

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015KY070
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Name of Service:	Little House Montessori
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Address of Service:	Mercy Primary School, Moyderwell, Tralee, Co. Kerry
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Eircode:	V92 AE70
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Name of Registered Provider:	Helen Brick
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	13/03/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	14	PM	0
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Aras an Phobail, Deans Lane, Tralee, Co. Kerry.
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Inspection undertaken by:	N. Reidy
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Title:	Early Years Inspector
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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

Little House Montessori is a private early years service that is registered to provide care for children aged between the age of 2 years and 6 years. The service is registered as operating 2 sessions between the hours of 08:45 am and 11:45, 11.:45 and 2:45pm Monday to Friday inclusive. The service operates from a room in the hall on the grounds of Moyderwell primary school. The children attending the service have access each day to a covered enclosed outdoor classroom located to the side of the building, to the spacious hall and to a designated outdoor playground with soft matting located within the school grounds, at allocated times from the national school children.

Staffing

There are 4 adults employed in the service, of whom 1 is the registered provider who are involved in the direct care of the children. This includes adults employed under the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) Support Scheme. In addition, a student was undertaking work placement at the time of inspection.

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/ premises and facilities. The inspections 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 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.*

(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 are named deputies who can deputize as required on the premise.

(b) At all times during the period when the pre-school service is being carried on, the designated person in charge or the named deputy is on the premise.

(2)
The registered provider confirmed that four adults were employed in the service and one student on work placement.

The recruitment records in respect of these adults were the subject of this inspection.

(a)
Six written references and validations were on file from a past employer.

(b)
Four written references and validations were 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 all adults.

(d)
Police Vetting was on file for two adults who had resided outside 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 5 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 was 1 session in operation on the day of the inspection. There were 3 adults caring for 14 children aged between 3 to 5 years attending the service on a sessional basis. In addition, there was a student on work placement from a third Level College. The adult child ratio was correct.

(8)(c) Not applicable as the service does not operate single-handedly.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:

- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;*
- (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;*
- (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;*
- (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;*
- (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;*
- (f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;*
- (g) the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner;*
- (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;*
- (i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.*

Compliance Information

There was a record for each of the 21 children enrolled in the service of which a sample of 11 records was inspected. Each of the 11 records had the required detail as per(a) to (i) inclusive.

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:

- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*

Compliance Information

(1) A record in writing was kept in relation to the service of the following was maintained:

(h)

A record of the arrival and departure time for each child attending the service on a daily basis.

(i)

Details of staff rosters on a daily basis.

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

- The adults caring for the children were kind, caring and respectful towards the children, they spoke to the children in low soft tones of voice.
- The adults interacted in a positive way with the children for example they sat at children's level, maintained eye contact, demonstrated empathy and a good understanding of children's needs and were observed to be caring and supportive in their interactions with the children.
- The children were facilitated and supported in their various choices of play, they played individually, in small and in the larger group.
- The group enjoyed a musical movement break in the indoor hall during the session as well as time in outdoor classroom for which they were dressed appropriately with their coats and hats. The outdoor play area was not used during the inspection due to the inclement weather conditions.
- The inspector observed children's individual needs for settling into the service were accommodated, the adults were mindful of the time taken for children to adjust to the service environment.

- The playroom was decorated with St. Patrick's Day themed artwork, there were a variety of toys available and accessible to the children on low level open shelving in the room together with a designated station with paper and pencils, painting supplies and painting easel and an array of reading books displayed in an areas with a small rug and supply of soft cushions placed on the carpet tiled flooring.
- The children had unrestricted access to the allocated toilets located outside of the playroom in the indoor hall. Children were observed being accompanied to the toilet at all times in a timely manner. The adults discretely reminded and asked children as they were engrossed in play time if they wanted to use the toilet outside of the planned times.
- The children located their own lunch bags from the labelled cubbies in the playroom, helped by the adults with opening food boxes and packaging as was needed. They sat at the low-level tables on the low-level chairs to eat and each of the 4 adults present sat with a group of children.
- The food consumed by the children was supplied by the parents. The food observed consisted of buttered bread rolls, crackers, wraps, cheese and a variety of fresh fruits and dried fruits. The inspector observed the adults reminding and encouraging the children to take drinks from their individual drink's bottles at the mealtime.
- A jug of water and cups were provided in the room during the session.

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) There were 2 adults working with the children with current First Aid Responder (FAR) training, the certifications in respect of these were open to inspection.

(2) (a) The suitably equipped first aid box was stored on a high-level shelf in the playroom.

(b) The first aid box was accessible to the adults and out of the reach of the children

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-

(c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated

(e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.

Compliance Information

(c) The premise was adequately heated, the air temperature of the playroom was maintained within the appropriate limits, it was recorded at 18.3 degrees Celsius.

(e) On the day of inspection, the sanitary accommodation for the children consisted of 2 toilets and 3 wash hand basins. The warm water supply provided at the 3 wash hand basins was recorded below the maximum temperature of 43 degrees Celsius at each wash hand basin.