

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015MH151
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Name of Service:	Playmates Montessori Ltd
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Address of Service:	School Road, Flemington, Balrath, Navan, Co. Meath
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Eircode:	C15 R722
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Name of Registered Provider:	Karen Lynch
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	22/11/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	14	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Meath Child & Parent Support Hub, Commons Road, Navan, Co. Meath
Inspection undertaken by:	AM Cunningham
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 sessional service is located in a rural setting. The service caters for children aged between 2 years and 8 months and 5 years. The service is registered to open from Monday to Friday between 9am and 12 md and 12.30pm and 3.30pm hours. The premises are single storey building beside the registered providers own home which was purpose built.

Staffing

There were 4 adults present on the day of inspection (1 staff was AIM support), an additional staff member is employed in the service and 1 staff member was available for relief when required. All staff were working directly with the children this includes registered provider.

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/ premises and facilities. 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 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,

(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.

(6A) Paragraph (4) shall not apply to an employee of a registered provider where - (a) the registered provider receives funding for the employment of the employee pursuant to a scheme funded by the Minister and known as the Access and Inclusion Model, and (b) the employment of the employee is for the purpose of providing support, pursuant to the scheme referred to in subparagraph (a), for a child attending the service to enable the child to participate in the programme known as the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) funding Programme.”

Compliance Information

- (1) (a) The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.
- (2) Five staff files were reviewed also a relief staff members file was reviewed, and the following was noted.
- (a) & (b) Twelve validated written references were available.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosure was available for all staff. 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) Police vetting was not required as the staff member or emergency contact person had not resided outside the state for a period of more than 6 consecutive months as an adult.
- (4) The staff members had a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 and above on the National Framework of Qualifications.
- (6A) One staff member was providing AIM support.

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) On the day of inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.

(3) The adult/child ratio was correct.

Four adults cared for 14 children attending a sessional service (aged between 3 years 4 months to 4 years 6 months).

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,

Compliance Information

Basic Needs:

- The atmosphere in the service was warm and child centred. The staff members were observed to be caring and attentive in their interactions with the children, responding meaningfully to the children's verbal and non-verbal cues and providing praise and encouragement using gentle tones of voice.
- The staff members were observed to be responsive to the children's cues should they need to use the toilet, with discreet supervision provided and assistance if required.
- Regular hand washing practices were observed throughout the morning as children washed hands before snack after toileting and as needed. Self-toileting was supported, and children were supervised as necessary.

Supporting Relationships Around the Children:

- The children in the service were encouraged to value and respect each other and this was particularly evidenced by the positive regard shown by the children and staff members towards children with additional communication needs in the service.
- Staff sat with children as they completed activities and regular praise, and encouragement was heard.
- Children enjoyed practising for their Christmas concert and doing Christmas artwork. Fun and laughter were observed and children happily engaged in activities throughout the inspection.

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 entrance to the preschool was secure and controlled by staff to prevent children from exiting the service unsupervised and restricted unauthorised persons from gaining access to the preschool. The service met the necessary safety requirements in respect of the indoor environment and safe storage of cleaning agents.

Infection Control:

The premises appeared in a clean condition and cleaning schedules were available and up to date.

Fire Safety:

Staff were familiar with the safe evacuation procedures in the event of an emergency occurring in the service and all fire exits were unobstructed.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

Garda vetting was available for all staff members. However, three of the six 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'.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Garda vetting renewed for the three staff members. Garda vetting will be renewed every three years going forward.

Supporting documentation submitted

The registered provider submitted garda vetting for the three staff members.

Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider has addressed the non-compliance in 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.

Compliance Information

(1) A record was kept of each child's time of arrival and departure on a daily basis by the staff members

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 provided evidence that persons had up to date First Aid Responders course and were available at all times to the children attending the pre-school service.

(2)(a) and (b) A suitably equipped first aid box was available and safely stored in the premises.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured that the service was adequately insured for 22 children at any one time attending a sessional service. The policy showed that the service was insured from 28th March 2024 to the 27th of March 2025.