

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015RN041		
<b>Name of Service:</b>	Patricia's Montessori		
<b>Address of Service:</b>	The Enterprise Hub, Castlerea, Co. Roscommon		
<b>Eircode:</b>	F45 AC96		
<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Patricia Buckley		
<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional		
<b>Date(s) of Inspection:</b>	27/04/2023		
<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	15	PM N/A
<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Year's Inspectorate, TUSLA, Child and Family Agency, Government Buildings, Convent Road, Roscommon, Co. Roscommon		
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	A. Kennedy		
<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
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### Description of service

This service has been in operation as a privately operated childcare service since 2013. It caters for children from 2 to 6 years and operates from 9:00hrs -12:00hrs Monday to Friday for 38 weeks of the year. The pedagogy of the service is a predominately Montessori curriculum. The service is located in a large room in the local community enterprise centre. There are two outdoor play areas available for children's play, one with direct access from the preschool room and an additional grassed area located to the front of the premises.

### Staffing

Three adults work directly with the children. The registered provider does not presently work in the service and has employed an adult to deputise in her absence.

### 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*.

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, person in charge, 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 registered provider was not on the premises upon the arrival of the early years inspector, however the designated deputy person in charge facilitated the inspection in her absence. And the registered provider was present for the closing meeting.

(b) The designated deputy person in charge was on the premises when the early years inspector arrived and remained on site for the duration of the inspection.

Staff rosters indicated that either the registered provider or the deputy person in charge are available on the premises, at all times, when the pre-school children were present.

(c) Staff rosters and documentary evidence indicated that there was a clear management structure in the service, that identified the lines of authority and accountability within the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee.

(2) The staff files were reviewed and it was advised that one new adult has commenced in the service since the previous inspection on 19/05/2021.

(a)(b) Two written validated references were on file for this adult and were provided from past employers.

(c) A Garda vetting disclosure was available in respect of this adult.

(d) Not applicable as this adult had not resided outside the jurisdiction for a period in excess of six months

(4) The four staff hold a Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) at a Level 5 or over, in Early Childhood Care and Education.

### 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 day of the inspection there were two adults caring for fifteen children aged between three to five years.
- (3) The appropriate adult/child ratio was maintained throughout the inspection.
- From assessment of records, there are three adults in attendance daily with two in attendance on the day of this inspection.

### 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

- Hand washing was carried out regularly in the setting by the children with gentle reminders from the adults after toileting, prior to consuming snack, after messy play and outdoor play.
- The children sat at low tables for their morning snack accompanied by the adults in the preschool room.
- Adequate tables and chairs were provided for the children and they were encouraged to self-feed and assisted by the staff if necessary.
- A healthy eating policy was in place in the service. It was observed that the children consumed their snack at 11.15am. There was evidence of healthy eating with the children consuming a selection of fresh fruit to include apples, strawberries, grapes, raisins, blackberries, oranges, apples, crackers, rolls, croissants, sandwiches and yoghurts. Juice and water were available as drinks.

- The snack time was unhurried and the children were encouraged to be independent.
- There was a cosy area in the preschool room which could be adapted as a rest area for the children to rest or opt out of activities if they so wished.
- Children were encouraged by the adults to do things for themselves and be self-caring around their toileting needs.
- The children enjoyed freedom of movement within the playroom and the outdoor play area throughout the session.
- Children had plenty of opportunities to move themselves, to practice and improve their emerging skills, such as co-ordination and balance. Play activities and experiences were developmentally appropriate and suitably challenging. The children could move about freely and explore their environment. The children were observed at free play, stacking, at artwork, dancing to action songs, doing Montessori exercises and at messy play.

The staff read stories and children questioned the characters and gave their views. The staff used visual aids and probed with questions such as ‘who is this?’ ‘how many are there?’, and ‘where is that?’. The staff acknowledged a child’s achievements, and the children were observed having fun.

In the outdoor area, the children played at the sand tray, on the slide, at the play kitchen and on push along trikes/ bicycles, walking, running, and catching bubbles.

- The staff supported children in forming and sustaining positive relationships by -
  - having a key person system for each child,
  - showing respect for each unique child and developing their trust,
  - listening to the voice of the child as they communicate their needs, thoughts, and experiences both verbally and non-verbally, by reading children’s cues, gestures, and body language,
  - using soft tones, the child’s individual name, and getting down to their level and making eye contact,
  - providing opportunities for individual and small group activities and play, leading to increased social awareness, co-operation, collaboration, teamwork, and a sense of belonging,
  - providing opportunities for children to learn from each other and with each other, to work together, join in and contribute to projects and tasks,
  - working with parents and guardians by sharing knowledge and observations of the child’s interests, strengths, developmental and care needs, approaches to learning, changes in their life, and any other concerns.

- On the day of the inspection the staff showed kindness. They were thoughtful, supportive, and reassuring whilst caring for the children. They cared for children by being supportive while the children engaged in free play, role play, and creative play. A climate was fostered where the children knew their boundaries. The staff supported children to enter social groups, and to learn to help and positively engage with other children. They encouraged and praised children for specific, positive, and appropriate behaviours. Children were given positive alternatives, rather than just being told 'no'. Children were supported in preventing, managing, and resolving conflict. Older children could identify, name, and explore their feelings both positive and negative.

### Physical And Material Environment

- The pre-school room was spacious, bright and colourful. The room was laid out with clearly defined areas of play to include a storage unit with an abundance of arts and crafts supplies to include paint, glue, brushes foam shapes, scissors, glitter, sponges, stampers, paper and card.
- Large and small-scale construction (plastic and wooden blocks) and manipulative materials; picture books, problem solving toys (e.g. jigsaws), role and pretend play (e.g. a play kitchen, dolls and accessories, a doll's bath with towels) and small world toys (e.g. play animals, transport toys, play figures).
- An extensive selection of Montessori equipment to include materials to support practical life exercises, sensorial materials, an early introduction to history, geography, early language and maths were provided.
- A soft matted area with cushions was provided as a reading area should a child wish to relax or opt out of activities.
- Low level tables and chairs were in place and low-level shelving with equipment and materials were accessible to the children. The outdoor play areas were located to the front of the pre-school premises.

### 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,

#### Compliance Information

(1)(a)

The design, organisation and resourcing of the pre-school environment supported each child’s wellbeing, learning and development, within the ethos and philosophy of the service. The environment provided a range of challenging, diverse, creative, and enriching experiences for all children in line with their stage of development. The atmosphere in the learning environment was encouraging and unhurried. The play materials and environment were changeable, flexible, and responsive to the emerging changing needs, preferences, and interests of the children. The staff encouraged children to interact and to engage with a range of materials, activities, and equipment in the environment, based on the child’s choices, age and stage of development.

#### The Playroom

The indoor playroom was designed and arranged to

- maintain a space that was clean, organised, and free of clutter,
- accommodate children individually, and in small groups,
- divide the space into areas that were supplied with materials organised in a way to support children’s play and learning,
- give all children access to the same facilities, activities and play opportunities, to promote their welfare and development.
- The equipment was stored on low-level shelving and was readily accessible by the pre-school children.
- The play equipment and materials were age and stage appropriate, they were designed to offer a child manipulative activity, to encourage hand eye co-ordination, to develop fine motor skills and logical thinking.
- Materials and items included a home area with a play kitchen, dress up clothing, a clothes airer, dolls and accessories. There were connectors, links, pins, buttons, stickle bricks, pegs, threading materials, zips, insets, puzzles, and games. There were trays with sand, sieves, scoops, brushes, spoons, and containers.

There were stacking and construction and transport items. There were dressing frames, ocean, zoo, and farm animals. There were small world items and action figures.

- There were paints, scissors, glue, paper, bibs, and various art and craft materials.
- Displayed on the walls were art and visual displays of the solar system, birthday balloons, 'experimenting with water', 'fantastic families', photographic displays of the children doing activities, art displays on 'the African plains, the farm, flags from different countries, the daily routine, a choice board and posters on emotions added additional decorative features to the indoor play environment.

### 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:

Children were observed to be actively supervised by the adults at all times when playing in the indoor and the enclosed outdoor play areas during the inspection.

Toys and play equipment were developmentally appropriate, kept in good repair and did not pose an injury risk to children.

Cleaning agents were stored in a locked press inaccessible to a preschool child.

The heating system was thermostatically controlled, to ensure the temperature was maintained between 18°C to 22°C.

The water was thermostatically controlled with a temperature reading of 32.8°C and 33.8°C, on the day of inspection.

##### Infection control

The inspector observed that the children washed their hands regularly throughout the inspection to include, prior to consuming snack, after outdoor play and after toileting.

Suitable hand washing facilities were provided with supplies of liquid soap.

The playroom had hand sanitiser, cleaning products, personal protective equipment and foot operated lidded bins.

There were enhanced cleaning procedures in place with records of completed works maintained in the service.

The pre-school room and sanitary areas were well ventilated with the windows open throughout the inspection.

Tabletops were cleaned immediately prior to children's snack break.

Mouthed toys were removed after use and sterilised appropriately. The adults were observed regularly washing their hands including after disposing of tissues into bins.

Fixtures, fittings and play resources were observed to be in a hygienic condition. The adults showed awareness of the services procedures including the management of suspected infection when questioned.

A refrigerator was provided for the storage of perishable foods.

### **Administration of Medication:**

There were no medications administered to the children on the day of the inspection.

It was advised by the staff presently no child is on medication. The staff demonstrated knowledge of safe practices with regards to the safe storage and administration of medication should it be required.

### **Fire safety**

Monthly fire drills were carried out on the premises to ensure the children were familiar with the procedure in event of an emergency.

All exit routes from the service were free from obstruction during the inspection.

## **Non-Compliance Information**

### **General safety**

1. The door leading from the preschool room to a storage room and the hallway to the stairwell had no lock fitted to prevent the children gaining access to these areas which could pose a potential safety concern.
2. In the preschool room there was an electric extension lead trailing and not secured which could pose a safety concern.
3. A push along toy in the outdoor area was broken with a sharp edge exposed which could pose risk of injury to a child.

## Infection Control:

- The staff toilet was located within the communal sanitary accommodation with no lock in place to prevent members of the public using this facility. It is acknowledged that the registered provider advised that there are no adults in attendance of the community centre during the hours of operation of the service, however they do access the centre in the evening times.
- A push lidded bin was provided in the sanitary accommodation which could pose a risk of cross contamination.

## Action submitted by the Registered Provider

### Corrective Action

The registered provider submitted a written response on 23/05/2023 to advise

#### General safety

- Locks have been fitted on the doors leading from the preschool room to the storage room and the door leading from the hallway to the stairwell,
- A shelf has been fitted to store the c.d. player on.
- The exposed handlebar has been covered.

## Infection Control:

- The staff toilet is locked to prevent members of the public using this facility.
- A foot operated pedal bin has been placed in the sanitary accommodation.

### Preventive action

#### General safety

- The staff will ensure the locks are used on the doors when the service is in operation.
- The staff will ensure the shelf is used to store the c.d. player.
- The staff will check the equipment on a regular basis to ensure there are no safety concerns.

#### Infection control

- The door is checked daily to ensure it is locked and kept for staff use only.
- The staff have been advised to use the foot operated pedal bin in the sanitary accommodation.

### Supporting documentation submitted

#### General Safety:

The registered provider submitted photographic evidence of

- The new locks fitted on the door from the preschool room to the storage room and from the preschool room to the hallway.

2. The shelf fitted to store the c.d. player.
3. The repaired handlebars on the tricycle.

### Infection Control:

4. The lock on the staff sanitary accommodation.
5. The foot operated pedal bin in the sanitary accommodation.

### Summary Comment

The Early Years Inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliances identified under points 1 -5 have been adequately addressed. These will be reviewed on next inspection.

## 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) The service provided evidence that a person trained in first aid for children was available at all times to the children attending the pre-school service. Four adults had current training in first aid responder training.

(2)(a) The first aid box was appropriately stocked with items safely stored and easily accessible by the adults in a conspicuous position on a high shelf in the preschool room.

(b)The service demonstrated that the first aid box was available to the children attending the pre-school service.

### 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 completed in the service.

The last recorded fire drill was on 03/03/2023.

(b)Records were available in relation to the number, type, and maintenance of fire-fighting equipment with the annual service dated 24/10/2022.

The smoke and fire detection alarm system for the premises had the last annual service dated 23/10/2023.

(4) Notices were displayed within the service of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire in the premises.

### 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 27/03/2024 covered the following,

public liability,

personal accident,

insurance against fire and theft,

outings undertaken as part of the service provision.