

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015KY075
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Name of Service:	Maggies Montessori
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Address of Service:	Clohane, Ironmills, Killarney, Co. Kerry
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Eircode:	V93 NR4C
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Name of Registered Provider:	Margaret O'Sullivan
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	16/04/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	21	PM	None
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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).

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Description of service

Maggie's Montessori is registered as a privately operated early years service, catering for children aged between 2 years and 6 years on a sessional basis. The children attending on inspection were aged between 3 years and 5 years. The service offers one session between the hours of 9 am and 12 pm Monday to Friday.

The service is located in a purpose-built building at the registered provider's home setting in the rural area of Clohane, Killarney, Co. Kerry. The service consists of 2 playrooms with sanitary accommodation and outdoor play areas located at the front and at the back of the building. In addition, since the previous inspection, the registered provider constructed a covered in well-resourced outdoor space located inside the newly constructed secured high level fencing and a gate located at the front of the premise.

Staffing

There are 3 adults attached to the service employed to work directly with the children each day. This includes the registered provider. There was 1 adult employed under the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) Support Scheme.

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. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

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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.*

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(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 to deputise in her absence as required.
- (b) When the unannounced inspection commenced, the registered provider and the named deputy were on duty to assist with the inspection process.
- (2) The recruitment records in relation to each of the 3 adults attached to the service were inspected.
- (a) Of the six references required, there were 4 references from previous employers with records of validation on file.
- (b) Of the six references required, there were 2 references with records of validation on file from a source other than a past employer.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for each of the 3 adults. However, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. Please refer to the information outlined under Regulation 23 of this report.
- (d) Not applicable, the 3 adults had not resided outside the jurisdiction for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months.
- (4) The 3 staff working directly with the children had achieved major awards in Early Childhood Care and Education, as listed on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) with copies of the relevant qualifications on file.

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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 3 adults caring for 21 children between 2 playrooms. The children were aged between 3 years to 5 years and were 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

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Compliance Information

(1)(a)

Basic Needs: -

- On the inspector's arrival to the service the children were playing indoors.
- The inspector was informed by the staff member's that children's individual toiletry needs were accommodated in consultation with the parents.
- Self- toileting by the children was encouraged and practiced as observed on inspection.
- The proximity of the sanitary accommodation in the pre-school rooms ensured that staff were available to supervise and help the children at all times as was observed on inspection.
- The inspector observed the staff members to promptly facilitate the children going inside to use the toilet from the outdoor areas. The staff communicated with each other as to the names of the children gone inside to supervise them.
- The service promoted healthy eating and the food provided by the parents/guardians for the snack was observed to be healthy and nutritious.
- The tables were cleaned down before and after the snack time, with the children helping the staff to clean up and sweep the floor with their small brushes.
- The staff were observed to be kind and caring towards the children they were caring for.
- The staff were attentive to the children's needs and picked up on children's individual cues, for example for not feeling well at snack time when not eating. The staff member came down to the child's level, asked how the child was feeling and proceeded to check the child's temperature. The child was encouraged and facilitated to rest on the low-level seating in the playroom, whilst re-assured that contact was made with the parent/guardian to arrange early collection from the service.
- The children were supported and encouraged by the staff to participate in activities of their choice, individually, in pairs, small groups and in large groups.
- The children played with various tabletop activities and participated in the large group circle time for example that was facilitated by the registered provider.
- The theme for the circle time was the life cycle of a frog. The service had a water tank with tadpoles, this was placed in the centre of the table with magnifying glasses available for children to easily see and examine them, supported by visuals used by the registered provider to illustrate the tadpole's stages of development.

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Physical and Material Environment

- The service provided a flexible and responsive environment, reactive to the emerging changing needs, preferences and interests of the children attending as evidenced whereby the children had the choice of using the indoor and outdoor environments for play activities during the session.
- Some children availed of one-to-one time with staff in the newly constructed covered in outdoor space, fully enclosed and secured in place since the last inspection.
- The area was designed to support all children and in particular children with individualized sensory needs, with a variety of play materials and toys provided. There were wall mounted activity panels, a bubble tube sensory light positioned near soft seating, high level soft string lighting overhead, a gently swinging hammock and artificial grass underfoot. Outside the area, there was a space with seating and tarmac underfoot.
- The outdoor play area at the rear of the service had a variety of play materials and toys available and accessible to them, including a fixed activity unit, playhouses, a large wall mounted chalk board with chalks, benches, small vehicles and ride on toys.
- The playrooms were resourced with a range of equipment and materials displayed on low level open shelving units and within easy reach for the children to independently access them as they so wished.
- There were defined interest areas with materials and resources which enhanced all the children's developmental areas.
- The rooms were colourfully decorated with a selection of educational posters, children's artwork, murals and photographs of activities the children took part in the service. In addition, the children's birthdays were displayed and their family photographs that were placed at a low level for children to easily see.
- The service had visuals (toilet, outside, sore tummy, snack) positioned above a push button command device that recorded the voice of the registered provider for the individual words. This was to help and support individual children to understand what was happening in the "now" and what the child wanted "next".

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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/guardians provide all the food that is consumed for the snack in the service.
- The children had access to their water bottles during the session as they wanted.
- The children's individual needs were catered for, whereby the food and drink was available throughout the session, to enable children to eat small amounts as they wanted to.
- The food observed for the morning snack included sandwiches and a selection of fruit.

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 temperature of the warm water at the wash hand basins in the sanitary accommodation was recorded below the required 43 degrees Celsius.
- The first aid box was stored on a high-level shelf in the playroom located at the front of the service, out of the reach of the children.
- The outdoor areas were secured with fencing, walls and gates. The registered provider had installed new raised fencing at the main entrance to the service.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. The temperature of the warm water at the 2 wash hand basins was recorded above the required range of 43 degrees Celsius. The temperatures recorded ranged between 43.1 and 44.6 degrees Celsius, posing a risk of scalding to children.

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- Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for the 3 adults attached to the service. However, 2 vetting disclosures were not dated within the previous three years in adherence with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EY-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

- The adjustable thermostatic mixer in the hot press has been adjusted and the water temperature is now less than 43 degrees Celsius. A water thermometer was purchased for regular checks.
- The updated Garda vetting has been applied for.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

- The statement is accepted as evidence.
- The Garda vetting disclosures in respect of the 2 staff members were received.

Summary Comment

All evidence received was reviewed. The requirement for this regulation has been met.

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

- Of the three staff members working in the service, 1 staff member had a current certified First Aid Responder certificate (FAR).
- The sufficiently equipped first aid box was stored on a high-level shelf in the front playroom, out of reach of children.
 - At all times when the service is in operation, the first aid box was accessible to the adults in the event that children required them.

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