

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LM034
--------------------------	-------------

Name of Service:	Sunflower Montessori
-------------------------	----------------------

Address of Service:	Unit 1-3, Mountain Vista, Kinlough, Co. Leitrim
----------------------------	---

Eircode:	F91 AR20
-----------------	----------

Name of Registered Provider:	Sarah Matthews
-------------------------------------	----------------

Service type:	Part Time, Sessional
----------------------	----------------------

Date(s) of Inspection:	14/05/2025
-------------------------------	------------

No of pre-school children:	AM	35	PM	n/a
-----------------------------------	----	----	----	-----

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, TUSLA Child & Family Agency, Markievicz House, Barrack St, Sligo, F91 XC84
Inspection undertaken by:	L Costello
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
---------------------------------	----------------

Description of service

Sunflower Montessori is a privately operated early years' service catering for children 3 years to 6 years on a sessional and part time basis. The service operates weekdays from 9:00am to 2.00pm. The setting is registered to cater for a maximum of 49 preschool children at any one time. The service is located in a premises within close proximity of the town of Kinlough in North County Leitrim. There are three play rooms in the service, two were in operation on the day of inspection.

Staffing

The service employs five people including the registered provider. The registered provider works directly with the children attending the service. All staff working directly with the children in the service have completed a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at the required minimum Level 5 to Level 8 qualification on the National Qualifications Framework.

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

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9,11, 15, 21, 23, 25, 27 and 28. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

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/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*
- (c) there is a clear management structure in the service that identifies the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and unpaid worker.*

(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).

There was a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required. Both people were present for the duration of the inspection.

(2) (a) (b).

The records of all five adults employed in the service were reviewed.

Ten written and verified past employer references were available in respect of all five adults employed in the service.

(c)

Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for five 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)

International police vetting was not required as all the adults employed in the service that had not lived outside the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

(4)

The five adults had attained major awards in Early childhood care and education at level 5 or above on the national framework of qualifications, or qualifications deemed by the Department of Children, Disability and Equality (DCDE) to meet the regulatory requirement.

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.

(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.

(8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-

(a) a registered provider of a pre-school service other than a child-minding service or a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that there are at least 2 adults on the premises at all times,

Compliance Information

(1)
There were an adequate number of adults working directly with children attending the preschool service. There were five adults working directly with 35 children in the morning of the unannounced inspection.

(2)
The minimum ratio of adults to children ratio were provided on the day of the inspection in accordance with the required ratio considering the ages of the children and the length of time each child spent in the service.

(8) (a)
The registered provider ensured that two adults were present on the premises at all times. This was demonstrated by a sample review of rosters.

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.*

(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-

- (c) an authorised person.*

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) is retained for a period of 2 years from the date on which the child to whom it relates ceases to attend the service.

Compliance Information

1) (a-i)

Twelve sample records of the children attending the service were reviewed. The required information including the authorisation to collect the child, details of illness or special needs of the child, emergency contact and record of immunisations were fully completed for each child.

(3) (c)

The records in writing were available for inspection by the early year's inspector.

(4)

The Registered Provider is aware of the requirement to retain these files for a period of two years from when the preschool child ceased attending the service.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

The service operated from two indoor care rooms and outdoor space to the front of the building and a private garden at the back of the building. The care rooms were laid out to ensure children experienced a Montessori based curriculum with opportunities for all types of play including imaginary, sensory and creative play. There were adequate and suitable indoor play facilities available in the sunroom and the rainbow room for the age range of children attending. The rooms presented as bright and visually appealing spaces with an orderly arrangement of play equipment and materials set into clearly defined areas of interest. Open low level shelving units stocked with a variety of Montessori based equipment enabled all items to be readily accessible to the children. Cosy areas with child size couch and soft matting allowed for children to rest or read a book in comfort from the large library available. Suitable sized tables and chairs were available for tabletop activities and artwork. The outdoor areas provided a change of environment for the children creating opportunities for gross motor skill development and movement. Children were observed on the day to play on bikes, balance beams and play group games in the large open area.

The garden to the rear of the property is decorated to provide a world of imagination for the preschool child. This space is laid out to stimulate the imagination of the preschool child bringing them to a world of role play and creativity. A playhouse that provides a shopping village for opportunities of role play, wooden tee-pee tent, sand boxes and sensory tables. The rear of the garden focuses on the beauty of nature and the environment with trees

and willow providing natural shelter. Evidence of the children's learning was observed in the planting of flowers and vegetables and children learning the lifecycle of plants in a fun and inclusive way.

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 main door was locked on the inspectors unannounced arrival to the service which prevented unauthorised access and unsupervised egress from the service.
- Cleaning products were stored out of the reach of the preschool children.
- The Kitchen was inaccessible to the preschool children.
- All waste was secure and inaccessible to the preschool child.
- Foot pedal bins were in operation throughout the service.
- Children had sunscreen applied while playing outdoors.

Infection Control:

- Warm water, liquid soap and paper towels were available for safe hand hygiene practises.
- The service was visibly clean with cleaning schedules that were comprehensive and up to date.

Fire Safety:

- Fire doors remained free from obstruction throughout the inspection.
- A record of fire evacuation drills was made available to the inspector on the day, these were in line with the service policy of monthly evacuation drills.
- A fire evacuation plan was clearly displayed on the care room wall.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

- (1) Garda vetting was available for all five adults employed in the service. However, one of these vetting disclosures were not dated within the previous three years in adherence to with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. Garda vetting has been applied for through Tusla. A log will be in place for dates of renewal of garda vetting.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

2. Email confirmation of renewal submitted.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider adequately address the non-compliance found on inspection. This regulation is now compliant.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.

Compliance Information

On the morning of the inspection children were being supervised in the outdoor area while completing a yoga session. The staff members ensured that all children were in view and offered support if required with various poses. The children spent the majority of the day in the outdoors enjoying the good weather. Throughout the day staff members were observed to complete head counts, informing each other if they entered the building to support a child to use the bathroom or retrieve equipment from the care rooms.

Morning snack took place in the outdoors where children and adults sat together on picnic blankets to enjoy a picnic experience. Staff members sat with the children and encouraged independence in opening yoghurts and peeling fruit and offered support if required. The adults ensured all children were included in the conversations over snack time engaging in a kind and encouraging way.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

There was evidence of a current insurance cover valid until the 27th of November 2025. The insurance provided cover for 40 preschool children.

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 service demonstrated that a person trained in first aid for children was available to the preschool children at all times.

(2) (a)
A first aid box was accessible to the preschool children.

Non-Compliance Information

(2) (b) The first aid box did not contain a sufficient quantity of in date recommended contents for the numbers of children registered to attend the service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

New items have been bought to replace the out of date items. A log of when items in the first aid box need to be replaced is now in place.

Supporting documentation submitted

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Photographic evidence of new items purchased submitted to the inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider adequately address the non-compliance found on inspection. This regulation is now compliant.