

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LK089
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Name of Service:	Karibu Montessori
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Address of Service:	The Newtown Centre Annacotty Co Limerick
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Eircode:	V94DK02
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Name of Registered Provider:	Liza Eyres
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	24 February 2025
Date of Regulatory Compliance Meeting:	15 April 2025
Date of Regulatory Enforcement Meeting:	15 May 2025

No of pre-school children:	AM	83	PM	70
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Office, 2 nd Floor Estuary House, Henry Street Limerick
Inspection undertaken by:	J Ryan and E Browne
Title:	Early Years Inspectors

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

3rd July 2025

Regulation 9 Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016

The Registered Provider will be required to comply with the following condition:

- Ensure 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.

This condition is in place for 12 months.

Description of service

Karibu Montessori is a full day childcare service located in the Newtown Centre in Annacotty, County Limerick. It operates Monday to Friday from 07.45hrs to 18.00hrs and provides full day, part time and sessional services to children of all pre-school ages. A service for school aged children is offered each afternoon.

The service operates from a two story, purpose build premises. At ground floor level there is a baby room, a wobbler room, a toddler room, two sleep rooms, a kitchen, a manager's office, and a staff room. At first floor level there is a sensory room and three dual purpose rooms used by pre-school children in the morning and the school aged children in the afternoon.

There are two large outdoor play areas located adjacent to the building, one to accommodate the younger preschool children and the second for the older preschool children and the school aged children.

Staffing

The registered provider has leased the business to another childcare provider and named them the designated person in charge. They in turn have appointed a manager and an assistant manager to operate the facility on a day-to-day basis. The registered provider does not work on site as the person in charge works in the service every day.

There are twenty-two staff on the staff roster. Fourteen staff employed to work at the service have achieved a major award in early childhood care and education or a qualification deemed by the minister to be equivalent in childcare.

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, and premises. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9,10,11,19,23,24 and 29.

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.

Additional Information

10 April 2025

A meeting was held with the person in charge and the service manager who attended the meeting on behalf of the registered provider. The purpose of the meeting was to seek clarification regarding the CAPA 2 (Corrective and Preventive Action) document, which had not been received by the Inspectorate, and to determine how and when the outstanding non-compliances under regulations 9,19, and 29 would be addressed. Through discussion, it became apparent that the CAPA 2 submission had been returned by the person in charge on 21 March 2025; however, it failed to deliver to the Inspectorate because of the size of the email attachments. The CAPA 2 was resent to the Inspectorate on 10 April 2025.

15 April 2025

A Regulatory Compliance Meeting was facilitated by the Inspection and Registration Manager, with persons who the registered provider delegated to attend the meeting on her behalf. The purpose of the meeting was to:

- Discuss the outstanding non-compliance regarding Regulation 9 (4) following the service's CAPA 2 response.
- Highlight the service's history of repeated non-compliances with the regulations.
- Discuss the corrective and preventive action responses regarding Regulation 9 (4) and allow an opportunity for the proposal of any further actions to address the outstanding non-compliance.

During the Regulatory Compliance Meeting, it was confirmed that staff who did not hold the required qualifications continued to work directly with the children daily to cover the break times of qualified staff.

A decision was made to refer the service to the National Registration Enforcement Panel in relation to unresolved areas of recurring and outstanding non-compliance within the service.

15 May 2025

A Regulatory Enforcement Meeting was convened to discuss the unresolved areas of recurring and outstanding non-compliance within the service. The service provided further information and submitted representations to the National Registration Enforcement Panel following the meeting, which was reviewed and considered.

3rd July 2025

As the service had not satisfactorily demonstrated that the non-compliance regarding Regulation 9 (4) had been adequately addressed, a condition has been attached to the registration of the service for a period of 12 months.

Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the persons 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.*

(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) A designated person in charge of operating the service was present on the day of the inspection. There was a named person available who was able to deputise if required.

(b) During the period of the inspection, the designated person in charge was present and the staff roster indicated that this person or their deputy were always available on the premises.

(2)(a) Two written and validated references were available for all staff members employed to work at the service.

(b) References were submitted by staff from their past employers or from sources other than past employers.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all staff documented on the staff roster and had adhered to the re-vetting timeframes of every three years as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice.

(d) Police vetting was available for seven staff members who had resided outside of Ireland for longer than six consecutive months.

(4) Fourteen staff working directly with children held an appropriate qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education or an equivalent such qualification.

Non-Compliance Information

(4) Six staff working directly with children did not have an appropriate qualification in early childhood care and education or an equivalent such qualification.

- In the wobbler room at 11.10 hrs there were fifteen preschool children aged 1-2 years being cared for by two staff who had childcare qualifications. The third adult present in the room did not have a childcare qualification.
- In the toddler room at 11.10 hrs there were fourteen preschool children aged 2-3 years being cared for by two staff who had childcare qualifications. The third adult present in the room did not have a childcare qualification.
- In ECCE room 3 at 15.00hrs there were twelve preschool children aged 3 years being cared for by one staff who had childcare qualifications. The second adult present in the room did not have a childcare qualification and was documented on the staff roster as working with the school aged children.
- Staff breaks throughout the service were covered by staff who did not have childcare qualifications.

This is a reoccurring non-compliance as on the previous inspection dated 28 May 2024 where there were three staff working directly with the preschool children who did not have documentary evidence of childcare qualifications or an equivalent qualification.

Staff employed without a recognised childcare qualification have the potential to impact on the level of quality care and learning opportunities provided to the children in the care of the service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

14 March 2025: CAPA 1 was returned by the person in charge.

This response was not accepted as it was not specific, measurable, and timely.

The response in the corrective and preventive action plan and in previous corrective and preventive action plans were not actioned to prevent this non-compliance reoccurring.

This was also a non-compliance on the previous inspection dated 28 May 2024 as there were three staff working directly with the preschool children who did not have documentary evidence of a childcare qualification or an equivalent qualification.

On the inspection dated 22 November 2023 there were two staff working directly with the preschool children who did not have documentary evidence of a childcare qualification or an equivalent qualification.

10 April 2025: A meeting was held with the person in charge and the service manager who attended the meeting on behalf of the registered provider. The purpose of the meeting was to seek clarification regarding the CAPA 2 (Corrective and Preventive Action) document which had not been received by the Inspectorate, and to determine how and when the outstanding non-compliances under regulations 9,19, and 29 would be addressed. Through discussion, it became apparent that the CAPA 2 document had been returned by the person in charge on 21 March 2025; however, it failed to deliver to the Inspectorate because of the size of the email attachments. The CAPA 2 was resent to the Inspectorate on 10 April 2025. Following the review of the CAPA 2 document sent to the early years Inspectorate on 10 April 2025 the response was not accepted regarding regulation 9 (4).

15 April 2025:

A Regulatory Compliance Meeting was facilitated by the Inspection and Registration Manager, with persons who the registered provider delegated to attend the meeting on her behalf. In the meeting, the outstanding non-compliance regarding Regulation 9 (4) following the service's CAPA 2 response was discussed. During the Regulatory Compliance Meeting, it was confirmed that staff who did not hold the required qualifications continued to work directly with the children daily to cover the break times of qualified staff. A decision was made to refer the service to the National Registration Enforcement Panel in relation to unresolved areas of recurring and outstanding non-compliance within the service.

Please refer to the Additional Information section of this inspection report for information regarding a Regulatory Enforcement Meeting that was held with the service, and how the continued registration of the service is now subject to the addition of the condition for a 12 month period.

Supporting documentation submitted

The service did not submit adequate supporting documentation in relation to addressing the non-compliances under regulation 9 (4).

Summary Comment

The regulatory requirement for regulation 9 (1)(a)(b) and regulation 9 (2) has been met.

The regulatory requirement has not been met for regulation 9 (4) and remains non-compliant. This will be assessed on the next inspection of the service to ensure regulatory compliance.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.

Non-Compliance Information

The following first aid requirements were not detailed on the outings policy in relation to

- The attendance of a person trained in first aid for children to accompany the group on each outing when they leave the premises. This posed a potential safety risk to children in the event of an emergency.
- A well-stocked first aid box must be taken by staff when they leave the premises to go on an outing. This posed a potential safety risk to children in the event of an emergency.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The outings policy has been revised to include the details that were not included.

A staff member up to date in first aid responder will accompany children on outings and all staff are aware that a first aid box must also be brought on outings.

Supporting documentation submitted

Staff have been made aware of the updated policy and will ensure that this policy is followed at all times.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventative actions as stated by the person in charge meet the regulatory requirements of regulation 10.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels

(2) Subject to paragraphs (4) and (5), a registered provider of a full day care service or a part-time day care service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 1 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) thereof at that reference number is satisfied.

Compliance Information

(2) The adult child ratio was correct in the following rooms.

Baby Room - There were 3 preschool children (1-2 yrs.) being supervised by 1 staff.

Wobbler Room - There were 15 preschool children (1-2 yrs.) being supervised by 3 staff.

Toddlers Room - There were 14 preschool children (2-3yrs.) being supervised by 3 staff.

ECCE Room 2 - There were 16 preschool children (3-4 yrs.) being supervised by 2 staff.

ECCE Room 3 - There were 17 preschool children (3-4 yrs.) being supervised by 2 staff.

ECCE Room 4 - There were 18 preschool children (3-4 yrs.) being supervised by 2 staff.

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

Healthy eating was promoted within the service with fresh hot meals provided. Children had all meals and snacks in their designated rooms and mealtimes were observed to be a sociable occasion for the children. At dinner time children were observed having enough time to eat and enjoy their food without being rushed. Spaghetti bolognese was served for dinner on the day. Bottles and beakers of water were accessible on low shelving in each room for the children.

Two separate sleep rooms were provided for children under 2 years who required a sleep, with enough standard cots accessible at all times for the children in the baby and wobbler rooms. Designated rest areas were accessible in all rooms of the service throughout the day.

Adults were observed to work well with all the children in their care responding to them in a timely manner, using soft tones of voice and making eye contact with them.

Children had freedom of movement in each of the rooms to choose activities they liked.

PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

Each playroom had safe and comfortable spaces for the children to explore and play. Rooms had low level tables and chairs to facilitate tabletop activities and dining at mealtimes. Open low-level shelving provided storage for toys and equipment.

Defined interest areas were provided where equipment and play materials were accessible in each room.

Adult seating was available to facilitate staff sitting with children during the day.

A sensory room had been developed upstairs for children who required some quiet time away from the playrooms and small group activities.

Non-Compliance Information

PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

1. Opportunities for children to be outdoors as often as possible for fresh air, movement and outdoor play was limited:
 - As the outplay area to the front of the facility was not available for use as repair works had commenced in the area.
 - The outdoor play area to the rear of the facility was poorly maintained as it was waterlogged and covered in moss, leaves and debris. This was detailed as a non-compliance on the inspection reports dated 9 September 2021, 22 November 2023 and 28 June 2024 and responses given by the registered provider in previous corrective and preventive actions have not been actioned or prevented this reoccurrence.
2. There was limited age-appropriate play equipment exclusive for outdoor use available in the outdoor play area for the younger children.
3. Distinct area had not been developed in the outdoor play area for the different age groups for e.g. sheltered areas were not available to provide protection for children in warm or in wet weather conditions or areas with different age-appropriate toys and equipment.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

14 March 2025: CAPA 1 was returned by the person in charge.

This response was not accepted as it was not specific or measurable.

Photographic evidence was not submitted in relation to the work completed in the play area at the entrance to the facility.

Evidence of when the repair works to the rear outdoor play area will commence and be completed was not submitted.

Photographic evidence was not submitted in relation to provision of play equipment in the outdoor play area for the younger age group.

10 April 2025: A meeting was held with the person in charge and the service manager who attended the meeting on behalf of the registered provider. The purpose of the meeting was to seek clarification regarding the CAPA 2 (Corrective and Preventive Action) document which had not been received by the Inspectorate, and to determine how and when the outstanding non-compliances including regulation 19 would be addressed. Through discussion, it became apparent that the CAPA 2 document had been returned by the person in charge on 21 March 2025; however, it failed to deliver to the Inspectorate because of the size of the email attachments. The CAPA 2 was resent to the Inspectorate on 10 April 2025. Following the review of the CAPA 2 document sent to the early years Inspectorate on 10 April 2025, the response was accepted regarding regulation 19.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence was submitted in relation to addressing the non-compliances under regulation 19.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventative actions as stated by the person in charge meet the regulatory requirements of regulation 19.

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.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

1. A communal cloth hand towel was observed to be used by the children and the staff following handwashing in the toddler room which increased the risk of cross infection between children and between staff.

Outing:

2. Children were taken on an outing to the local park on the day of the inspection. Staff stated that they did not take a first aid box with them when they took children on outings from the service. This posed a safety risk to the children in the event of an emergency.
3. A person trained in first aid for children did not accompany the children on the outing when they left the premises on the day of the inspection. This posed a potential safety risk to children in the event of an emergency.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

1. Staff have been reminded of the infection control policy and of the importance of hand hygiene in relation to infection control. Communal cloth hand towels have been removed from the toddler room.
2. & 3. Staff have been informed of the revised outings policy which states that a first aid box must be brought on any outing outside of the creche and that a person qualified in first aid must accompany the children on any outing outside of the creche.

Staff have been reminded that they must follow the policies.

Supporting documentation submitted

An updated outings policy was submitted.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventative actions as stated by the person in charge meet the regulatory requirements of regulation 23.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) no person other than-

(i) pre-school child attending the service,

(ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,

(iii) an employee, or

(iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and

(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.

Compliance Information

(1) Each child who attended the service was checked in and out of the service by a staff member on a childcare app on arrival and on departure.

(3)(a) No persons other than the following could enter the service without being approved by a staff member.

(i) A pre-school child attending the service.

(ii) A person dropping or collecting such a child.

(iii) An employee.

(iv) An unpaid worker.

(b) A visitor book was maintained which recorded the name of every adult who entered the service, the time they spent in the service, the reason they entered, contact phone numbers and the person who allowed them to enter.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

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

(d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required.

Non-Compliance Information

1. A section of the outdoor play area used by the younger children was waterlogged, covered in moss, leaves and dirt. There was no evidence of a cleaning and maintenance schedule for this area. This has been highlighted on previous inspections dated 9 September 2021, 22 November 2023 and 28 June 2024 and

responses given by the registered provider in previous corrective and preventive actions have not been actioned or prevented this reoccurrence.

It is acknowledged that the outdoor play area for the older children is currently being upgraded and is not currently in use.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

14 March 2025: CAPA 1 was returned by the person in charge.

This response was not accepted as it was not specific, measurable, and timely.

Photographic evidence was not submitted that the area has been appropriately cleaned and suitable for use by the children.

This has been highlighted on previous inspections dated 9 September 2021, 22 November 2023 and 28 June 2024.

10 April 2025: A meeting was held with the person in charge and the service manager who attended the meeting on behalf of the registered provider. The purpose of the meeting was to seek clarification regarding the CAPA 2 (Corrective and Preventive Action) document which had not been received by the Inspectorate, and to determine how and when the outstanding non-compliances including regulation 29 would be addressed. Through discussion, it became apparent that the CAPA 2 document had been returned by the person in charge on 21 March 2025; however, it failed to deliver to the Inspectorate because of the size of the email attachments. The CAPA 2 was resent to the Inspectorate on 10 April 2025. Following the review of the CAPA 2 document sent to the early years Inspectorate on 10 April 2025, the response was accepted regarding regulation 29.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence was submitted in relation to addressing the non-compliances under regulation 29.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventative actions as stated by the person in charge meet the regulatory requirements of regulation 29.