

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LK062
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Name of Service:	Diane's Montessori
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Address of Service:	Community Hall, Tournafulla Village, Tournafulla, Co. Limerick
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Eircode:	V42CF30
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Name of Registered Provider:	Diane Horgan
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	15/09/2023
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No of pre-school children:	AM	13	PM	No.
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla, Estuary House, Henry St, Limerick
Inspection undertaken by:	E Browne
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

This privately owned preschool service is operating from the Community Hall in Tournafulla , Co Limerick providing sessional care for children aged 2 to 6 years of age from 09.00 to 12.30hrs for 38 weeks of the year.

The staff and children have access to a designated playroom located upstairs in the community hall , an entrance area , sanitary facilities for the adults and children and a large, enclosed cement yard to the rear of the premises for outdoor playtime.

Staffing

The registered provider and 1 staff are working in the preschool service and all have a childcare qualification. Additional staff are available to assist in the event of an emergency.

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 inspections may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 19, 20 ,25, 26, 28.

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 person in charge, 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 designated person in charge was present on the day of the inspection. There was a second person available to deputise if needed.

(b) The staff roster indicated that the provider or their deputy was always available on the premises.

- (2)(a) Two written references were available for each adult working at the service.
- (b) All references were from each person's previous employers.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures received from the National Vetting Bureau of An Garda Síochána were available for all adults working at the service.
- (d) Police vetting was not required for any adult working at the service.
- (4) One adult working at the service had an appropriate qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education.

Non-Compliance Information

- (4) There was one staff working with the children on the day who did not have the required minimum Level 5 Early Childhood Care and Education qualification. While it is acknowledged that qualification components were available, evidence to clearly state they met the minimum requirements was not.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action.

- (4) This staff member present on the day is no longer working in the service. A new staff member has been recruited with the appropriate childcare qualification.

Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of the staff's childcare qualification was submitted to the Early Years Inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The action as stated by the registered provider in relation to the non-compliances identified under Regulation 9 (4) has been adequately addressed. This will be reviewed at the next inspection.

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.*

Compliance Information

- (1) The registered provider ensures that at all times the correct number of adults are rostered to work at the service.
- (3) On the day of the inspection there were 2 adults present with 13 preschool children. The adult/child ratio was correct for a sessional service.

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

(1)(a)

BASIC NEEDS:

There was a healthy eating policy in place in the service to encourage and educate the children about the importance of good nutrition. The parents supplied healthy snacks and drinks for the pre-school children. Perishable foods were stored in a refrigerator if required. Staff sat with the children at break time and actively encouraged meal time to be a social occasion.

Children had unrestricted access to the toilets which were located off the preschool room. Hot water, liquid soap and paper handtowels were accessible to ensure hygienic hand washing.

Foot pedal operated, lidded bins were used for the safe disposal of used tissues and handtowels. Staff were available to assist children at all times if needed. A change of clothes was available for all children if required. Protective clothing was available for children when engaging in messy play activities. The service provided individuals space and hooks for each child's coat and bag to support organised access and independence. Children had opportunities to move about freely in the playrooms during their free play time. The staff were positive and consistent in their approach to managing children's behaviour.

PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

The playroom located upstairs in the community hall was a large, bright and safe room and provided a good range of developmentally appropriate and challenging experiences for the children.

The range of Montessori and play resources was sufficient and varied to support all areas of children's development and offer sensory stimulation. These included materials that required children to use their gross motor, fine motor, thinking and reasoning skills and support their language development. The Montessori and play equipment was freely available and accessible to the children when needed on low level open shelving. Play equipment and materials were grouped to provide specific interest areas and appealing places for children to play and explore. Some of these included a home corner, a farm set with animals and shed, a library area, jig-saw area and an arts and crafts area. Materials and equipment were changed and rotated as required depending on the children's emergent interests, curriculum plans, children's preferences and their ability levels.

The outdoor facilities were accessible to the children each day for physical exercise and play.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

(1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-

(b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(b)

There was one small bean bag available to the 13 preschool children present, which was inadequate and didn't encourage a child or a small group of children to have some quiet activities of their choice or have a rest with soft seating to sit or lie down.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

A two-seater couch has been ordered for the service.

Supporting documentation submitted

The invoice order was submitted to the inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The action as stated by the registered provider in relation to the non-compliances identified under Regulation 20 (1)9b) has been adequately addressed. This will be assessed at 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) There was one staff present on the day of the inspection who had completed first aid responder training and the certificates was in date with an expiry date of the 17th of September 2024.

(2)(a) There was a well-stocked first aid box located on the premises.

(b) The first aid box was readily available and easily accessible if required.

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) Fire drills were carried out monthly up until June 2023. The service reopened in early September 2023 and plan on carrying out a fire drill in the coming weeks.

(b) A record of the number, type and maintenance of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms were available on the premises with the most recent service carried out on the 19th of October 2022.

(4) The fire evacuation procedures were displayed on the wall at the entrance to the Preschool room.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider had a current insurance certificate which outlined that adequate insurance was available for 22 preschool children to attend the service. The insurance cover commenced on the 28th of November 2022 and expired on the 27th of November 2023.