

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier: TU2015MO055

Name of Service: Hunt Montessori School

Address of Service: Behybaun, Foxford Road, Ballina, Co. Mayo

Eircode: F26 FW32

Name of Registered Provider: Mary Hunt

Service type: Sessional

Date of Inspection: 25/05/2023

No of pre-school children: AM 15 PM -

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate: Early Year's Inspectorate,
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

Description of service

Hunt Montessori School is a sessional service located on the outskirts of Ballina, Co Mayo. The service caters for children aged from 2-6 years of age and is registered to provide a morning session from 9:00-12:00 hours and an afternoon session from 12:30-15:30 hours. The premises is in a dedicated section of the registered provider's home with one playroom and sanitary accommodation available to the children. The children have access to large outdoor play areas on the premises.

Staffing

There are four staff working in the service including the registered provider who works directly with the children and a staff member employed through the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM).

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 inspections may also focus on other areas as required.

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, 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.

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) The registered provider was the designated person in charge and there was a named adult to deputise in her absence.
 - (b) The designated person in charge and deputy were available on the premise throughout the period of inspection.
- (2) The designated person in charge informed the inspector that there were two new adults working in the service since the most recent inspection of the 24 March 2021.
- The following vetting information was available for these staff whose vetting documentation had not been previously inspected:
- (a) Two written validated references from past employers in particular the most recent employer for two staff members.
 - (c) Vetting disclosures from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána for two staff.
 - (d) The registered provider confirmed that international police vetting was not required for the staff members who had not resided outside of the state for a period of longer than six months as adults.
- (4) Certification of a major award in Early childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework was available for two staff members new to the service since the last inspection.

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 morning of the unannounced inspection, there were 3 staff members caring for 15 children in the service.
- (3) The minimum ratio of adults to children of 1 adult for each 11 sessional children aged from 2 years and 6 months to six years was adhered to with 3 staff caring for the 15 children present.

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 16 children's records were selected for review by the inspector from the 32 children currently enrolled in the service. Each of the records was found to be compliant and contained the required details as laid out under the regulation.

(3) (c)

The required information detailed in paragraph (1) was made available for inspection by the inspector 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 building was secured on the inspector's arrival to the service and remained secured during the inspection allowing the staff to control access and prevent children from leaving unnoticed. Cleaning products were stored on high shelving in the hallway out of reach of children. Toys and play equipment were in satisfactory condition and suitable for the age and developmental stages of the children using them. A climbing frame was secured in the grassed area to the rear of the premises.

Infection Control:

Hand washing facilities with warm water recorded under 43°C were provided with liquid soap and paper towels for children to wash and dry their hands with. The staff were seen to prompt the children to wash their hands following using the toilet and before lunchtime during the inspection. Foot pedal operated bins were available and used for waste disposal. Boxes of tissues were available at a low level for the children to clean their noses with. The staff cleaned down surfaces frequently during the inspection for example tables after use at mealtime. Records of the cleaning/disinfection processes carried out by the staff in the service were kept electronically and available for inspection. Daily risk checklists were in place for various areas of the service and completed by the staff. A refrigerator was provided in the hallway to store children's lunches containing perishable food items such as yoghurt under 5°C. Some of the windows in the playroom were opened to ventilate the room during the inspection. The sandpit outdoors was covered when not in use.

Administration of Medication:

The staff advised the inspector that none of the children in the service required medication to be administered whilst in attendance in the service.

Fire Safety:

The emergency exit routes were found to be free from obstruction during the inspection.

Outing:

The inspector was informed by the staff that an outing was organised to be undertaken by the service to a nearby setting for the following day. A risk assessment from a previous outing in the setting was available on file and the registered provider advised that a new risk assessment of the setting to be visited was to be undertaken that evening.

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) A certificate of the completion of First Aid Response (FAR) training course with an expiry date of 30 July 2023 was available for one staff member who was present on the day.
- (2)
 - (a) A first aid box was safely stored in an easily accessible location on high shelving in the playroom.
 - (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.
- (2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-
- (a) a parent or guardian of a pre-school child attending or proposing to attend the pre-school service,
 - (b) an employee, and
 - (c) an authorised person.
- (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) Fire drills were conducted monthly in the service with electronic records of the fire drills kept by the staff. The most recent fire drill was recorded as having been undertaken on the 18 April 2023.
 - (b) Records were available of the number, type and maintenance of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises. The records showed that the firefighting equipment was last maintained on the 30 September 2022 and the smoke alarms/fire detection system were last maintained on the 20 March 2023.
- (2)
- (c) The records were made available in the service to the inspector on request.
- (4)
- Notices of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were conspicuously displayed on a wall of the playroom near the door to the hallway.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service had a certificate of insurance valid until the 27 March 2024 showing that adequate insurance cover was in place for the service's maximum number of children.