

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015KK048
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Lisdowney Montessori Play & Learn
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Resource Centre, Lisdowney, Kilkenny
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<b>Eircode:</b>	R95 WNF4
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Helen Coogan
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<b>Service type:</b>	Part Time
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<b>Date(s) of Inspection:</b>	27 February 2023
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	20	PM	N/A
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate. Tusla Child and Family Agency, Athy Road, Carlow.
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	Ann Spain
<b>Title:</b>	Registration Support Manager.

### 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

Lisdowney Montessori Play and Learn is a part-time service under the present ownership since 2013. The registered provider is leasing the single storey building which is in a rural village in north Kilkenny. The stone building on church grounds comprises of three separate playrooms, sanitary accommodation for children, a cleaning store, and a kitchenette off one playroom. Sanitary accommodation for staff is available in the adjoining church. Outdoor play areas are provided both directly outside of the service and in a separate area across the road from the service. Parking is available outside of the boundary walls to the service. The service is operational between the hours of 8.30am and 1.30pm and is currently caring for children in the age range two years six months to six years. The registered provider works directly with the children in the service.

### Staffing

The service employs three adults who have childcare qualifications at Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) level 6 and level 7. One staff member has availed of Access and Inclusion model (LINC) training. Experience in childcare varies from 12 to 15 years.

### 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 9 Management and recruitment, 11 Staffing levels, 19 Health, welfare and development of child, 22 Food and drink, 23 Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child, 25 First aid, 26 Fire safety and 28 Insurance.

The scope of the inspection included all rooms in the 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 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-

- (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.

#### Compliance Information

(1)(a) The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.

(b) Both the designated person in charge and the named person to deputise as required were present in the service on the day of and for the duration of the inspection.

(c) It was observed on the day of inspection that each staff member was aware of their roles and responsibilities which included taking children to the smaller room for group activities, working with children in the main playroom and making recordings in the children's diaries throughout the day.

(2)(b) Validated references from sources other than past employers were held on file for both staff members working in the service with the registered provider.

(c) A garda vetting disclosure from the National Vetting Bureau as conducted on the 10 May 2021 was held on file in respect of all three staff working in the service.

(d) A police clearance was held on file in respect of two staff members who had lived outside of the state for over six consecutive months as adults.

### 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.*

*(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) An adequate number of adults were working directly with the children for the duration of the sessional service. Three staff members were present on the day of inspection with a total of 20 children. The attendance register held in the service confirmed that the total number currently enrolled in the service was 25 children with 3 staff members present daily.

#### Non-Compliance Information

(8)(a) While the three staff members remained in the service for the duration of the inspection the registered provider informed the inspector that one staff member remained in the service after sessional hours and between the hours of 1.00 and 1.30pm to care for the reduced number of children remaining for part-time care. The service was registered to care for a maximum of 33 children and cared for a total of 5 children on a part-time basis. A second staff member was not recorded on the staff roster, to remain in the service after sessional hours, as required by a part-time service.

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

##### Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider advised in the response to the inspection report as received on the 11 April 2023 that two staff members are now rostered to remain in the service after sessional hours.

##### Supporting documentation submitted

It was advised in the response that the new roster will remain in place for the part-time hours in the service.

#### Summary Comment

The registered provider's response meets the requirements of the childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

### 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

The following activities were observed on the day of inspection to promote each child's learning, development and well-being while cared for in the service.

#### Basic needs.

Children were assisted to put on their coats and reflector jackets at 10.00am to play outdoors. On return indoors, children were observed to be assisted to take off their coats and hang them on hooks in the front hallway.

Children were supervised for hand washing on return from outdoor play and before breaktime in the service and after going to the toilet. Staff sat with the children at break time and engaged in conversation with the children in a relaxed manner. Children were allowed finish their lunch at their individual pace while other children moved to tables to play in small groups. A child with a preference to sit alone at break time was facilitated at a small low-level table with an individual chair, offered comfort and assisted with opening a yogurt as required. The children were afforded the time to independently collect their lunch boxes from the refrigerator in the "home room" and replace them in their bags after break time.

#### Supporting relationships around children.

On entry to the "home room" and main room in use in the service the inspector was introduced to the children and the relaxed atmosphere in the room prevailed as circle time continued with the children in attendance. Staff were observed to play games with the children outside and assist with the skipping ropes, while children played on bicycles and cars, with dolls, prams and with the sand in a sand box. The two staff in the "home room" were observed to ask children questions and wait for the children's answers as the springtime poster on the wall and farm animals were discussed.

Children were praised for freely offering information on what happens on their family farms when animals were both fed and got sick in addition to what they saw on an agriculture programme on television. A staff member was observed to get down to a child's level when approached by the child to answer a question posed.

A small group of children were taken to the Montessori room by a staff member during the inspection.

One to one assistance with the children was offered as children matched cards and made jigsaws associated with the cards. Children were praised for making necklaces and rainbows with interlocking stick together bricks. All children were returned to the main playroom before home time for story time. Staff were observed to ask appropriate open-ended questions about the animals in the story book, allow time for the children to respond and listen attentively to each child's response.

A daily diary book was in use in the service and key staff members recorded details on each child in their individual diary. Details recorded included an activity the child enjoyed and any concerns or upsets during the day in the service. Diaries served to communicate daily with parents and guardians and were placed in the children's bag to take home. In addition, a folder for each child was held in the service and served as a means of providing parents and guardians information on their child's progress and development over the course of the year in the service.

### **Physical and material environment.**

There were three separate rooms available for daily use in the service. The main playroom called the "home room" was equipped with a variety of toys and play equipment in defined areas of interest. Pictures from the children's home settings were on display in an area to promote identity and belonging. Flowers were growing on the nature table. A kitchen with food and utensils, dolls and a separate dolls house was provided in a home corner. Lorries, cars, blocks and bricks of different sizes and dimensions were provided for construction play. A black board, paints, colours, and shapes were provided for arts and crafts activities and an open unit provided to dry paintings before going on display.

The "sensory room" in the service was equipped with a world globe, dress up clothing, puppets, soft toys, and a theatre. A variety of arts and crafts materials were available including coloured sheets of paper, loose feathers, and connection toys. The Montessori room was equipped with play and work equipment to cater for life tasks including opening, tying, threading, locking, and pouring. Spindles, peg boards, rods, blocks and bricks were observed in the mathematical area. Mats were provided for children to sit on at floor level and engage in construction activities.

All three playrooms in the service were equipped with play equipment for tabletop activities which included jigsaws, puzzles, and games. Books were provided in the rooms for children to freely avail of and for story time before going home at the end of the sessional service.

The outdoor play area directly outside of the service had a shed to store outdoor play equipment. Wheel along toys, bouncing balls, a sand box and space to run around were available on the day of inspection on a smooth tarmac surface.

A grass surfaced area enclosed by timber fencing and a stone wall was also available to the service to facilitate physically active play. This area was located directly across the road with access from a zebra crossing outside of the service. The registered provider outlined the manner in which the children were taken to the second outdoor play area wearing high visibility jackets and the use of a rope for children to hold in the company of three adults working in the service to safely get to the second outdoor area in use in the service. Toys in the grass surfaced area included a slide and swing, tyres to climb on and a sand box. A storage shed was on site to store away toys daily after use.

### Non-Compliance Information

#### Basic needs.

A designated rest and relaxation area, was not available in the service for children to relax comfortably from the activities of the day and whenever they close to.

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

#### Corrective and Preventive Action

Subsequent to the inspection written confirmation and picture evidence was submitted to the inspectorate on the 13 March 2023 to confirm that a rest and relaxation area was provided in the “home room” in the service.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

The picture evidence submitted confirmed the provision of a soft floor mat, low level bed, cushions, and a bench to sit on beside open shelving where books were in the rest area.

### Summary Comment

The registered provider’s response meets the requirements of the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

### 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

All meals and snacks were provided by parents and guardians of preschool children in attendance in the service. Children brought their individual drinking beakers to the service with drinks to freely avail of while cared for in the service.

On the day of inspection lunches brought to the service by the children included sandwiches with a variety of fillings including ham and cheese, crackers, rice cakes, yogurts, and a selection of fruit such as bananas and oranges. The kitchen area off the home room was equipped with a sink and a dishwasher to assist with wash up and cleaning after break times. The two refrigerators in the home room provided suitable storage for perishable foods and snacks on arrival of children to the service and before break times.

### 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 floors in the service were surfaced with a heavy-duty lino which was in a good state of repair and maintenance on the day of inspection.
- Entrance to the service was secured from the inside with a high-level door latch and a doorbell provided to assist with early arrivals, late collections, and unauthorised access.
- A cleaning store was available to store cleaning equipment in an area outside of the playrooms.
- A high-level shelf in the kitchen provided a suitable location for the storage of cleaning chemicals in an area children had no access to.
- Children's bags and coats were stored in the hallway at the exit from the service and in an area outside of the playrooms.

- The perimeters of the grounds were secured with stone walls and cast-iron gates denied children access to the roadway when in the outdoor play area outside of the service.

### **Infection Control:**

- Wash hand basins located adjacent to the children's sanitary accommodation and in the Montessori room were provided with liquid soap, disposable paper towels and foot pedal operated bins.
- There was availability of spare clothing for each child to limit the transmission of infection should their clothing become soiled.
- Documented cleaning schedules were available, and the dishwasher assisted with daily cleaning of toys in the service.
- A storeroom was available to store cleaned toys not required for everyday use and for rotation in the service.
- The openable windows in all rooms in the service ensured a good supply of fresh air directly from outside of the building.

### **Administration of Medication:**

The service had a policy to administer medication and parental consent was noted on the children's enrolment forms. Any medication administered to children was also recorded daily in the children's daily diary for parents to sign. In addition, a record was maintained in the kitchen of any medications administered which included details of the child's name, date of birth, amount given and the signatures of the staff members who both administered medication and witnessed the administration.

### **Fire Safety:**

Fire extinguishers were located at the front and side door access points to the service and in the kitchen. A fire assembly point was located on a sign in the outdoor play area outside of the service.

### **Outing:**

The children had access to daily outdoor play directly outside of the service. Children were observed to avail of outdoor play dressed appropriately in coats and hats. The inspector also observed that daily outdoor play was posted on the daily activity programme as documented in the service.

### Non-Compliance Information

#### General Safety:

The surface temperature of the electric radiators in the home room was recorded as 64°C and the ambient air temperature was recorded as 14 to 15°C in the room. Radiators were not protected by fixed guards or maintained at a maximum surface temperature of 50°C with an accompanying ambient air temperature between 18 and 22°C.

#### Infection Control:

There was no hot water supply to wash hand basins and the kitchen sink on the day of inspection to safely wash children's hands and to assist with cleaning in the service.

### Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective & Preventive Action

#### General Safety:

The registered provider advised in the response to the inspection report as received on the 11 April 2023 that radiators will be covered with fixed guards. It was also advised that the registered provider will engage with the management committee with responsibility for running the community building to resolve the heating issue in the building during the summer months when the service is closed. Picture evidence was submitted by the registered provider on the 17 April 2023 to confirm that both radiators in the home room have been covered with fixed guards and secured in place.

#### Infection Control:

The registered provider submitted written confirmation on the 13 March 2023 to advise that the heating element in the hot water cylinder has been replaced and the water temperature is thermostatically controlled.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

#### General Safety:

The registered provider confirmed in their response that a meeting with the centre committee has been requested to address the heating in the building and that remedial work will be conducted during the summer closure of the service. Picture evidence was also submitted to confirm that the existing radiators in the home room have been provided with fixed guards.

#### Infection Control:

The written submission was dated 28 February 2023 and signed by the person responsible for carrying out the remedial work

## Summary Comment

The registered provider's response meets the requirements of the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 will be reviewed on the next inspection.

## 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 three adults working in the service had up to date first aid responder training with expiry dates of 10 April 2023 in respect of one staff member and the 2 July 2023 in respect of the remaining two staff members.

(2)(a)(b) A first aid box was held in storage in the kitchen in the 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 record was maintained of fire drills as conducted in the service. The last monthly fire drill was recorded on the 23 February 2023.
- (b) The maintenance record for both the fire extinguishers and the smoke alarm system in the service confirmed that a service was conducted in November 2022.
- (4) A notice of the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire was on display in the home room in the service.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

#### Compliance Information

The service had insurance cover for a maximum of 26 children in daily attendance in a part-time service. Insurance was valid from 12 September 2022 to 27 March 2023.