

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015MO036		
Name of Service:	Country Montessori Preschool Service		
Address of Service:	Collagh, Meelick, Swinford, Co. Mayo.		
Eircode:	F12 VP40		
Name of Registered Provider:	Mary Sheedy		
Service type:	Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	01/02/2024		
No of pre-school children:	AM	11	PM -
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Year's Inspectorate, TUSLA, Child and Family Agency, 2nd Floor, St. Mary's HQ., Castlebar, Co. Mayo		
Inspection undertaken by:	M Farrell		
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

Country Montessori Preschool Service is privately owned and operated and is registered to provide sessional services. The service operates from 8:30 hours to 11:30 hours in the morning and 12:30 hours to 15:30 hours in the afternoon catering for children aged from 2-6 years of age. The service is located in a dedicated section of the registered provider's home near Swinford in Co. Mayo. There is a playroom and sanitary facilities provided in the building. Children have access to enclosed outdoor areas with play equipment to the premise rear and sides.

Staffing

There were two staff members including the registered provider working in the service at the time 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/ safety. 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

(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

(2) It was confirmed with the registered provider following review of documentation that there was one new staff working in the service since the most recent inspection of the 2 December 2021. The vetting documentation for other staff member had been reviewed on previous inspection.

The following vetting information was available for the staff member new to the service:

- (a) Two written references from past employers including their most recent employer.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all staff. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
 - (d) The vetting documentation on file showed that international police vetting was not required.
- (4) Evidence of qualifications in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above was available for two staff members.

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 inspector's unannounced arrival to the service there were 2 staff members working directly with the 10 children present. An additional child subsequently arrived to the service bringing the total number of children present to 11.
- (3) The minimum ratio of 1 adult to each 11 children for the age range of the children present attending sessional services was adhered to with 2 adults working with a maximum of 11 children during the morning session. A review of the attendance records showed that the minimum adult to children ratios were adhered to at all times.

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-

- (a) a parent or guardian of a pre-school child but only in respect of the record relating to that child,*
- (b) an employee who is authorised in that behalf by the registered provider, and*
- (c) an authorised person.*

Compliance Information

(1) (a) to (i)

The inspector randomly selected a sample of 10 children’s records for review from the children currently enrolled in the service. Each of the records was found to contain the required details as laid out under the regulation.

(3) (c)

The required records were made readily available to the inspector by the registered provider on request.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:

- (a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;*
- (b) details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services;*
- (c) details of the adult:child ratios in the service;*
- (d) the type of care or programme provided in the service;*
- (e) the facilities available;*
- (f) the opening hours and fees;*
- (g) the policies, procedures and statements the service is required to maintain in accordance with Regulation 10;*
- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*
- (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

(3) A record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection on the premises, and the documents and records referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall be open to inspection whether on the premises or elsewhere, by an authorised person.

Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider ensured written records were kept of the following information in the service:

- (a) The name, position, qualifications and experience of each staff member in staff vetting files.
- The service's Statement of purpose and function contained:
- (b) Information on the service type and ages of children that the service is registered to provide services to,
 - (c) The adult: child ratios provided in the service,
 - (d) The service's type of care or programme,
 - (e) The facilities available in the service.

- (f) The service’s hours of opening and fees.
 - (g) The service’s policies, procedures and statements as required under Regulation 10 that were kept in a service policy folder.
 - (h) Details of the daily attendance of each pre-school child recorded daily in an attendance book.
 - (i) Details of the staff roster and attendance were recorded.
 - (j) Forms were available to record any medication administered to a child while attending the service with parental consent.
 - (k) An accident/incident report book contained details of accidents, injuries or incidents involving children attending the service.
- (3)
- The records referred to in paragraph (1) were made available in the service to the inspector by the registered provider on request.

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 door to the service was secured when the inspector arrived unannounced to the service. The inspector was admitted to the service by the registered provider following production of identification documentation. The gate to the enclosed outdoor play areas with concrete ground cover used by the children during the inspection was secured when the children were playing outside. A grass outdoor area was not in use following risk assessment by the staff as a recent storm had caused damage to a section of fencing that was awaiting repair. The toys and play equipment were kept in good condition and were suitable for the age and developmental stages of the children using them. There were securing devices on the kitchenette door and the door from the playroom leading to the registered provider’s home door allowing the staff to restrict access by the children to these areas. Cleaning products were stored out of reach of children.

Infection Control:

The service was observed to be clean with cleaning records kept by staff. The staff prompted and supervised the children washing their hands using warm water, liquid soap and drying them with paper towels at appropriate times during the inspection. Foot pedal operated bins were available in the playroom and sanitary areas for the disposal of waste. Boxes of tissues were accessible by the children at low levels should they need to use them to clean their noses.

Administration of Medication:

There was no medication administered to a child in the service during the inspection. The staff showed awareness through discussion with the inspector of the procedures in relation to the correct storage and administration of medications.

Fire Safety:

The emergency exit routes and doors were observed by the inspector to be unobstructed during the 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) Both members of staff had undertaken First Aid Response (FAR) training with certification available due to expire on the 10 September 2024 and the 16 September 2025 respectively.

(2) (a) There was a suitably equipped first aid box stored on a high shelf in the playroom.

The first aid equipment was readily available if a child required first aid treatment in the service.

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) Written records of the monthly fire drills undertaken in the service were kept by the staff with the last fire drill recorded as having been undertaken on the 24 January 2024.
- (b) Certificates of the maintenance of the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarms/fire detection system were made available by the registered provider for inspection.
- (4) Notices of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were conspicuously displayed in the playroom.

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

The required adult: child ratios were adhered to in the service. The staff supervised the children appropriately primarily by sight during the inspection. When playing outdoors the children were observed by sight by the staff who positioned themselves strategically in the outdoor spaces to be able to see them. The children who were able to use the toilet by themselves were out of sight of the staff when using the toilet but remained within hearing distance if help was needed to be given by the staff.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

A certificate of insurance was available and displayed in the playroom for up to 11 children attending sessional services at any one time valid until the 27 March 2024.