

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015KE011
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Name of Service:	Confey Montessori
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Address of Service:	San Carlo Senior School, Leixlip, Co. Kildare
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Eircode:	W23 E1N8
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Name of Registered Provider:	Gertrude Hallinan
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	09/11/2023
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No of pre-school children:	AM	53	PM	n/a
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate Suite 7, Vista Primary Care Centre Child and Family Agency Ballymore Eustace Road Naas Co. Kildare, W91X38W
Inspection undertaken by:	T. Duignan
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	n/a
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Description of service

Confey Montessori was established in 1989 and provides sessional care and education to preschool children aged between two and six years. The service is open from Monday to Friday from 09:00am – 15:15 hours and offers three morning sessions and one afternoon session. The service is registered to provide school aged care. The service operates from two prefab buildings located in the grounds of San Carlo Senior School in Leixlip. A secured area at the rear of the second building is used for outdoor play for all children attending the service. Limited set down parking is available at the front of the school premises.

Staffing

There were eleven adults including the registered provider present on the day of inspection. Ten of the adults including the registered provider and a student on placement were working directly with the children in three rooms. The manager of the service provided oversight and support if needed.

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.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under

- Regulation 20(1)(a) – Facilities for rest and play
- Regulation 22 – Food and Drink.

- Regulation 23 – Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child.

As a result, the scope of the inspection included rooms 1 and 2.

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.

Additional Information

- 1 A written immediate action notice under Regulation 9 in respect of outstanding Garda Vetting was issued to the registered provider on 14 November 2023 by the Early Years Inspector.
- 2 A written response was received from the manager on behalf of the registered provider on 15 November 2023 in relation to the immediate action notice. The response was accepted by the Early Years Inspectorate.

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),(b) There was a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.

(c) There was a clear management structure in the service that identified the lines of authority and accountability in the service. Staff members were familiar with this structure and their role and responsibility.

The records of eleven staff members employed and/or present in the service, including the registered provider, were reviewed.

(2)(a),(b) Twenty-two written and verified past employer references or references from a reputable source, in the absence of a past employer, were available in respect of eleven records reviewed.

(c) Garda Vetting disclosures were available for ten employed staff members including the registered provider.

(d) Not applicable, as no adult had lived outside the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months.

(4) Six staff members employed and who work directly with the children whose records were reviewed held a major award at Level 5 or higher in Early Childhood Care and Education on the National Qualifications Framework; Three staff members were in possession of a letter of qualification recognition issued by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY).

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(c) Garda Vetting disclosure was not available for one employed staff member.

(4) One staff member employed and working directly with the children did not have documentary evidence of a major award at Level 5 or higher in Early Childhood Care and Education on the National Qualifications Framework.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(c) A Garda vetting disclosure has been received in respect of a student on work experience, identified on inspection who did not have a disclosure. Garda vetting disclosure was requested on the 14/11/23 and a copy sent to the EYI office on the 15/11/23. We will ensure all students have validated garda vetting in place before they commence work experience.

(4) The staff member is no longer working directly with the children.

Supporting documentation submitted

(2)(c) Garda vetting disclosure

Summary Comment

The written response and documentary evidence submitted has been assessed by the Early Years Inspectorate. Regulatory compliance has been met for regulation 9.

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) There were fifty-three children attending the service being supervised directly by eleven staff members during the inspection.
- (3) The minimum ratio of adults to children was adhered to during the day as specified in column (3) of Part 1 of Schedule 6.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

- (1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-
- (a) having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day, and

Compliance Information

(1)(a) Rooms 1 and 2 were well resourced with a wide variety of age-appropriate play and learning equipment and materials that provided a stimulating and curious learning environment for the children, both indoors and in the outdoor area. All equipment and materials were accessible to the children and grouped to encourage children to use them independently. The tables and chairs provided were child sized which enabled all children to sit comfortably for snack and tabletop activities. All equipment and furniture were observed in a clean and well-maintained condition. The outdoor area was well resourced and included space for the children to run freely and engage in playground games. Equipment included trikes, tuk tuk style tricycles, an integrated climbing / slide unit, a growing area, and a wooden playhouse, balls and hoops. There was a space which had a retractable roof to facilitate outdoor play for the children if the weather was inclement. The children also can use the outdoor space in the school grounds and a spacious natural /wild flower garden adjacent to the child care service.

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

The service had a healthy eating policy in place. The children were observed to have healthy snacks including sandwiches, crackers, cheese, fruit and yogurts.

Fresh drinking water was readily available in the pre-school throughout the morning.

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:

The entrance door to the service was controlled by staff to prevent children from exiting the service unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the pre-school rooms. The service met the necessary safety requirements in respect of the indoor environment, toys and equipment and safe storage of cleaning agents. The staff members ensured that grapes provided for snacks were cut in half to mitigate the risk of a child potentially choking.

Infection Control:

Thermostatically controlled hot water, liquid hand soap and paper hand towel, hygienically dispensed from wall mounted units, were readily available for hygienic hand washing and drying. The staff members supervised children's handwashing and handwashing routines were well established and observed.

Nappy changing was carried out, as observed, in line with the nappy change policy of the service. Gloves, plastic aprons, and nappy sacks were available for hygienic nappy changing practices. Foot pedal operated bins were provided for the disposal of used tissues, nappies and paper towel.

Written cleaning schedules were maintained for all room environments which were observed to be maintained in a clean and hygienic condition.

Administration of Medication:

Medication was not given at the time of the inspection and during conversations with various staff members, they advised they were aware of the procedures to be followed to administer medicine safely to a child if required while attending the service.

Safe Sleep:

A comfortable rest area was available in the preschool rooms for any preschool child who wished to rest or take a break from activities.

Fire Safety:

Regular monthly fire drills were carried out and records were maintained. All fire exits were easily identifiable and unobstructed. The staff were aware of the evacuation procedures in the event of a fire or other emergency.

Outing:

Outings do not take place from the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

- (1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.
- (2) Where there are more than 15 children attending a pre-school service in a drop-in centre, the registered provider shall ensure that one employee or unpaid worker is assigned responsibility for the checking in and out of children.
- (3) A registered provider shall ensure that-
- (a) no person other than-
 - (i) pre-school child attending the service,
 - (ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,
 - (iii) an employee, or
 - (iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and
 - (b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.
- (4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (3)(b) is retained for a period of one year from the date to which it relates.

Compliance Information

- (1) The registered provider ensured that each child was checked in and out of the service. This was confirmed by the written attendance records maintained for the pre-school rooms inspected.
- (2) Not applicable as this was not a drop-in service.
- (3) (a),(b) The registered provider ensured that any person entering the service was approved and a record in writing was maintained.
- (4) The registered provider confirmed that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (3)(b) is retained for a period of one year from the date to which it relates.

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) Persons trained in first aid responder (FAR) training were immediately available to the children attending the service.
- (2)(a),(b) The first aid boxes were suitably equipped and stored in conspicuous positions in the pre-school rooms inspected and immediately available for the children at all times.

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 fire drills which were completed monthly in the service, the last recorded fire drill took place 25 October 2023.
- (b) A record was kept of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises. Firefighting equipment and the smoke/fire detection system was last serviced 1 April 2023.
- (4) Notices of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were conspicuously displayed in the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

There was evidence of current insurance cover valid until 27 March 2024. The insurance provided cover for 66 children.