

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015MO118
--------------------------	-------------

Name of Service:	The Little Way Montessori
-------------------------	---------------------------

Address of Service:	Upper Quay, Westport, Co. Mayo
----------------------------	--------------------------------

Eircode:	F28 HE48
-----------------	----------

Name of Registered Provider:	Karina MacBride
-------------------------------------	-----------------

Service type:	Sessional
----------------------	-----------

Date(s) of Inspection:	28/03/2025
-------------------------------	------------

No of pre-school children:	AM	6	PM	No.
-----------------------------------	----	---	----	-----

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:	B Lavin
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

The Little Way Montessori is a sessional service which provides a morning session five days per week for children aged from two to six years. The service is situated in a purpose-built ground floor facility on the grounds of the registered provider's home. It is located in a residential area on the outskirts of Westport town. The children had access to a main playroom and an adjoining smaller playroom. The service has an outdoor area located to the rear of the premises with direct access from the main playroom where children have access to outdoor play equipment.

Staffing

The service employs three adults including the registered provider who works directly with the children.

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 and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 15 Record of a preschool child.

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*
- (c) there is a clear management structure in the service that identifies the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and unpaid worker.*

(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 service manager was assigned as the designated persons in charge and there was a named person who was able to deputise as required.
- (b) The registered provider was present in the service for the duration of the inspection.
- (2)(a) Of the six required, five references were sourced from past employers and were validated.
- (b) The remaining one required reference were from a source other than a past employer.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for three staff. The service did adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d) Police Vetting disclosures were available for one adult working in the service that had lived outside the jurisdiction for a period of over six months.
- (4) All adults working directly with children have obtained an award in Early Childhood Care and Education from Level 5 to a Level 6 on the National Qualifications Framework.

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

A process was in place to develop and approve the service's policies and procedures. A number of policies were reviewed on the day of inspection to ensure that the policies were consistent with service practices that were observed during the duration of the inspection.

The following policies were reviewed and were found to be compliant.

- Policy on behaviour management
- Policy on accident and incident.

- Policy on recruitment.
- Policy on risk assessment.
- Policy on staff training.
- Policy on supervision of staff.
- Child safeguarding statement.
- Policy on Healthy eating.
- Policy on infection control.
- Policy on administration of medication.

Each policy outlined the procedures to be followed in relation to the subject matter. Effective systems were in place to review policies and the duration of records to be maintained. The service had maintained records indicating that staff had read, understood and undertaken to abide by all the policies and procedures of the service.

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) There were three adults working directly with six children on the day of inspection.

The minimum adult to child ratios were provided on the morning of inspection in accordance with the required ratios considering the ages of the children and the length of time each child spent in the service as outlined below:

Six sessional children aged between 2 years 9 months - 4 years and 3 members of staff caring for the children.

(3) The registered provider ensured that the minimum ratio of adults to children specified was maintained.

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 reviewed a random sample of ten children's records. The records contained the required details as laid out under the Regulation.

- (c) The required information was made readily available for inspection in the service 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

Basic Needs

- Drinking water was available to all children in individual beakers throughout the day.
- Children were observed eating their snack which consisted of fruit, yogurt, cheese and sandwiches which was provided by their parents/guardians. Children were supported during mealtimes with opening food items when needed. Independence was encouraged with self-help skills.
- Children sat at tables and chairs which were appropriate for their height and/or stage of development.
- The staff were observed sitting at the child's level and chatted in a respectful manner.
- The privacy and dignity of each child was respected during toileting.
- Appropriate rest facilities were available in the care rooms and children were observed spending time in this area for short periods of rest throughout the day.
- Children had easy access to the outside areas throughout the day and children moved freely between both indoors and outdoors.
- Appropriate outdoor clothes are provided by the service. A change of clothes was available when a child needed to be changed after outdoor play
- The adults working with the children were sensitive and responsive in promoting positive behaviours and supported children to find positive solutions to sharing toys and equipment.
- Children had plenty of opportunities to move themselves, to practice and improve their emerging skills, such as co-ordination and balance in the well-established outdoor area.

Supporting relationships

- Staff supported children to engage positively with one another, and the children were encouraged to engage in play activities that required turn taking and sharing. Staff members were heard encouraging

children to be mindful of the feelings of those around them which promoted an ethos of friendship and working together.

- Emerging interests from the children guide the play and learning and the inspector observed imaginative and sensory play based around making playdoh and using easter themed materials to make shapes.
- A group of children engaged in imaginative play, based on playing shop. The staff members engaged fully in this immersive play and helped to extend the play further by finding more shopping items and asking open ended questions about the game.
- The service provided parents and guardians with daily information, including significant events or activities involving their child, for example, verbal communication at drop off and collection times and through a messaging service which allowed for the sharing of photographs and a description of the child engaged in activities.

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) A written record was available of the monthly fire drills that took place in the service. The last recorded fire drill took place on the 10/03/2025.
- (b) Maintenance records of all the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms were available in the service.
- A record for the firefighting equipment advised that the last service was 28/08/2024 and smoke alarm advised that the last service was 01/05/2024.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire was displayed on the wall in the playrooms in the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service's insurance with an expiry date of 27/03/2026, was for a sessional service, for a maximum number of 22 children. The insurance covered the following,

- public liability,
- personal accident,
- insurance against fire and theft,
- buildings,
- outings undertaken as part of the service provision.