

# TUSLA PRE- REGISTRATION REGULATORY INSPECTION REPORT

## Inspection Due to a Proposed Change of Circumstances

**Tusla I.D:** TU2015MO110

**Name of Service** Stepping Stones Montessori

**Address of Service:** Main Street, Newport, Co Mayo

**Email Address:** steppingstonesnewport@yahoo.ie

**Name of Registered Provider:** Catherine Sheridan

<b>Type of Proposed Service:</b>	<b>Full Day Care</b>		<b>Part-Time</b>	✓	<b>Sessional</b>	✓
	<b>Drop-In</b>		<b>Childminding</b>		<b>Temporary</b>	

**Proposed change:**

- Change in service type from sessional only to sessional and parttime care service provision.
- Change in hours of operation

**Proposed Number of Children:**

- Maximum of 44 children attending sessional services.
- Maximum of 40 children attending parttime services.

**Recommended Change Following Inspection:** Approve all changes

**Registered change:** Change in service type from Sessional to Part Time / Sessional for 44 children (Max 40 Part Time)  
Change in hours of operation from 09:00-12:00 & 09:15-12:15 to 09:00 – 14:00

**Date of Inspection:** 1 5 0 5 2 0 2 3

**Inspection undertaken by:** M Farrell

**Title:** Early Years Inspector

2nd Floor, St. Mary’s HQ., Castlebar, Co. Mayo.

### Rationale for Inspection: Proposed Change of Circumstance

**Note: For Office use only, to be completed by Registration Office**

**Registration Status:** Registered Part Time / Sessional Service for 44 Children (Max 40 Part Time)  
**Date of Registration** 11<sup>th</sup> July 2023

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### Authority to Inspect

The Tusla Early Years Inspectorate carries out inspections of Early Years Services under Section 58(D) of the Child Care Act 1991 (as inserted by Section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013).

<b>Description of Service</b>	Stepping Stones Montessori is a privately owned and operated sessional service located in Newport Co Mayo and registered to provide childcare services to children aged from 2-6 years. The service operates two morning sessions, weekdays, from 09:00-12:00hours and 09:15 -12:15 hours. The service is registered to provide school aged childcare.
<b>Premises</b>	The premises is in a converted commercial building and has two care rooms, one located on the first floor and a second on the ground floor, an office and sanitary facilities. An outdoor area is located to the rear and side of the premises where children have access to outdoor play equipment.
<b>Staffing</b>	The service employs eight staff including administrative staff and the registered provider who is actively involved in the day to day running of the service.
<b>Methodology</b>	<p>The inspection was an announced inspection to assess compliance with the Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 and Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) (Amendment) Regulations 2016. The Inspection focused on regulations under the following themes; Governance, Health, Welfare and Development of the child, Safety and Premises.</p> <p>The findings on inspection based on information obtained through examination of documentation, direct observation, and discussion with relevant staff are documented in the inspection report and taken into consideration when making a decision in relation to registering the change in circumstance. 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.</p>
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider and staff who were present on the day of the inspection.

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### 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.

#### Requirement met:

This requirement has been met.

(1)

- (a) The registered provider is the designated person in charge in the service.
- (b) A named person is available to deputise in the service in her absence.

### 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.

#### Requirement met:

The requirement has been met.

(1) There are currently three staff assigned to work directly with children in both of the care rooms. It is proposed that the staff will maintain the adult: child ratios of:

- 1:6 for children aged between 2 and 6 years of age and
- 1: 8 for children aged from 3 to 6 years of age for children availing of parttime services.

### 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—

(a) having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day, and

(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.

(3) A registered provider of a full day care service, a part-time day care service or a childminding service, other than such a service to which paragraph (2) applies, shall ensure that—

(a) a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the pre-school children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises.

#### Requirement met:

These requirements have been partially met.

(1)

(a) A similar selection of toys and play equipment are provided in both care rooms and displayed in open low level storage allowing access by the children. The play equipment is arranged in defined labelled interest areas including home corners/kitchen areas, construction areas, transport areas, dress up outfits, small world toys and farm areas with wooden farms, toy farm animals and farm

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	<p>machinery reflecting the rural setting of the service. A range of tabletop equipment including Montessori activities such as knobbed cylinders are provided in addition to selections of art and craft equipment. Age-appropriate reading books are positioned near rest areas. There are substantial additional supplies of books and play equipment stored in a small storage area off the upstairs care room to be rotated depending on children’s emergent interests. A large wooden boat and a shop area are provided for imaginative play in the upstairs care room. Age-appropriate tables and chairs are provided for tabletop activities, group work and mealtimes.</p> <p>A wide range of play equipment is provided in the outdoor space such as a covered sandbox and mud kitchen for messy play, play house, and climbing equipment and ride on toys provided for physical play. There are chalkboards for artwork, a work bench and there is digging equipment with wheelbarrows in a fenced off section of the pebbled area.</p> <p>(b)</p> <p>The service proposes to provide parttime services for children over two years of age. Stackable beds with sheets and blankets to be laundered off the premises following use are available. Rest areas with soft seating/furnishings are provided in both care rooms where the children can rest and relax when they wish to.</p> <p>(3)</p> <p>The outdoor area provided is suitable and secure and directly accessible from the building to facilitate outdoor play on a daily basis. The outdoor space has areas with ground cover of pebbles and cement including a cement cycle path for ride on toys. There are sheltered areas in the outdoor space providing shelter allowing the area to be used in inclement weather.</p>
<b>Requirement not met:</b>	<p>(3) The requirement has been partially met.</p> <p>In relation to safety:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The mud kitchen is not adequately secured and poses a potential safety risk to children.</li> <li>2. There are sections of pebble ground cover under a climbing frame in the outdoor area that may cause an injury if a child fell from the climbing frame.</li> </ol>
<b>Response from Provider:</b>	<p>The registered provider stated in a written response that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The mud kitchen has been anchored and is now secure.</li> <li>2. A matted area has now been provided under the climbing frame.</li> </ol> <p>The registered provider submitted photographic evidence of the securing of the mud kitchen and the newly installed matting in the outdoor area to the Early Years Inspectorate.</p>
<b>Summary Comment:</b>	<p>The requirements have now been met.</p>

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### Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

#### Regulation 22 – Food and Drink

*A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.*

#### Requirement met:

The requirement has been met.

- It is proposed that healthy foods in line with the service's healthy eating policy are to be provided from home for the children attending the service. The service has developed an information sheet for parents to advise them of types of food to be provided.
- The registered provider advised the inspector that drinking water is to be available at all times to the children in the service.

### 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.*

#### Requirement met:

The requirement has been met.

#### General Safety

- A wooden gate is in place in the upstairs care room to prevent children from leaving the area unnoticed.
- The gates in the outdoor area have mechanisms in place to restrict access from unauthorised persons and prevent children from leaving the area unnoticed.
- Secure storage for medication is available in the office downstairs and store area upstairs.
- The door to the storage area upstairs is secured with a device to restrict access by children.
- The toys and equipment available in the care rooms are in a satisfactory condition and free from hazards.

#### Infection control:

- Detailed cleaning schedules and cleaning record templates are in place for all areas of the service.
- Foot pedal bins are in place for the disposal of waste in all areas.
- The outdoor waste storage bins are inaccessible to children in the service.
- A supply of drinking water is provided in the service.
- Refrigerators are provided in the care rooms for the storage of perishable food items.

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### 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.

<b>Requirement met:</b>	The requirement has been partially met. (1) Evidence of the completion of first aid training (FAR ) for children was available for four staff in the service with expiry dates ranging from the 01 of April 2024 to the 01 March 2025. (2) (a) First aid boxes are stored in the storeroom off the upstairs care room and in the office off the downstairs care room with signs on the doors to highlight where they are stored. (b) The first aid equipment is proposed to be always available to children attending the service.
<b>Requirement not met:</b>	(2) (a) There were no eye pads with bandages in the first aid kits in the care rooms.
<b>Response from Provider:</b>	(2) (a) Eye pads with bandages have been purchased and are now in both first aid kits in each preschool room.  Photographic evidence of the eye pads with bandages was submitted by the registered provider to the Early Years Inspectorate.
<b>Summary Comment:</b>	The regulatory requirement has now been met.

### 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.

<b>Requirement met:</b>	The requirement has been partially met. (1) (a) Copies of the templates for the recording of all monthly fire drills to take place on the premises are available in the service. (b) A record is available of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises. The fire detection and alarm system was last maintained on the 8 November 2022.
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	(4) Detailed notices of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire are displayed on the premises for example on the wall of the upstairs care room.
<b>Requirement not met:</b>	(1)(b) There was no record of the annual maintenance of firefighting equipment available for inspection.
<b>Response from Provider:</b>	(1)(b) A copy of the record of the annual maintenance of firefighting equipment was submitted by the registered provider to the Early Years Inspectorate.
<b>Summary Comment:</b>	The requirement has now been met.

### Part VI – Safety

#### Regulation 28 – Insurance

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

<b>Requirement met:</b>	An insurance quotation was submitted to the Registration Team prior to this inspection. The registered provider must ensure that adequate insurance is in place prior to the commencement of the change. The change approval is contingent on the registered provider's compliance with Regulation 28.
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### Part VII – Premises and Space Requirements

#### Regulation 29 – Premises

*A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are—*

- (a) of sound and stable structure,*
- (b) safe and secure,*
- (c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated,*
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

<b>Requirement met:</b>	The requirement has been partially met. (a) No obvious defects were observed in the structure of the building.  (b) The perimeter of the outdoor area was enclosed with securing mechanism on the gates to prevent children from leaving unnoticed.  (c) <b>Lighting:</b> There is natural light from windows and doors and artificial lighting provided in the premises which is adequate and suitable for the provision of a childcare service. The light fittings light fittings in both the care rooms and in the sanitary areas are encased with protective covers.
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	<p><b>Heating:</b> The building is heated by oil fuelled central heating system. The system was last maintained in August 2022. The air temperatures of the care rooms were recorded within the range of 18-22°C as required for these areas.</p> <p><b>Ventilation:</b> There are openable windows in the care rooms to allow ventilation of the rooms. The sanitary units have openable windows and/or mechanical ventilation to ventilate these spaces.</p> <p>(d) There are cleaning schedules and cleaning recording templates in place for all areas of the service. The care rooms were found to be clean. The play equipment is maintained in a satisfactory condition.</p> <p>(e) Sanitary facilities were provided in the service as follows: <b>Upstairs:</b> There is a sanitary unit with two toilets and two wash hand basins allocated for use by the children and a third separate toilet and wash hand basin in this area allocated for use by the adults. <b>Downstairs:</b> One toilet and wash hand basin is provided for use by the children in an ability sanitary unit located beside the care room off the main entrance lobby. This unit also has a height adjustable, electrically powered nappy changing unit. A second sanitary unit with one toilet and wash hand basin is located off the downstairs care room. Warm water, liquid soap, paper towels and foot pedal bins are provided in the sanitary units for handwashing and drying purposes.</p>
<p><b>Requirement not met:</b></p>	<p>(b) There is a thumb turn mechanism on the main entrance door at the side of the building which prevents unauthorised entry to the area however it could potentially be openable by children with the potential to leave the area unnoticed.</p> <p>(c) <b>Heating:</b> The air temperature in one of the downstairs sanitary units ranged from 16.3 -17.4°C. which was not between the required range of 18-22°C.</p> <p>(d) 1. The vent of the mechanical ventilation system was dusty and required cleaning. 2. A number of the ceiling tiles in the suspended ceiling were heavily stained and required replacement.</p>
<p><b>Response from Provider:</b></p>	<p>The registered provider advised in a written response that: (b) A thumb turn mechanism on the main entrance door has been raised higher.</p>

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	<p>(c) The radiators have been bled and the sanitary unit temperature is now within the required range.</p> <p>(d)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The vent has been cleaned.</li> <li>2. Ceiling tiles have been ordered and the builder is awaiting their arrival. The registered provider will forward evidence to the Early Years Inspectorate when they are fitted.</li> </ol> <p>The registered provider submitted supporting photographic evidence to the Early Years Inspectorate.</p>
<b>Summary Comment:</b>	The majority of the requirements have been met. The requirements in relation to (d) 2. will be met on the installation of the replacement ceiling tiles.

### Part VII – Premises and Space Requirements

#### Regulation 30 – Minimum Space Requirements

- (1) Subject to paragraphs (2) to (6), a registered provider shall ensure that adequate clear floor space is available in the premises for the work, play and movement of children attending the pre-school service.
- (2) A registered provider of a full day care service or a part-time day care service shall ensure that the minimum amount of clear floor space specified in column (3) of Schedule 7 opposite a particular reference number specified in column (1) of that Schedule in respect of the age range of children specified in column (2) thereof at that reference number is available for each child in that age range attending the service.
- (3) Where a registered provider contemporaneously provides—
- (a) a sessional pre-school service, and
  - (b) a full day care service or a part-time day care service, or both, the minimum clear floor space applicable for the duration of the sessional preschool service in respect of the children attending that service shall be the floor space specified in paragraph (3).

<b>Requirement met:</b>	<p>The requirement has been met.</p> <p>(1) The clear floor space required for children attending parttime services is: 2-3 years of age: 2.35 square metres, 3-6 years of age: 2.3 square metres.</p> <p>The clear floor space in the downstairs care room measures a total of 47.58 square metres which can accommodate a maximum of 20 children (aged between 3-6 years) of attending parttime services. The upstairs care room measured 46.35 square metres and can also accommodate a maximum 20 children (aged between 3-6 years) attending parttime services.</p> <p>(2) The total clear floor space in both care rooms can accommodate a maximum of 40 children (aged between 3 and 6 years) attending part-time services.</p> <p>(3) The minimum of 1.818 square metres of clear space is available in the care rooms for the proposed 44 children to attend sessional services when sessional and parttime care services are contemporaneously provided in the room.</p>
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