

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015RN043
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Name of Service:	Right Start Montessori
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Address of Service:	Curraghmore, Kiltoom, Athlone, Co. Roscommon
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Eircode:	N37 WY86
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Name of Registered Provider:	Marion Mulkearn-Colgan
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Service type:	Full Day
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Dates of Inspection:	26/06/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	13	PM	10
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Year's Inspectorate, TUSLA, Child and Family Agency, Government Buildings, Convent Road, Roscommon, Co. Roscommon
Inspection undertaken by:	A Kennedy and M Farrell
Title:	Early Years Inspectors

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
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Description of service

This ground floor full day care service is attached to the registered provider's home, in a rural setting of Kiltoom, near the town of Athlone, Co. Roscommon. A full day care service from 8.00hrs to 18.00hrs, and an Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) and sessional care pre-school programmes are offered. The service caters for children aged between 2 years to 6 years. There are two interconnected playrooms. There is a designated kitchen where the main meals are prepared, cooked, and stored on site. There are outdoor play areas to the side and rear of the premises accessible to the children. Additionally, the service is registered to provide a breakfast club and after school programme for school aged children.

Staffing

There are 8 staff in the service including the registered provider who works directly with the children, childcare staff, relief staff and maintenance staff.

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/ premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under sections of regulations 9, 11, 15, 16, 22, 23, 26, 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.

Additional Information

On the day of the inspection, an immediate action notice was issued in relation to Regulation 23 (Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of child), as the water temperatures from the warm tap of a wash hand basin accessible to the children was recorded at 65°C, above the recommended 43°C upper safety limit to prevent a risk of scalding. On the afternoon of the inspection, the registered provider took temporary measures to turn off the water supply to this sink until the hot water temperature could be regulated by a tradesperson.

Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish 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 named designated person in charge and a named person to deputise in her absence in the service.
 - (b) Both the designated person in charge and deputy were present in the service during the inspection. It was confirmed by review of rosters and discussion with staff that either the designated person in charge or the deputy were present during service hours.
- (2) The inspectors confirmed through discussion with the staff and review of rosters that there were eight staff in the service at the time of the inspection. The vetting files for the eight staff were reviewed and the following required documents were available:
- (a) Two written validated references from past employers particularly their most recent employer for four adults. One written validated reference from a past employer for four staff.
 - (b) One written validated reference from sources other than past employers for four staff.

- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all eight adults. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting for staff members every three years.
- (d) International police vetting was not required for any staff members as they had not lived outside of the country for more than six months as adults.
- (4) Evidence of qualifications in Early Childhood Education and Care at QQI level 5 or higher or equivalent qualifications where available for all six staff who worked directly with the 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.

(2) Subject to paragraphs (4) and (5), a registered provider of a full day care service or a part-time day care service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 1 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) thereof at that reference number is satisfied.

(8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-

(a) a registered provider of a pre-school service other than a child-minding service or a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that there are at least 2 adults on the premises at all times,

Compliance Information

- (1) At all times during the period of the inspection, the registered provider ensured that an adequate number of staff were working directly with the children.
- (2) Documentary evidence in the form of attendance records and staff rosters indicated that adult child ratios were adhered to.
On the morning of the inspection, there were 13 pre-school children aged between 2 to 5 years. There were 5 staff working directly with the children.
In the afternoon of the inspection, there were 10 preschool children aged 2 to 5 years. There were 5 staff working directly with the children.
- (8)(a) The registered provider ensured that there were always 2 staff on the premises while the pre-school was operating.

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.*

Compliance Information

(1)(a)(b)(d)(e)(f)(g)(h) & (i)

Ten children's records were sampled and reviewed by the early year's inspectors.

The ten records reviewed showed that the entries were accurate.

The ten children's records contained the following: -

The name and date of birth of the child.

The date in which the child first commenced in the service on six children's records.

The name and address of the child's parent or guardian, and a telephone number where that parent or guardian (or a relative or friend of the parent or child) can be contacted during the hours of operation.

Written authorisation / permissions for collecting the child.

Details are recorded of any illness, allergy, or additional need(s) the child had, together with all the information relevant to the provision of specific care or attention.

The name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner on nine of the children's records.

A record of any immunisations the child has had.

Written parental or guardian consent was included to allow the child to have appropriate medical treatment if there was / is an emergency.

Non-Compliance Information

- (b) The date on which the child first attended the service was not recorded on four children's records.
- (g) The name and telephone number of the child's registered practitioner was not available on one child's record.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider submitted a written response to state

- (b) All children's records were reviewed to identify missing information and the date the child started in the service is included on the four children's records
- (g) Contacted the parents of the child missing GP details and obtained the name and telephone number of their GP along with all up to date immunizations.

The registered provider verified that all children's records are now fully completed in line with requirements and entry forms updated to ensure same

- (b) & (g) Updated enrolment forms with new section showing start and cease date. Implemented an enrolment checklist to ensure all required fields are completed before a child's first day. And the service has introduced quarterly audits of children's records to ensure information remains current and accurate. Nominated a designated staff member responsible for ensuring ongoing compliance with Regulation 15

Supporting documentation submitted

The registered provider submitted documentary evidence of the revised enrolment form, enrolment checklists and the quarterly audits.

Summary Comment

The inspectors have reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliances identified under Regulation 15 have been adequately addressed.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:

- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*

Compliance Information

- (h) A record was maintained of the details of attendance of each preschool child on a daily basis.
- (i) A record was maintained of the staff rosters on a daily basis.

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.

Compliance Information

- There was a healthy eating policy. The registered provider advised that healthy eating was promoted within the service by visual aids, and adherence to best practice guidelines.
- At 11.00hrs, the children had their snacks provided by parents and guardians which included, cheese, meat slices, crackers, rice cakes, sandwiches, chopped fruit and yogurt and yogurt drinks.
- At 13.10hrs, the service provided children with the main meal of chicken curry with rice and or water/juice to drink.
- At 16.00hrs, the service offered the children ham and cheese wraps and a selection of fruits.
- Clean and safe drinking water at a low-level countertop was available and accessible to children in the play spaces.
- There was a designated fridge in the Montessori part of the playroom, for the safe storage of perishable foodstuffs from children’s lunch boxes, for their snack times.

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 external door had a buzzer access system and was appropriately secured to prevent a child gaining unsupervised access and unauthorised persons gaining access to the premises.
- All toys and play equipment were observed to be safe and in good condition.
- There were restrictive access devices on the low-level windows in the playrooms and the sanitary accommodation as a safety security precaution.
- There were strips on the glass doors used by the children entering / exiting the service, as a visibility safety precaution.
- Leads, cables, and flexes were wall mounted to prevent any trip or strangulation hazard.
- The indoor temperature was maintained between 18°C to 22°C.
- Cleaning products were stored out of the reach of children.

Infection Control:

- Staff encouraged and supervised the children to wash their hands before eating and following toileting, messy play, and outdoor play.
- Adequate liquid soap and paper towels were available at the wash hand basins in the sanitary areas.
- The toys and play equipment were maintained in a clean and hygienic condition.
- There were suitable cleaning products available in the service.
- The inspectors noted high contact areas, were cleaned regularly.
- The outdoor play equipment was cleaned prior to/ after a child's use.

Administration of Medication:

- Medication was stored inaccessible to the pre-school children.
- The staff were familiar with the medication administration policy of the service if medication needed to be administered.
- Suncreams were supplied by the parents and guardians, and stored in the service

Safe Sleep:

- Rest/quiet areas were provided to facilitate a child to rest or opt out of an activity if he/she chose to.
- On the day of inspection, no child required to have a sleep. All of the children were aged over two years of age.

Fire Safety:

- Records on file demonstrated that fire drills were carried out frequently which helped to ensure that adults and children were familiar with the procedure in the event of a fire.
- All exit routes from the service were free from obstruction during the inspection.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. On the day of inspection, at 13.08hrs the water temperature from a hot water tap at a sink in the playroom used by children was recorded at 65°C. This water temperature was above the recommended 43°C upper safety limit to prevent potential risk of scalding. It is acknowledged on the day that the registered provider contacted the plumber to turn off the hot water supply to this sink until the temperature could be adjusted to a maximum of 43°C.
2. A goalpost in the outdoor grass area, was not securely anchored posing a potential safety risk.
3. The plastic underlay on the gravel area in the outdoor area to the rear of the premises, close to the climbing frame, slide and playhouse was exposed and uneven and posed a potential tripping risk.
4. A section of the wire fencing in the outdoor area to the rear of the premises was uneven and not secured and posed a potential tripping hazard.

Infection Control:

5. A bin used for the disposal of handtowels at the sink in the preschool room was not foot operated and had no lid.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

The registered provider submitted a written response to advise that

1. The hot water tap now permanently closed off and only cold water in use for this sink which is used for arts/crafts only. This sink will not be in used for handwashing.
2. The goalpost in outdoor grass area secured into the ground with ground spikes.
3. The plastic underlay in gravel replaced and levelled to remove tripping risk.
4. Section of rear fence has been repaired. It is planned to have the tress cut and new fencing will be erected

Infection Control:

5. Extra bin in toilet room with a foot-operated, lidded bin with signage for easy disposal. An additional foot operated bin has been ordered

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

The registered provider submitted photographic evidence of

1. The sink in the preschool room now used for cleaning paint brushes and art supplies
2. Evidence of the spikes fitted to secure the Goalpost
3. The plastic underlay in the outdoor area
4. The wire fencing secured

Infection Control:

5. Foot operated pedal bin in the sanitary accomodation and evidence of an additional bin ordered

Summary Comment

The inspectors have reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliances identified under Regulation 23 have been adequately addressed.

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 firefighting 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) Fire drills were conducted monthly in the service with records of the fire drills kept by the staff. The most recent fire drill record showed that it was undertaken on the 6 June 2025.
 - (b) The service kept a record of the number, type and maintenance record of firefighting equipment and smoke alarm system. The records showed that the firefighting equipment was last maintained on the 21 November 2024 and the smoke alarm system on the 29 November 2024.
- (4)
- Notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were conspicuously displayed in the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

There was evidence of certification of adequate insurance which had an expiry date 27th of March 2026.

The insurance for 30 pre-school children was for a full day care service, included the following: -

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

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

Compliance Information

(d) In the fire exit hallway lobby accessing the rear outdoor play area, there were large storage presses fitted ensure the children did not have access to the utility sink, cleaning products, dustpans, brushes, materials and equipment. The wooden skirting board and the door frame were complete. Individual cubby holes were also provided in this area to store the children's belongings.