

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier: TU2015GY232

Name of Service: Smarties Montessori

Address of Service: 44 Ocean Wave, Dr. Colohan Rd, Salthill, Co. Galway

Eircode: H91 X751

Name of Registered Provider: Joanne O'Donnell

Service type: Sessional

Date of Inspection: 12/05/2025

No of pre-school children:	AM	28	PM	No.
-----------------------------------	----	----	----	-----

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate: Early Years Inspectorate, Quality and Regulation Directorate, Child and Family Agency, Clinical & Administration Building, Block A (1st Floor- Green Corridor), Merlin Park, Galway.

Inspection undertaken by: F Kelly.

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 Click or tap here to enter text.

Description of service

This private pre-school service is situated in a residential housing estate in Salthill, Galway city and was established in 2000. It offers a sessional day care service and is open, Monday to Friday from 9.00am to 12.30pm and from 10.00am to 1pm. It consists of one playroom upstairs and a large playroom downstairs and an outdoor play area to the rear of the service

Staffing

A total of three adults are currently working in the pre-school, which includes the registered provider.

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 announced and focused on the area of governance, health, welfare and development of child. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

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 wish 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

(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 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 three members of staff employed in the service

The three staff files were reviewed on the day of inspection.

(2)(a) There were two of the required six written and appropriately validated references available from their most recent employer for the adults working in the service.

- (b) There were four of the required six written and appropriately validated references available from a reputable source other than the most recent employer for the adults working in the service
- (c) Garda Vetting disclosures were available for the three staff working in the service. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting for staff members every three years.
- (d) Police Vetting disclosure was not required for the adults working in the service as they had not lived outside the jurisdiction for a period of over six months.
- (4) All adults working directly with children have obtained an award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or equivalent on the National Qualifications Framework.

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) On the day of inspection there were 3 adults working directly with 28 pre-school children. At all times during the period of inspection, the minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained.
- (3) The registered provider ensured that during the inspection the minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained.

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

- When the children arrived at the service, they took their drinks from their lunch bags and left them on the Drinks Shop, which was located on a low-level shelf in the downstairs playroom. The children had access to their drinks at all times during the session.
- The children had a small break in the morning which consisted of a small piece of fruit and the children broke into their groups for this break, one downstairs and one upstairs. These groups were divided according to their age and if there were transitioning to primary school in September.
- The children attending the playroom downstairs, washed their hands prior to lunch in a low-level hand washing sink that was conveniently located in the playroom.
- When the children were finished, their small break they returned their lunch boxes and their lunch bags to their individual space on a low-level shelving unit.
- An achievement wall was used to display photographs the parents sent in of their children completing various tasks, which included brushing their teeth, dressing themselves, cycling their bike and out walking in the countryside. The children were very proud of this wall and spoke and showed each other the various tasks that they had completed.
- The children took part in an arts and craft activity, one little child wanted to sit beside his older sibling, the staff arranged the children so that this request could be fulfilled.
- At 11:30 each day, the children dined together in the large playroom downstairs. The children were encouraged to eat their lunch at their own pace. The staff sat with the children and were observed chatting and assisting the children when required.
- The children played for large proportion of the session in the outdoor play area to the rear of the building. Children were observed playing on ride-on toys, balancing beams, in a toy house and with building blocks.

- Children were observed playing both on their own and participating in adult led games such as The Floor is Lava. Music was playing and the children danced around the outdoor play area following instructions from the staff.
- While the children were playing in the outside play area a staff member had brought out all the children's drinks. These were conveniently located in the shade so that children could access them when they wanted to.