

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LH074
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Name of Service:	Play'n'Learn Montessori School
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Address of Service:	Townley Hall Road, Tullyallen, Drogheda, Co. Louth
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Eircode:	A92 AY29
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Name of Registered Provider:	Jayne Gilpin
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	08/10/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	10	PM	No.
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate Child Wellbeing Centre, Castleblayney Co. Monaghan
Inspection undertaken by:	M. Flood
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	Not Applicable
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Description of service

Play n Learn Montessori School is a privately owned service that has been in operation since 1999. The service provides sessional care and education to pre-school children aged from 2 to 6 years of age and participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme. The service caters for a maximum of 11 children and operates from 9:00 to 12:30 each weekday.

This service operates from the registered providers own home. It is located in a rural area of Co. Louth and has parking onsite for drop off and collection. The premises consist of a purposely developed playroom, storage and sanitary areas and an outdoor play area to the side of the building.

Staffing

The registered provider works directly with the children attending the early years' service on a daily basis. One additional staff member is the designated emergency contact person and is also available to provide relief in the service as required.

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.

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 would like to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider 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)&(b)The service had a designated person in charge who is also the registered provider and was present throughout the inspection. Although not present on the day one additional staff member is the designated emergency contact person and is available to provide relief in the service as required

(2) There were 3 files presented for inspection including the registered provider, emergency contact person and an adult household member. The following were reviewed:

(a) & (b) There were 2 written and validated references from a past employer or an alternative source available for each of the 2 members of staff and the adult household member.

(c) Documentary evidence of a processed Garda vetting disclosure was available for the 2 members of staff and household member. The registered provider adhered to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Following a review of the staff files presented, evidence of international police vetting was not required at this time.

(4) Documentary evidence was available to demonstrate that each member of staff, who works directly with the pre-school children held at least the minimum required level 5 on the National Framework of Childcare Qualifications

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) On the day of inspection there was an adequate number of staff working directly with the children attending the service.

(3) The adult to child ratios were correct in the service when the inspector arrived unannounced at 10:20 and remained so throughout the inspection. There were 10 preschool children aged 2 - 4 years present with one staff member.

(8)(c) The registered provider provided details of a 2nd member of staff who is available to provide relief in the service or to assist in the event of an emergency.

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:

- (a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;*
- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*
- (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

Compliance Information

(1)(a) Documentary evidence of a curriculum vitae was available for each member of staff that detailed the qualifications, experience and/or the requirement for international police vetting if applicable.

(h) A written record was available of the arrival and departure times for the children attending the service on a daily basis.

(i) Documentary evidence was available of the daily staff roster, including the arrival and departure times of the staff member.

(j) The registered provider confirmed that no medications have been administered in the service. Medication administration sheets were available for documentation should they be required.

(k) It was confirmed by the registered provider that no accidents or incidents have occurred in the service to date this year or for the school term last year. Accident and incident records were available for documentation should they be required.

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

Healthy eating is generally promoted in the service as evidenced by the variety of foods, sandwiches and fresh fruit that was available at snack time. The registered provider when questioned was familiar with the requirement to prepare foods safely e.g. small fruits and vegetables and advised that this information is communicated to the parents. All snacks and lunches are provided by the parents and were stored appropriately in the fridge. The children were encouraged to be independent at lunchtime and ‘helper roles’ were appointed on a daily basis to support independence and transitions in the daily routine. The children were afforded time to eat their lunches and social interactions and discussions were observed. The registered provider also sat with the children during snack time to have her own snack and joined in with the discussions.

All children attending the service had their own cups/drinks bottles, which were stored on low level shelving throughout the day and were available for the children to access as required.

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

It was observed that the registered provider has taken the following measures to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of the pre-school children attending the service including:

General Safety:

- The external doors were appropriately secured to prevent unauthorised access to the building and to prevent children exiting the service unsupervised.
- Designated emergency exit doors remained clear free from obstruction.
- Cleaning materials and equipment were stored out of the reach of children.
- The kitchen area was inaccessible to the preschool children.
- All blind cords in the service were restricted or inaccessible to the children

- The registered provider was observed to carry out a physical risk assessment of the outdoor area prior to outdoor play time to ensure that the external gates were locked, and potential hazards were removed.

Infection Control:

- Thermostatically controlled warm water, hand soap and single use paper towels were provided in the sanitary area to support effective hand washing. The children were obviously familiar with handwashing routines as they were observed to spontaneously roll up their sleeves and sing the 'handwashing' song in preparation for snack time.
- The premises and equipment were maintained in a clean and hygienic condition. Daily and weekly cleaning records were completed and detailed in the service attendance book.
- Pedal operated waste bins were observed in use and were appropriately maintained on the day of the inspection.
- Good environmental cleaning practices were observed during the inspection, with tables being wiped down prior to snack time and after activities
- A refrigerator was provided in service for the appropriate storage of the children's perishable snacks.

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 a person trained in first aid for children was at all times available to the children attending the service. Documentary evidence was available of an up to date First Aid Responder (FAR) qualification for two staff in the service.

(2)(a) and (b) The first aid box was adequately stocked and was stored in a conspicuous location where it was easily accessible in the event of an emergency.

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)(a) A record was maintained of all monthly fire drills which had been completed in the service.
- (b) A record was kept of the number, type and maintenance of the fire-fighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises dated the 20/10/2023.
- (4) Notices of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were conspicuously displayed on the premises