

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015TY083
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	ABC Montessori
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Westlawn, Dundrum, Cashel, Co. Tipperary
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<b>Eircode:</b>	E34 E489
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Monica Kennedy
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<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	26/01/2024
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	13	PM	N/A
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Tusla Child and Family Agency, Glenmorgan, Ferryhouse, Clonmel, Tipperary.
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	E Cullen
<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

ABC Montessori was established in 1998 and offers a sessional programme five days per week, 38 weeks per year, 9:30am to 12:30pm. Located in the rural area of Dundrum, Tipperary, the service is attached to a private residence with its own dedicated entrance and outdoor area.

### Staffing

The service currently employs two staff members who work directly with children. The registered provider also works directly in the service. The service currently has one student on work placement. Staff members held qualifications in Early Childhood Education and Care at Level 5 and 6 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

### 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.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9 (2)(4) – Management and Recruitment, 11 (1)(3) – Staffing levels, 19 - Health, welfare and development of child and 26 – Fire safety measures. 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.

## 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

*(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) Documentation was reviewed for the two staff members, the registered provider and one student.

(a)(b) Two validated references were available for each adult from either a past employer, or from a reputable source.

(c) Garda vetting was available on file for each adult.

(d) Police vetting was available for one staff member who had lived outside the state for a period over 6 months.

(4) Certificates of qualification were available on file demonstrating that the two staff members and registered provider held a qualification at the minimum level 5 and above on the National Framework of Qualifications.

### 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 inspection there were adequate numbers of staff working directly with the children.
- (3) The staff to child ratios were maintained above the minimum requirements. There were 13 children aged 2 to 6 years being cared for by 2 staff.

### 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

Strategies were in place to support children to transition from one activity to the next. For example, from free play to snack and to outdoor play. A helper chart was observed in use, one child held the responsibility of putting on a timer as a countdown for a transition, while two children handed out placemats and another two handed out lunches.

Parent and guardian communication, during collection and drop off periods, provided an opportunity for staff to share information with parents. The service also used a messaging application to share information, pictures and observations. Special events were celebrated between home and preschool, this was observed as a child was celebrating a birthday. A cake was supplied by parents and a celebration was held in the preschool.

The service has made links with the local community. The service had a recent visit from a local member of An Garda Síochana and a librarian has come to the service for a story telling session as well as a visit to the library at Christmas. These activities support the children attending the service to make connections with the wider community.

Indoors, low-level open shelving units ensured children could freely access materials and resources from the labelled shelves, promoting independence and choice making. A range of play-based and Montessori materials were offered in the home corner, small world play, puzzle, craft, mathematical, sensorial and culture areas of the room.

Outdoors, children were observed to engage in a range of activities. As the children transitioned from the classroom to the enclosed outdoor play area, they play games such as ‘what time is it Mr wolf and going on a bear hunt’. This provided a sense of playfulness to the transition and encouraging language and mathematical skills. The enclosed play area had a range of equipment such as a play house with slide, teepee and a seesaw. A section of the space was partially sheltered with a large canopy, which contained wheeled toys, sensory play and picnic benches.

### Non-Compliance Information

Children did not have free access to drinks during the session. Children were only observed to avail of fluids during their morning snack when lunch bags were handed out. A drinks station was created the day following the inspection.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### **Corrective and Preventive Action**

A drinks table was put in place the day after inspection. A drinks table will now be an established feature of our classroom going forward.

#### **Supporting documentation submitted**

Photograph of drinks station.

### Summary Comment

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

### 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) There was a record of fire drills which had taken place in the service. The most recent fire drill was recorded as having taken place on 22 January 2024.
- (4) There was a notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire displayed beside each emergency exit door on the premises.

#### Non-Compliance Information

- (1)(b) It is acknowledged that there was a record available demonstrating that the firefighting equipment was last serviced on 04 December 2023. However appropriate documentation was not available on the day of inspection to confirm that the smoke alarm system was recently maintained by a competent contractor.

#### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

##### Corrective and Preventive Action

Documentary proof of the inspection of the smoke alarm system was sourced. The contractor who inspects firefighting equipment and smoke alarms was informed that certification for the smoke alarms will always be required in future.

##### Supporting documentation submitted

A record of maintenance of the smoke alarm system completed on 14 December 2023 was submitted by the registered provider on 31 January 2024.

#### Summary Comment

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