

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015MH196
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	The Montessori Story
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	24 Balrath Wood, Mullingar Road, Kells, Co. Meath
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<b>Eircode:</b>	A82 KK29
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Lynda Carroll
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<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	10/10/2023
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	29	PM	3
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Family Resource Centre, Commons Road, Navan Co. Meath
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	D. Murray
<b>Title:</b>	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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not Applicable
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### Description of service

The Montessori Story provides a sessional service to children from 2 to 6 years and participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education Programme (ECCE). The sessional service operates from 09:00 to 12:00 hours and from 12:30 to 15:30 hours. The service is situated in a residential area and is purpose built consisting of the following rooms:

Downstairs:

**Rooms 1 & 2** provide care and education to children from 2 years 8 months to 6 years.

Upstairs:

**Room 3** facilitates the care of children from 2 years 6 months to 6 years.

Two additional playrooms are available on both levels along with sanitary facilities, an office and a kitchen.

An outdoor space was located to the rear of the premises.

### Staffing

The registered provider employs a manager and 5 staff members. On the day of inspection, a manager was present with 5 staff members. The registered provider arrived when the inspection had commenced and was present for the remainder of the inspection.

### 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.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9,11,19,20,21,23,25,26 & 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, manager, 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.

(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.

(b) A designated person in charge was on the premises when the inspector arrived unannounced to carry out the inspection.

(2) (a)&(b) Fourteen validated written references were available either from a past employer or from a reputable source.

(c) Garda vetting disclosure was available for the 7 staff members.

(d) Police vetting was available for 3 staff member who had resided outside the jurisdictions for a period of more than 6 consecutive months as an adult.

(4) Seven childcare staff members had a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 and above on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

(6A) Four staff member were employed under the scheme known as the Access and Inclusion Model.

## Non-Compliance Information

(2)(d) One staff member who had resided outside the jurisdictions for a period of more than 6 consecutive months as an adult did not have police vetting. Although it is acknowledged that the staff member tried on 3 occasion to obtain Police vetting with no success.

## Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

### Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(d) At present this staff member is on long term leave. Three attempts have been made in the past to obtain police vetting with no success as the staff members fingerprints can't be read. Due diligence in relation to this staff member was carried out, references were verified and garda vetting obtained.

It is procedure that before any staff member commences work in the service police vetting is sought if required.

### Supporting documentation submitted

Previous attempts for application for police vetting were reviewed on the day of inspection.

## Summary Comment

Three attempts have been made to receive police vetting with no success, however this non-compliance remains outstanding.

### 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 ensured that an adequate number of adults were working directly with the children attending the service.
- (3) On the day of inspection, the correct adult/child ratio was maintained.
- In Room 1 there were 2 adults with 10 children ranging in age from 2 years 8 months to 6 years.
  - In Room 2 there were 2 adults with 11 children ranging in age from 2 years 8 months to 6 years.
  - In Room 3 there were 2 adults with 8 children ranging in age from 2 years 6 months to 6 years.

### 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) The following observations were made on how each child's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the daily life in the service:

##### Basic Needs of the Infants and Children:

- Children's individual needs were well supported by the staff members who engaged in play activities with the children which included sensory play, art and crafts, singing and storytelling. During activities children were offered choices and sought out the staff members for praise, encouragement, and reassurance.

- Children’s personal hygiene was attended to with regular handwashing and supervision while using the toilet. Transitions were handled smoothly with staff members giving the children ample time to complete one activity before starting the next.
- The children brought their own healthy lunches which they had at 11am. Staffs member were observed sitting and chatting with the children at lunch time, helping the children when required whilst encouraging conversation and extending interactions.
- The service embraces outdoor play and learning with all children observed enjoying outdoor play with their peers.
- The themes of the week were “Australia”, “Autumn” and “Halloween” with lots of conversation and art work displayed to reflect these themes.

### Supporting relationships around children:

- The adults were observed promoting positive behaviour and supported children to find positive solutions when they experienced challenge in sharing play equipment and materials. New children were supported and encouraged to develop interaction and friendships with other children.
- The children showed confidence around the staff members and appeared comfortable, happy and relaxed in their environment.

### 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.
- (2) A registered provider-
- (a) of a full day care service, a part-time day care service, a sessional preschool service or a childminding service that is registered for the first time on or after 30 June 2016, shall ensure that a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the preschool children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises.

### Compliance Information

(1)(b) Mats and bean bags were available should a child needed to take a break from activities and rest.

(2)(a) The outdoor space was enclosed by walls with 2 secure gates. The surface area consisted of grass and a cemented area.

### 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

- All care rooms were well resourced with play materials and equipment which were laid out in interest areas which were spacious and uncluttered. The play materials and equipment incorporated natural/sensorial materials, Montessori equipment, art and crafts, a range of suitable toys and books. Play materials and equipment were easily accessible on open shelving at the children’s height which encouraged active engagement and involvement.
- Equipment in the outdoor space included a mud kitchen, wooden activity unit with a slide, free standing slide, ride on tricycles, wooden playhouse with slide and ladder, plastic activity unit, activity tray, climbing frame, tyres, water/sand trays, basketball stands and a wooden shed used for storage.

### 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 following safety measures were in place on the day of inspection:

- An indoor and outdoor risk assessment was conducted on a daily basis.
- All cleaning agents were stored out of reach of the children.
- The door to the service was secured and the outdoor space was enclosed by walls with 2 secure gates. These security measures ensured that a child did not exit unsupervised and restricted unauthorised persons from gaining access to the service and outdoor spaces.

- All play materials were placed on stable based shelving units. Play materials and equipment were observed to be safe and suitable for the developmental age of the pre-school children present in the service.
- The emergency exit doors were unobstructed.

### Infection Control:

The following infection control measures were observed.

- The hand washing policy was implemented in practice with appropriate hand washing for staff and children at all times. Warm running water was available in the children's sanitary area, along with a supply of liquid soap and hand paper towel for effective hand washing.
- The service was clean with cleaning schedules maintained on a daily basis.
- Perishable items in children's lunch boxes were refrigerated.

## 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 a person had up to date paediatric first aid training and was 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.

### Non-Compliance Information

(1) No staff member had an up to date First Aid Responders course completed.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective and Preventive Action

A staff member who is on duty on a daily basis has now completed a First Aid Responders course.

## Supporting documentation submitted

First Aid Responders Certificate

## Summary Comment

The registered providers in the Corrective Action and Preventive Action plan has provided evidence that a member of staff is trained in FAR and has given assurances that a FAR trained member of staff will be working in the service at all times. This has been reviewed and is accepted by the Inspectorate. This regulation will be reviewed at the next inspection.

## 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 firefighting 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 written record was available of the fire drills completed in the service. The last recorded fire drill took place on 13/09/2023.
- (b) A record was maintained of the number, type and maintenance record of the firefighting equipment and mains powered smoke alarms on the premises. The fighting equipment was last serviced on the 14/09/2023. The mains powered smoke alarms were last serviced on the 14/08/2023.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was conspicuously displayed 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 33 children at any one time attending the sessional service. The policy showed that the service was insured from 28/11/2022 to 27/11/2023.