

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015GY274			
Name of Service:	Tir Na nÓg Montessori			
Address of Service:	Lisheenavalla, Claregalway, Co. Galway			
Eircode:	H91 FW27			
Name of Registered Provider:	Aishling Hyland			
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional			
Date of Inspection:	11/12/2024			
No of pre-school children:	AM	35	PM	16
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			

Description of service

This pre-school is located in the rural area of Lisheenavalla, near the village of Claregalway, Co. Galway. The service operates a full day care and part time care service from 8.00hrs to 18.00hrs and the Early Childhood Care and Education scheme (ECCE) and sessional care programme from 9.00hrs to 12.00hrs. This detached premises on its own grounds has 2 playrooms. Both playrooms are at ground floor level – named the Ladybird room and Butterfly room. The service caters for pre-school children aged between 2 to 6 years of age. Additionally, an early morning service from 8.00hrs to 9.00hrs and an afterschool programme from 13.30hrs to 18.00hrs are available for school aged children. There is a designated kitchen where the main meals for children are stored, prepared, and cooked on site. Quiet rest areas are provided in each of the playrooms to facilitate a child to rest or opt out of an activity if he/she chooses to. Stackable beds are also available for children requiring sleep provision. To the rear and sides of the pre-school are secure outdoor play areas and ample parking is available at the front of the premises. A play-based curriculum with a focus on Montessori is offered on a daily basis.

Staffing

The registered provider works between two services. There are twelve staff in total which includes the registered provider working in the service. Nine staff hold a Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) at a minimum Level 5 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 a caretaker/ bus driver person.

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.

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 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. 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.

Twelve staff files in total were reviewed.

(2)(a) &(b)

Twenty-four written validated references on file, in respect of the twelve staff, were from a past employer or a source other than a past employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for twelve staff. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d)

Documentary evidence indicated that two of the 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.

(4)

Twelve 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.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels

(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

(2)

At 10.00hrs, on the morning of the inspection, there were 35 children present.

There were 5 staff directly caring for these children.

At 13.30hrs, in the afternoon, of the inspection, there were 16 preschool children present.

There were 5 staff, directly caring for and supervising these children.

In the afternoon, there was a school aged programme with school collections at varying times with three staff allocated to their care.

(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 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(a) There was a photograph of each staff member on the wall at the entrance lobby, staff qualifications and the people in charge were easily identified.
- (h) Child attendance records were maintained in each playroom.
 - (i) Staff rosters were available for review by the inspector.
 - (j) Medication administration sheets were available with signed parental consent.
 - (k) Accident and incident recording books were available and records were 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

- Each child was given enough time to eat and enjoy their snacks and meals 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 toileting and toilet training.
- No child wore a nappy on the day of inspection
- The 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.
- 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 stackable beds and individual linen for the children attending the part time and full day care service sleep provision.

Supporting Relationships.

- 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 interactive communication application and via profile scrapbooks.
- The service had a private application with interactive communication with parents. There was a section with photographs and a description of the child engaged in activities.
- Staff observations, a child's milestones and individual learning stories, a child's strengths, interests, and developmental care needs were also maintained. Staff collated a profile scrapbook my learning journal for each child, showing the 'child's journey' including samples of a child's work.
- 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 (positive and negative) and the relationships between children's actions and other's responses. In both 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, modelling, 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.
- The children in both the Ladybird room and Butterfly room were observed playing with tabletop activities, shape sorting, building blocks, playing with bead boards, singing Christmas songs and listening to stories.
- The children played predominately outside on the day of inspection.

- 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.
- 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.

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 to the children attending the pre-school service. Three staff had current training in first aid responder (FAR).

(2)(a) There was a first aid box in each playroom. First aid items were all safely stored, easily accessible and in a conspicuous position.

(b) The service demonstrated that the first aid boxes were fully equipped, with items in date 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 fire fighting 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 documented fire drill was dated the 13th and 19th of November 2024.
- (b) Records were available in relation to the number, type, and maintenance of fire-fighting equipment with the last annual certificate dated 23rd of September 2024.
The smoke and fire detection alarms system annual certificate was dated 22nd of August 2024.
- (4) Notices were displayed within the service of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire in the premises

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service had adequate insurance for 55 pre-school children in a full day care service at any one time, with an expiry date of 27th of March 2025, was available. The insurance covered: -

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