

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015TY013
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Name of Service:	Busy Bodies Montessori School
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Address of Service:	Killeen, Rathcabbin, Roscrea, Co Tipperary
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Eircode:	R42 NY60
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Name of Registered Provider:	Ann Delahunt-Smyth
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date of Inspection:	24/03/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	20	PM	5
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	North Tipperary Civic Offices, Limerick Road, Nenagh, Co Tipperary, E45 A099
Inspection undertaken by:	L McGeeney
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	N/A
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Description of service

This full day care service was established to provide care and education to children aged between 2 and 6 years old. The service operates Monday – Friday, 8am – 6pm, for 42 weeks of the year. This includes a daily three-hour session, funded under the early childhood care and education scheme (ECCE) for eligible children, which operates between 9am and 12pm for 38 weeks of the year.

The service is operated from three rooms on the ground floor of the registered providers residence, a detached dormer bungalow adjacent to a family farm. The service is located in a rural area near the village of Killeen in north Tipperary.

Staffing

The registered provider works with the children in the service each day, supported by five staff. This includes three staff employed under the access and inclusion model (AIM). All staff hold recognised qualifications in early childhood care and education.

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.

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The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9(2)(4), 11(1)(2)(4), 16(1)(3), 19(1)(a), 23, 25(1)(2) and 26(1)(4).

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.

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Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

(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

(2) Following a review of previous inspection information, information available on inspection and discussion with the registered provider it was determined that no new staff had been employed since the previous inspection in November 2024. Garda vetting records were reviewed in respect of all staff.

(a) Two written and validated references were available for each person working at the service.

(b) Where past employer references were not available, there were references from sources such as previous schools and colleges.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all staff members and the registered provider. In the case of one staff member and the registered provider, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting time frames as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. Please refer to the information outlined under Regulation 23 of this report.

(d) Not applicable to this service as none of the staff had lived outside the state for a period exceeding six consecutive months.

(4) All staff held recognised qualifications in early childhood care and education at levels 5 or 6 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

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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.*
- (4) Subject to paragraph (5), 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 ratio of adults to children applicable for the duration of the sessional pre-school service in respect of the children attending that service shall be the ratio specified in paragraph (3).*

Compliance Information

- (1) There were 6 staff working directly with 20 children aged between 3 and 5 years old on the morning of the inspection. There were 15 children attending on a sessional basis and 5 children attending on a full day care basis.
- (2) The children were divided into three groups, each group supervised by two staff, with seven children in Pod 1, seven children in Pod 2 and six children in Pod 3. The children were brought together in larger groups for outdoor play and other activities. The adult to child ratios were maintained at greater than the recommended requirements throughout the day.
- (4) The adult to child ratio was maintained at greater than the minimum requirements for either a sessional service or a full day care service throughout the day.

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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:

- (a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;*
- (b) details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services;*
- (c) details of the adult:child ratios in the service;*
- (d) the type of care or programme provided in the service;*
- (e) the facilities available;*
- (f) the opening hours and fees;*
- (g) the policies, procedures and statements the service is required to maintain in accordance with Regulation 10;*
- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*
- (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

(3) A record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection on the premises, and the documents and records referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall be open to inspection whether on the premises or elsewhere, by an authorised person.

Compliance Information

(1) The records required to be maintained in the service as detailed under parts (a) – (k) of this regulation were available in the service.

(3) The required records were available in the service for inspection by an authorised person.

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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

(1)(a) The following was observed on the day of inspection through direction observation, discussion with staff and review of records.

Basic needs

The children enjoyed freedom of movement both indoors and outdoors on the day of inspection. The development of the covered outdoor areas in recent years ensured that children could play outdoors in all weathers, including the windy and rainy weather experienced on the day of inspection.

The children brought a packed lunch to eat during the morning. Each child had an individual drink bottle of water that they could access at any time they wanted a drink. Children who stayed for longer than three hours per day brought extra food to eat in the afternoon.

The children could rest and relax in the cosy areas in the service when they wanted to.

Supporting relationships

The children benefitted from being cared for in small groups with very favourable adult to child ratios, which supported the development of friendships between the children. It also enabled the staff to become familiar with the needs, strengths, personalities and interests of the children in their care. The children got the opportunity to interact with the staff and children in the other groups for large group activities and outdoor play.

The service welcomed families into the service and supported communication with the wider family and community through special events such as the recent 'grandparents day' and collecting Easter eggs to be donated to the children attending Temple Street Children's Hospital.

Special occasions, such as the children's birthdays, were celebrated in the service. On the day of inspection, a child's birthday was celebrated after lunchtime with a cake, singing and games in the outdoor area.

Physical and material environment

The children had access to three activity rooms inside, two covered outdoor play areas and a large open outdoor play area. Each room and the outdoor spaces were very well resourced with a wide range and quantity of toys,

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equipment and materials to support all areas of development including imaginative play, small world play, construction, creative arts, manipulative play, open-ended play and sensory play. There was a range of Montessori equipment and practical life materials. Physical play resources included push toys, balls and many ride-on vehicles providing a variety of challenge levels. Customised equipment was provided for children with additional needs where required.

The premises was decorated for Easter which included the children's artwork displayed on walls and windows. The day was too wet and windy for the children to play in the main outdoor area which had a grass surface so the children's outdoor play times were spent in the covered play area. This space had a roof, and panels which covered both sides and part of the front of the space to make it usable in all weathers. The space was divided into two play areas: one area had an artificial grass surface and was furnished with bench seats, play houses, train track and trains, blackboards, push toys, blocks, toy kitchens, dolls, animals, special interest table and adult seating. The second area had a concrete surface and was equipped with four covered sand boxes, car tracks and ride-on toys.

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 service was located in a lane from a main road. The premises was enclosed by walls, fencing and gates to prevent children leaving the service unsupervised or gaining access to the adjacent farmyard, which was separately enclosed and gated.

Access to the premises was through the front door, which was kept secured when the service was in operation. A bell was available to alert staff that someone was seeking access.

There was an AED mounted to the front wall of the premises where it was available for use if required.

Hot water for hand washing was maintained below the maximum recommended temperature of 43°C,

The service displayed 'No Nuts' posters to remind staff and parents not to bring in food containing nuts as one child had a nut allergy.

There was a ramp to the front door to enable access by anyone using a pushchair, wheelchair or walking frame.

Hop-up steps were used to help children access the sinks for hand washing and steps were available to help children who required nappy changing to access the nappy changing unit without being lifted onto it.

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Infection control:

The staff and children washed their hands at appropriate times during the day such as after outdoor play, after messy play, before eating and after using the toilet or nappy changing.

Health promotion posters, such as hand-washing procedures and sneezing/coughing etiquette, were displayed on the walls of the service and sanitary accommodation area at the children's eye level.

Staff were responsible for ensuring the premises, fixtures and fittings, toys and materials were maintained in a clean and hygienic condition. Tables were wiped down after each use and before being used for dining.

There were two pedal-operated bins in each room: one for general waste and one for food waste.

Administration of medication:

The service had a policy on the administration of medication. The parents signed consent on the medication forms before any medications were administered to their children in the service. A care plan was available in respect of any child with specific medical needs.

Fire safety:

Fire escape routes were kept clear of obstruction.

Non-Compliance Information

General safety:

1. Garda vetting for the registered provider and one member of staff was more than three years old and required to be renewed.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General safety:

Garda vetting has been applied for in respect of the registered provider and staff member whose vetting was more than three years old. The service will keep a check on dates to make sure all vetting is renewed within a three year cycle.

Supporting documentation submitted

General safety:

Evidence of garda vetting renewal was received by the early years inspector on 12 May 2026.

Summary Comment

All evidence submitted meets the requirements of the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

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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.

Compliance Information

(1) All staff held current certification in First Aid Response (FAR). The registered provider was a certified FAR trainer and ensured that staff training was kept up to date.

(2)(a) There were suitably equipped first aid boxes in the entrance hall of the service.

(b) The first aid boxes were available for use if required by a preschool child.

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) There was a record of fire drills that had taken place in the service. Fire drills were practiced once or twice each month, most recently on 27 February 2026.

(b) There was a fire safety register available with a written record of the number, type and maintenance of the smoke alarm system and firefighting equipment. The smoke alarm system was serviced quarterly, most recently on 6 February 2026. The firefighting equipment was serviced annually, most recently on 10 September 2025.

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(4) There was a notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire displayed in a conspicuous position on the premises.