

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015KY007				
Name of Service:	Ballyard Montessori School				
Address of Service:	Slumber Haven, Ballyard, Tralee, Co. Kerry				
Eircode:	V92 AY16				
Name of Registered Provider:	Betty Brosnan				
Service type:	Sessional				
Date(s) of Inspection:	18/09/2024				
No of pre-school children:	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>AM</td> <td>09</td> <td>PM</td> <td>None</td> </tr> </table>	AM	09	PM	None
AM	09	PM	None		
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Áras an Phobail, Deans Lane, Tralee, Co. Kerry.				
Inspection undertaken by:	N. Reidy				
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

Ballyard Montessori is a private early years service that is registered to provide care for children aged between the 2 years and 6 years. The service is registered as operating 1 session between the hours of 08:30 am and 12 mid-day. The service operates from a room attached to the registered provider's private residence. The children attending the service have access each day to a designated outdoor play area directly accessible from the playroom.

Staffing

There are 2 staff employed in the service of whom 1 is 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 unannounced and focused on the area of governance/ health, welfare and development of child/ safety.

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 member 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) The registered provider is the designated person in charge and there is a named deputy.
(b) At all times during the period when the pre-school service is being carried on, the registered provider and the named deputy is on the premise.
- (2)
The registered provider confirmed that 2 adults were employed in the service.
The recruitment records in respect of these adults were the subject of this inspection.
(a)
Three written references and validations were on file from a past employer.
(b)
One written reference and validation was on file from a source other than a past employer.
(c)
The service had demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years in respect of the adults.
(d)
Not applicable, the 2 adults did not reside outside of the jurisdiction for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months.
(4) The adults working directly with the children had attained Quality Qualifications Ireland (QQI) in childcare training at Level 6 and above.

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) Throughout the period of inspection, the registered provider did ensure that there was an adequate number of adults caring for the children attending the service.
- (3) There were 2 adults caring for 9 children aged between 2 years 8 months to 4 years attending the service on a sessional basis. The adult child ratio was correct and maintained.
- (8)(c) Not applicable as the service does not operate single-handedly.

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

- Healthy eating is promoted in the service.
- The service had a Healthy Eating policy in place.
- The meal observed on inspection was the mid- morning snack, it was served to the children in the outdoor covered in area, children sat on the low-level chairs at the low-level tables.
- Each of the children were given ample time to eat and enjoy their food without being rushed.
- The atmosphere during the mealtime was relaxed, with the registered provider reading a story to the children as they ate.
- Children who had finished their food before others went off to play in the spacious outdoor area, some on the ride on toys and some playing chasing games for example.
- The children were appropriately dressed for the outdoors, outdoor protective clothing was put on prior to going outside, some children wore sun hats and all children had sunscreen applied.
- The children played in the spacious area, on the concrete surface and on the grassed area. There was a variety of equipment and materials in the area that supported children's play, movement and exploration. The children enjoyed physical exercise and play for example on the ride on toys, the climbing frame, the toy kitchens and associated utensils, the sand table and the mature shrubs and trees for exploration.
- The children had unrestricted access to the toilets located in the playroom.

- The staff were observed to be sensitive and responsive to the children’s individual toiletry needs, giving them one-to-one attention in a discreet and in an unhurried manner.
- The service provided a rest/relaxation area located near the book display area, it consisted of low-level chairs, matting and a selection of cushions.
- The inspector observed the children had free movement within the playroom. They independently accessed the various toys and play materials they wanted to play with from the low-level open shelving.
- Protective aprons were stored on low level hooks in the playroom, the aprons were used by the children who were painting at the painting easel.
- The staff were kind, caring and attentive to the children’s need. They listened to the children as they communicated their needs, they were active in the children’s play and supported the children in their interactions with other children.
- The playroom was decorated with a selection of artwork the children had completed since starting back in pre-school, for example handprints, buzzy bee’s plates and spider rolls.

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 parents of the children attending provide all food served to the children in the service.
- The food observed at the mealtime that was morning snack included for example: -a selection of fruit, crackers, buttered brown bread, with milk and water to drink.
- Drinking water was available to the children attending the service.
- A system was in place whereby each child’s food and drink’s bottles brought from home was labelled and identifiable to the child.
- The children’s perishable food items were individually labelled and stored in the fridge in the playroom.

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 internal doors were so secured to prevent children accessing unsafe areas for example the door leading to the registered provider's private residence.
- The external doors were appropriately secured to prevent children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised access in.
- The outdoor play area was secured.
- Grapes observed by the children at the mealtime were cut in half.
- The first aid box was stored on a high-level shelf in the playroom out of the reach of the children.
- The cleaning agents observed were stored out of the reach of the children.

Infection Control:

- The tables were cleaned down in the covered in area outdoors prior to the mealtime.
- All children washed their hands prior to the mealtime.
- A supply of warm water, liquid hand soap and disposable paper hand towels were in place at each of the sinks on the premise for the effective handwashing by the children and the adults.
- Lidded pedal operated bins were provided for waste disposal.

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 registered provider ensured that there were staff available at all times with appropriate first aid responder (FAR) training. The FAR certifications on file indicated that the 2 staff members held current up to date training.

- (2) (a) There was a suitably equipped first aid box available to the children attending. The box was stored on a high-level shelving unit in the playroom.
- (b) The first aid equipment was available to 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 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) The service had maintained in writing a record of the following: -
- (a) A template to record each fire drill that had taken place in the service. The last recorded fire drill took place on 06/06/'24 that was prior to the summer holidays. The records on file demonstrated that up to June 2024 monthly fire drills were conducted in the service.
- (b) A record of the number, type, and maintenance checks of the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarm. The records on file demonstrated the last check for the smoke alarm was 20.12.'23 and for the firefighting equipment was 29.11.'23.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire was 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

A copy of the insurance certification for the service was on file and displayed in the playroom.

The information provided on the insurance certificate included:

- the contact details for the insurance provider
- the name and address of the service insured
- the categories of insurance cover for the service that is sessional care.
- the number of children covered by the insurance was for 11 children.

The expiry date of the current insurance cover was 27/03/'25