

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015MO048			
<b>Name of Service:</b>	Guardian Angel Montessori			
<b>Address of Service:</b>	22A Moyvale Lawn, Sligo Road, Ballina, Co. Mayo			
<b>Eircode:</b>	F26 P659			
<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Louise Furlong			
<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional			
<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	23/04/2024			
<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	14	PM	11
<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Year's Inspectorate, TUSLA, Child and Family Agency, 2nd Floor, St. Mary's HQ., Castlebar, Co. Mayo.			
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	M Farrell			
<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
---------------------------------	----------------

### Description of service

Guardian Angel Montessori is a registered sessional service providing services for children aged from 2 to 6 years in a residential area of Ballina, in County Mayo. Two sessions are provided daily with a morning session from 9:00 to 12:00 hours and an afternoon session from 12:30 to 15:30 hours. The premises is purpose-built for childcare services and is adjacent to the registered provider's home. A playroom, kitchenette area and sanitary accommodation are provided in the building. There is an enclosed outdoor play area for the children to the rear and side of the building with direct access from the rear of the playroom.

### Staffing

There are four adults working in the service including the registered provider. One of the adults is employed through the Access and Inclusion Model scheme. An adult student was on educational placement 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/ health, welfare and development of child/ safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under sections of regulations 9, 10, 11, 15, 19, 23, 27, 28 and 29. 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) There was a designated person in charge in the service and a named adult to deputise in her absence.
  - (b) The designated person in charge and deputy were available on the premises throughout the period of inspection.
- (2)
- The inspector was informed by the registered provider that there were two new adults in the service since the last focused inspection on the 15 December 2024. The vetting information for the other three adults had been reviewed on previous inspections. The following vetting documentation and qualifications were available on file for the two new adults:
- (a) One written validated reference from a past employer for one adult.
  - (c) Vetting disclosures from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána for the two adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (4)
- Evidence of the required qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education or equivalent was available on file for the adult new to the service since the last inspection who worked directly with the children.

### Non-Compliance Information

- (2)
- (a) A second written validated reference from a past employer was required for one adult. There were no written validated references available for a second adult.
  - (d) There was no employment history/experience available for one adult and there were gaps in employment history details for one adult new to the service.

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

The registered provider stated in a written response that:

### **Corrective and Preventive Action**

- (2)
- (a) A second written validated reference from a past employer for one adult was received and validated. Two written references were received for the second adult. All new staff will have two written references which have been validated and up to date curriculum vitae on their file before their start work in the service.
  - (d) A curriculum vitae has been obtained for one adult and the gaps in the employment history for the other adult been addressed. All new staff will have two written references which have been validated and up to date curriculum vitae on their file before their start work in the service.

### **Supporting documentation submitted**

Copies of references and curriculum vitae.

### **Summary Comment**

The actions taken and evidence submitted by the registered provider has addressed the regulatory non-compliance found on inspection.

## **Part III – Management and Staff**

### **Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service**

*A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.*

### **Compliance Information**

The registered provider had the specified written policies, procedures and statements in place in the service. The following policies were selected for review and found to contain the required information:

- (e) policy on managing behaviour,
- (k) policy on authorisation to collect children.

## **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) A review of a sample of attendance records found that there had been an adequate number of adults working with the children in the service. An adequate number of adults worked directly at all times with the children present in the service during the inspection. An adult student was also present on educational placement in the service at the time of inspection.
- (3) The registered provider ensured that the minimum ratio for a sessional service of 1 adult to each 11 children for the age range of children attending the service was adhered to. 3 staff worked directly with 17 children in the morning and 3 staff working with 14 children in the afternoon session.

## 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.

### Compliance Information

(1) (a) to (i)

The inspector randomly selected a sample of 10 children's records across the morning and afternoon sessions for review from the children enrolled in the service. The children's records contained the required information.

(3) (c)

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

### 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

The children spent most of their time playing outdoors on the day. There was a wide range of play activities available to the children outdoors including a bubble play activity the staff had set up at a water table. Some of the children painted and coloured at seating and an easel provided under the shelter beside the playroom entrance. Large toy building blocks were available in one area and used by the children to build large constructions.

There was play equipment to promote physical activities such as balance bikes that the children rode on and "parked" after use at the bicycle rack, and a low-level climbing system on impact absorbent ground cover that children played on. The mud kitchen area in the shelter at lower end of outdoor space near a wooden house and

teepee was used by the children for fantasy play. Outdoor waterproof clothing for the children was stored in a large wooden unit outdoors.

The staff involved themselves in the children’s play following their lead where possible. There was a low-level table holding small plant pots containing sunflowers that had been planted by the children and had started growing. The children started watered the sunflowers using water containers made from recycled plastic cartons and then began to water flowers and plants in other areas of the outdoor space supervised by the staff.

Some children chose to go indoors at different times for example a small group wanted to hear a story that was read indoors for them by a staff member in response to their preference. Circle time was held under an outdoor shelter. The sheltered areas were also used to accommodate tabletop work with games brought outside to the tables for children to play with. One staff member made playdough for messy play that the children used rollers and cutters to make shapes with.

The children ate their food outdoors in groups at tables at snack time supervised by the staff. A metal fork was provided for a child who had prepared fruit and did not want to touch the particular fruit. The children were encouraged and supported to use the toilet independently where possible when they wanted to with help provided by the staff when needed.

The playroom was laid out in defined interest areas with most of the toys and play equipment positioned at low levels in open shelving and there was a rest area for children to use if they wanted to. There was a diverse range of play equipment including Montessori items such as a pink tower and brown stairs, small world toys, musical instruments, tabletop activities and a large amount of dressing up clothes and accessories.

The playroom had an “Our community-Ballina” photograph wall and electronic photograph frame with photographs of the children’s families strengthening the links between the service, home and community.

The staff managed children’s behaviour in a positive manner in line with the service’s behaviour management policy. The staff praised children appropriately for their efforts and prepared them for upcoming transitions between activities. There was keyworker system in place in the service where staff had identified children in their group. The staff carried out periodic observations of the children to record their progress and provide information to parents through a meeting or by telephone and in a written report. The staff showed a prospective parent around the service during one of the sessions providing them with information on the service.

“All about me” forms were used by staff that recorded individual information on the children to help with settling in and transitions. The registered provider told the inspector that the staff gave parents opportunities for meetings twice yearly. The service was in the process of planning supporting transition from the service to primary schools including the display of pictures of local primary schools and some of the school uniforms.

## 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 gate to the outdoor area was secured on the inspector's arrival and remained secured apart from when the children were departing at home time supervised by the staff members. The main entrance door was secured by staff who controlled access in to and egress from the building. The inspector was admitted to the service by the registered provider following production of identification documentation. The internal door from the hallway and the wooden half door/gate to the kitchenette were secured by staff to prevent children entering these areas unsupervised. The staff carried out safety checks each day to identify any potential hazards. The play equipment was suitable for the developmental stages of the children playing with it on the day. The staff stored cleaning products out of reach of children in a high cupboard in the kitchenette.

##### Infection Control:

The staff were observed to supervise children's handwashing at key times including before snack time and following toileting and playing outdoors. Children washed their hands with warm water and liquid soap drying them with the paper hand towel provided that was disposed of in foot pedal operated bins. The children's snacks containing perishable food items were stored in a refrigerator in the kitchenette.

##### Administration of Medication:

No child required to have medication administered during the inspection.

##### Fire Safety:

The emergency exit routes were observed to be free from obstruction during the sessions.

##### Outing:

The registered provider informed the inspector that the service does not go on outings.

#### Non-Compliance Information

##### General Safety:

1. The recycled microwave positioned on the wooden mud kitchen in the outdoor area was not adequately secured and posed a potential safety to children.

##### Infection Control:

2. The metal waste bin in the children's sanitary unit was rusty in places posing difficulties for effective cleaning and required replacement.
3. A number of ride on toys and a stool in the outside area were rusty posing difficulties for cleaning the equipment effectively.
4. Sweeping brushes and mops used to clean the playroom area and staff belongings were stored in the nappy changing area and posed potential infection control risks.

### Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective & Preventive Action

##### General Safety:

1. The recycled microwave has been moved to the ground where it does not pose a potential safety to children. Staff will carry out risk assessments of materials in the service to ensure they are safe for all children to use.

##### Infection Control:

2. The metal bin in the children's sanitary unit has been replaced. Bins will be replaced as needed and well maintained.
3. Three bikes with rust on them have been removed to be fixed over the summer and the stool with rust on it has been disposed of. Outdoor equipment is subject to rust, but the service will look at getting a preventative measure to ensure equipment lasts longer.
4. Sweeping brushes are now placed in the hall when not in use, out of reach of children. The mop handle is also stored there, and the mop head is replaced after each use so is not considered a potential infection risk. Staff will place their belongings in their car or in the kitchenette if needed.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

##### General Safety:

Photographic evidence was submitted by the registered provider.

##### Infection Control:

Photographic evidence was submitted by the registered provider.

### Summary Comment

The regulatory non-compliance found on inspection has been addressed by the actions taken and evidence submitted by the registered provider.

### 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 children were supervised by the adults mainly by sight but were out of sight remaining within earshot of the adults if using the toilet independently. Staff linked in with each other when children were going indoors to use the toilet and named the children who were under their care. Frequent checks of the numbers of children were undertaken by the staff. The required adult: child ratios were adhered to during the inspection. Most of the sessions were spent playing outdoors and the staff positioned themselves so that a staff member could observe the children in all areas of the outdoor space. At mealtimes eaten outdoors on the day, the staff were observed to sit with the children to supervise them.

### 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 displayed in the entrance hallway with an expiry date of the 27 November 2024 for a maximum of 19 children attending sessional services.

### Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

#### Regulation 29 - Premises

*A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-*  
*(d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*

## Non-Compliance Information

(d) Sections of the paintwork on the walls had peeled away in places in the playroom and required maintenance.

The registered provider stated in a written response that:

### **Corrective and Preventive Action**

A full paint of the classroom is due over the summer. Both staff and children's toilets have been freshly painted but due to the scale of painting the large room it will not be done until the summer when the service is closed and availability of funds. Regular maintenance of the walls and using a satin paint which is easy wipe will help make the upkeep of the walls easier for staff.

### **Supporting documentation submitted**

None submitted.

## Summary Comment

The non-compliance will be addressed when the room is painted during the summer holidays. This will be reviewed on next inspection.