On the 13/3/2026 and the 17/4/2026 the registered provider advised of the following.

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

The topic was discussed at a staff meeting. All snacks/lunches will be checked daily for any choking hazards. The staff will cut the foods accordingly if necessary.

Infection Control:

The topic was discussed at a staff meeting. All foods to be stored in the service fridge on arrival to the preschool each day. A staff member has been assigned the duty of placing the lunch boxes/bags in the fridge each day.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. A copy of a staff meeting held on 13/03/2026 with the topics of safe storage of perishable items of food and the importance of cutting grapes were discussed on the agenda.

Infection Control:

2. A photograph showing the children's lunch bags stored in the service fridge was submitted on the 23/03/2026.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 23 General Safety and Infection Control have been adequately addressed.

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) There was evidence that two staff had undertaken first aid responder (FAR) training and were available to the children attending the service.
- (2)(a) A suitably equipped first aid box was stored in a readily identifiable area in the kitchen.
- (b) The first aid box was available in the kitchen adjacent to the playroom for use by the adults in the event of an emergency.

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) Records were available to demonstrate that monthly fire drills were carried out in the service. The last recorded fire drill took place on the 12/1/2026.
- (b) A record of the number, type and maintenance for the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarm system were available. The most recent firefighting equipment maintenance service took place on the 16/01/2026. The most recent smoke alarm system maintenance service took place on the 17/01/2026.
- (4) Fire action notices demonstrating the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were displayed in the service.

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Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

Up to date insurance cover was available for 22 pre-school children per session. The policy is valid until the 27th of March 2026.