

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015TY026
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Roots Montessori
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Toomevara, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary
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<b>Eircode:</b>	E45 T382
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Pamela Cummins
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<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day, Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	27/02/2024
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	16	PM	15
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Civic Offices, Limerick Road, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary
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<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	L McGeeney
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<b>Title:</b>	Early Years Inspector
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### 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 full day care service was established to provide care and education to children aged between 2 and 6 years old. A registered school aged care service is also provided.

The service operates Monday – Friday, 8am – 6pm, for 48 weeks of the year. This includes a daily three-hour sessional service operated between 9am and 12pm and funded under the early childhood care and education scheme (ECCE) for eligible children.

The service is operated from purpose-built rooms in the registered providers residence in the rural village of Gortagarry, near Toomevara in north Tipperary. The children have access to two activity rooms and a sanitary accommodation area on the ground floor of the two-storey, detached premises, as well as access to a large enclosed outdoor play area.

### Staffing

The registered provider works in the service most days or is available on the premises to call on when required. On the day of inspection the room leader was the person in charge during the morning. There were two staff working directly with the children on the day of inspection.

### 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 regulations 9(2)(4), 11(1)(2)(4)(8), 20(1)(3), 21, 22, 24(1)(3), 25, 26(1)(4) and 28.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 9 Management and Recruitment.

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 wish 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

*(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

The staff files of two members of staff who had commenced working in the service since the last inspection on 9 September 2021 were reviewed as part of the inspection process. The staff file of the registered provider had been reviewed on previous inspections and was found to be compliant.

(2)(a) There were written, validated past employer references available in respect of both members of staff.

(b) A written, validated reference from a source other than a past employer was available in respect of one member of staff.

(c) Garda vetting had been carried out in respect of the members of staff and relevant records were maintained on file.

(d) Not applicable as none of the staff had lived outside the state for a period of six months or longer as adults.

(4) Staff held recognised qualifications in early childhood care and education as levels 6 or 8 on the national qualifications framework.

### 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).*

*(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) There were 2 staff working directly with 16 children aged between 3 and 5 years old on the morning of the inspection. There were 15 children present in the service after 12pm, being supervised by 2 staff. The registered provider was also present in the service in the afternoon and a member of staff who worked solely with the school aged children arrived at 1pm.

(2) and (4) The adult to child ratio was maintained within the regulatory requirements.

(8)(a) There were at least two staff present at all times while the service was in operation.

### 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.

#### Compliance Information

(1) (a) The children had access to two interconnected activity rooms which they flowed between throughout the day according to the toys and materials they wanted to engage in. The rooms were bright, naturally lit by daylight through windows and glass panelled doors. A separate room was available for use by the school aged children that was occasionally used by the pre-school children for quiet play and relaxation.

The children enjoyed daily play in the large outdoor area at the side of the premises.

(b) There was a cosy area in the second room where the children could rest and relax on the sofa and cushions when they wanted to. The children could sleep in the school aged care room in the morning or early afternoon. Sleep facilities were available if required though staff said that the children seldom slept while attending the service.

(3)(a) There was a large, enclosed outdoor area at the side of the premises that included a paved yard with a section of soft fall matting where swings and climbing equipment were secured into the ground. This area also contained a large wooden bus that the children could play in and a wooden gazebo, where their outdoor clothing and footwear were stored when not in use. Beside this area was a grass covered field with a natural slope. The outdoor area was surrounded by countryside of hills and fields.

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

#### Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

*A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.*

#### Compliance Information

The service was well equipped both indoors and outdoors to support the children’s learning and development through play and exploration. The main activity room was furnished with child sized tables and chairs where the children engaged in tabletop activities and where they ate their meals. This room was also furnished with low level, open shelving units for the storage of toys and materials such as Montessori equipment, puzzles and practical life materials. There was an activity tray table where special interest materials were available for the children to engage with. On the day of inspection, the children had made a silky sand using flour and shaving foam. At one of the tables they were creating daffodils with yellow and green playdough they made that morning. There were tissues on a low table near the door where the children could access them when needed.

The second room was set up for imaginative play, construction and small world play. There were farms, stables, a rocket, dolls houses, vehicles, animals and figurines, a wardrobe of dress-up clothes, large and small plastic building bricks, a second tuff tray table for special interest activities, a kitchen and a library area.

The outdoor area included balls, planting areas and areas for sitting, climbing, running and swinging. There were push toys and ride-on toys and accessories to support both creative and imaginative play outdoors.

### 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

The service had a healthy eating policy. The children brought a packed lunch to eat during the morning. On the day of inspection the children’s lunches included: sandwiches, rice cakes, crackers, brioche rolls, bagels, fromage frais, yoghurt, jelly, carrot sticks, and fruit (grapes, mandarins, strawberries, apples and bananas) The children brought drink bottles filled with water or squash which they consumed as desired throughout the day. The bottles were refilled with water as required.

Dinner was served at around 3pm to the children attending on a full day care basis. There was a weekly menu plan. Dinner on the day of inspection was beef meatballs in a sauce served with pasta and garlic bread.

### Part VI - Safety

#### Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

*(1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.*

*(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-*

*(a) no person other than-*

*(i) pre-school child attending the service,*

*(ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,*

*(iii) an employee, or*

*(iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and*

#### Compliance Information

(1) Staff were responsible for recording the arrival and departure times of the children in the attendance register.

(3)(a) The staff met any visitors at the door and assessed their purpose for visiting before allowing them access to the service.

### 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) One of the staff present on the day of inspection held current certification in first aid response (FAR).

(2)(a) There was a suitably equipped first aid box on the wall over the sink unit in the main activity room where it could be easily accessed when required.

(b) The first aid box was available if required by a child attending the 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 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 written record of the monthly fire drills that took place in the service, most recently on 26 January 2024.

(b) There was a written record of the number, type and annual maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the service.

(4) There was a notice on the wall outlining the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire.

### Part VI - Safety

#### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

#### Compliance Information

The registered provider held current insurance cover for the service valid for up to 22 children in attendance at any one time, until 27 March 2025.