

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015MO039		
Name of Service:	Derrywash Montessori Preschool & Afterschool		
Address of Service:	Derrywash N.S, Derrywash, Castlebar, Co. Mayo		
Eircode:	F23 T659		
Name of Registered Provider:	Deirdre Mc Donnell		
Service type:	Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	24/05/2024		
No of pre-school children:	AM	17	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

Derrywash Montessori Preschool & Afterschool is a sessional service located on the grounds of a primary school near Castlebar, Co Mayo. The service was originally based in a room in the primary school but has evolved to become an outdoor preschool. There is a large well-developed enclosed outdoor space for play with a prefabricated building known as the “cabin”, a wooden art room, a large polytunnel and sanitary facilities provided. The service is registered to cater for children aged from two to six years of age and provides a morning session from 08:45-11:45hours.

Staffing

There are five staff working in the service including the registered provider who works directly with the children. Three staff are employed under the Access and Inclusion Model Scheme.

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.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under sections of regulations 9, 11, 15, 23, 25, 26, 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, 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) The registered provider was the named designated person in charge and there was a named deputy in the service.
 - (b) The designated person in charge and deputy were available on the premises during the inspection.
- (2)
- The designated person in charge confirmed during review of documentation that two new staff had started working in the service since the last focused inspection of the 15 December 2021. The vetting information for the remaining three staff members had been reviewed on previous inspections. The following vetting documentation and qualifications were available on file for the two new staff members:
- (a) There were two written validated references from past employers particularly their most recent employer.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all five staff including the two new staff members. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting for staff members every three years.
 - (d) International police vetting was not required for the new staff members who had not lived outside of the State for periods of time longer than six months as adults.
- (4)
- Evidence of the required qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education or equivalent was available on file for the two staff new to the service since the last inspection who worked directly with the children. The qualifications for the remaining staff who worked directly with children in the service had been reviewed on previous inspection and deemed to be compliant.

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) An adequate number of adults worked directly with the children attending the service. There were 5 adults working directly with 16 children on the inspector's unannounced arrival to the service on the morning of the inspection. A further child arrived later to the service bringing the total of children to 17.
- (2) The minimum ratio for a sessional service of one adult to each eleven children was adhered to with 5 adults working directly with 17 children during the inspection.

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)

A sample of ten children's records were randomly selected for review by the inspector from the children currently enrolled in the service. The records were found to be compliant during the inspection and contained the required details as laid out under the regulation.

(3) (c)

The children's records were made readily available by the registered provider to the inspector in the service 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 gate was secured on the inspector's arrival to the service and remained secured when not opened to allow access which was controlled by the staff members. Risk assessments had been carried out in the service with checklists developed for staff to complete each day. Manager's morning checklists were completed each morning checking and recording for example that entry/exit gates and the outdoor area were secured. Daily risk checklists records were also available detailing information such as that the outdoor area was secure with no means of escape and that the outdoor equipment was in good repair. The play equipment used by the children during the inspection was suitable for the age and developmental stages of the children using it.

The service had a sun safety policy in place including information on the application of sun cream that the staff showed awareness of during discussion with the inspector. The staff informed the inspector that the sun safety policy was communicated to parents.

Infection Control:

Cleaning schedules for specified areas were available in the service and the staff members kept records of the cleaning processes carried out. The food provided from home for the children's meals was stored appropriately in a refrigerator in the "Cabin" on the children's arrival to the service. An emphasis was placed by staff on the children washing their hands thoroughly at key times including before eating and after using the toilet facilities. Warm water controlled under 43°C and liquid soap was used to wash the children's hands with paper towels provided for hand drying to be disposed of in foot pedal operated bins. Nappy changing facilities were provided in the primary school building with aprons and gloves provided to be used by staff if nappy changes were required.

Administration of Medication:

The staff had developed individual care plans for children where medication was potentially required to be administered by staff in the service. Training relating to medication administration had been undertaken by staff.

Fire Safety:

Fire drills were undertaken in the service monthly. The emergency exit routes were observed to be free from obstruction.

Outing:

The service had recently undertaken a recent outing to a pet farm. The staff informed the inspector that a risk assessment had been carried out prior to the outing. The service had insurance cover in place for outings and a first aid kit and attendance records had been brought on the outing by staff.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. The children's attendance records were observed to had been prepopulated on the day of inspection with the times of children leaving recorded before the children had left the service.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider advised in writing that:

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The designated person in charge has spoken directly to all the staff so that they know that filling in the roll book/prepopulating it before the child leaves is prohibited. Only the designated person in charge or deputy will complete the roll book when all the children have left the service.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. None submitted.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions as stated by the registered provider have addressed the non-compliance and therefore the requirements of the regulation are met.

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) Certificates of the completion of First Aid Response (FAR) training courses with expiry dates ranging from 13 July 25 to 5 November 2025 were available for four staff members in the service.
- (2)
 - (a) An appropriately stocked first aid box was safely stored in an easily accessible location on a high shelf out of children's reach in the art room.
 - (b) The first aid box was readily accessible to the staff if a child required first aid treatment.

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 fire drills undertaken in the service were kept by staff with the last fire drill recorded as having been undertaken on the 25 April 2024.
- (b) The service provided a certificate of the number, type and maintenance of the smoke alarms that had been certified as having been last maintained on the 14 February 2024.
- (4) Notices of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were conspicuously displayed in the hallway.

Non-Compliance Information

- (1) (b) The certificate of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment did not show that the equipment had been serviced annually as required. It is acknowledged that the registered provider submitted a certificate for the annual maintenance of the firefighting equipment dated for the 27 May 2024 after the inspection.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider advised in writing that:

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (1) (b) A visual reminder for the owner/manager is now displayed in the “cabin” as a reminder of the annual renewal date. The fire company have also assured that they will contact the service annually in relation to the servicing.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence was submitted.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions as stated by the registered provider have addressed the non-compliance and therefore the requirements of the regulation are met.

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 during the inspection. The service was located outdoors, and staff positioned themselves strategically in the outdoor space to supervise the children by sight. Some children were out of sight but remained within earshot of the adults when using the toilet independently. A bell system was also in place to alert staff if children needed help in the sanitary area. Frequent checks of the numbers of children were undertaken by the staff who linked in with each other regularly and moved around supervising different areas at different times. Meals were eaten outdoors on the day at wooden seating and the staff were observed to sit with the children to supervise them closely at mealtimes.

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 in the service for a maximum of 22 children attending sessional services at any one time with an expiry date 27 March 2025.