

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015TY148
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Stepping Stones Creche & Montessori
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Crann Ard, Fethard Road, Clonmel, Co. Tipperary
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<b>Eircode:</b>	E91 RY94
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Miranda O'Shea
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<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	22/05/2023
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	58	PM	42
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Tusla Child and Family Agency, 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

This full day care service is located in a residential area in the town of Clonmel. A service is provided to children aged between one and six years old. The service operates from 8:00am to 5:45pm daily. The premises is a purpose built, detached, single storey building with four early years rooms, an atrium, sleep room, kitchen, office, sanitary accommodation and outdoor play areas.

### Staffing

There are currently ten staff employed in the service. There was a designated person in charge on the day of inspection. The registered provider works directly with children in the service. Staff working directly with children held qualifications in Early Childhood Education and Care at Levels 5, 6, 7 and 8 on the National Qualifications Framework.

### 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 inspections may also focus on other areas as required.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 9, 10, 11, 16, 19, 23 and 26. As a result, the scope of the inspection include the wobbler, toddler, junior and senior Montessori rooms.

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)(b)(c) There was a designated person in charge on the day of inspection and a named person was available to deputise as required. The staff information notice board provided details of the management and reporting structures within the service. Information was available detailing the role of each staff member and specific responsibilities such as fire officer, inclusion coordinator and designated liaison person for example.

On review of documentation and discussion with staff members, it was established that one new staff member had been employed since the last inspection. Records were assessed for this staff member on this inspection:

(2)(a)(b) Two validated references were available for the staff member from past employers.

(c) Garda vetting was available on file for the staff member.

(d) Police vetting was not required as the staff member had not lived outside the state for a period over 6 months.

(4) A certificate of qualification was available on file demonstrating that the staff member held a qualification at the minimum level 5 and above on the National Framework of Qualifications.

## Part III – Management and Staff

### Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

*A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.*

#### Compliance Information

There were written policies, procedures and statements, as specified in Schedule 5, available for the service. The policies reviewed for this inspection were the following: Policy on administration of medication, policy on infection control, policy on nappy changing and toileting, policy on safe sleep, policy on accidents and incidents and the policy on risk management. These policies and procedures were reviewed and updated in 2022, appropriate and specific to the setting.

## 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.*

### Compliance Information

(1) On the day of inspection there were adequate numbers of staff were working directly with the children at all times. There were 58 children with 8 staff members directly supervising them during the morning of the inspection. The service manager and an additional staff member were available ensure adult: child ratios were maintained throughout the day.

(2) On the morning of the inspection, the staff to child ratios were maintained as follows throughout the service:

- In the wobbler room, there were 8 children aged 12 to 24 months old being cared for by 2 staff.
- In the toddler room, there were 9 children aged 22 to 31 months old being cared for by 2 staff.
- In the junior Montessori room, there were 19 children aged 3 to 4 years old being cared for by 2 staff.
- In the senior Montessori room, there were 22 children aged 4 to 5 years old being cared for by 2 staff.

### 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;*
- (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.*

#### Compliance Information

(1)(h)(i)(j)(k)

The registered provider ensured that all relevant information was accessible and available for inspection by authorised persons. Staff rosters made available by management. Each early years room was responsible for maintaining records of attendance, administration of medication and any accident or incident records.

### 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-*

- (b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.*

#### Compliance Information

Parents supplied all food and drinks, perishable foods were appropriately stored and refrigerated. Drinks were freely accessible to the children in each classroom throughout the day, drinks stations were on low level shelves. Mealtimes observed were unhurried social experiences in all rooms, staff sat with children and engaged in conversation. The children were encouraged to feed themselves appropriate to their stage of development and were assisted as required. Snack and mealtimes varied from room to room, depending on the age range of children and food requirements.

Regular nappy changing took place throughout the day and staff were observed to engage attentively with children during the process. Children who were toilet trained, toileted as needed and handwashing was promoted after toileting. Attention was given to children's appearance with staff observed to clean children's faces and hands throughout the day. Support was provided to children who required assistance in personal care, such as nose blowing. A system was in place to launder children's soiled clothing during the day.

Sleep was child led, children were placed to sleep when signs of tiredness were recognised by staff, this was observed in the wobbler room when children were placed to sleep as required during the day. Rooms used for sleeping were sufficiently dark and quiet to promote a restful sleep. Low-level floor beds were available to meet the sleep needs of children over 2 years of age.

Children had free movement and choice of activities in all rooms observed on the day. Children were placed in highchairs when meals were ready to be served and removed promptly when they were finished. Children had access to the three outdoor areas to the side and rear of the building and children were observed in the outdoor area throughout the day. The outdoor area accessed from the junior Montessori room had been renovated since the last inspection. A new all-weather surface and wall mounted activity boards were installed in the area.

### 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:

There was a keypad and key fob entry and exit system in place on the main entrance door of the building to prevent unauthorised persons gaining entry or children exiting unsupervised. The kitchen and staff areas were separate to areas used by children. All cleaning agents and hazardous materials were stored safely and out of reach of children.

Risk assessments were completed for each room to ensure equipment and materials used were appropriate for use by the age range of children using them. Accident and incident books maintained a record of any incidents,

these were completed in detail and signatures confirmed that relevant parents, staff and a manager were informed.

Room temperatures were monitored in each room by staff, temperatures were maintained between the required 18°C to 22°C in each of the early years rooms. Children were observed to wear suncream and sunhats during outdoor play and a pop-up gazebo provided additional shelter from the sun. Information was displayed for parents detailing the UV index for the day ahead.

All highchairs, tables and chairs used by children were in good condition and suitable for use by the age range of children using them. Equipment and materials used in each of the rooms were appropriate for use by the age range of children using them. The outdoor play areas were maintained to a good standard and free from hazards.

### **Infection Control:**

The service was clean and well maintained with digital cleaning records maintained daily by staff. Children were observed washing their hands before snack, after outdoor play and toileting. There was warm running water, liquid soap and paper hand towels available for hand washing throughout the service. Each room had designated children's toilets and/or a nappy changing area. Hand washing facilities were adequately stocked with paper hand towels and liquid soap.

### **Administration of Medication:**

Digital and paper medication record books documented the details of any medications which had been administered in the service in line with the service's administration of medication policy. Medications supplied by parents were stored securely in the service kitchen and inaccessible to children. Health care plans were put in place where required.

### **Safe Sleep:**

Staff were familiar with best practices in safe sleep and were observed to carry out physical checks on individual sleeping children, every 10 minutes, recording individual children's sleep positions, colour and breathing. The sleep room temperature was continually monitored by staff, with a digital thermometer located in the sleep room. Temperatures were maintained between the required 16°C to 20°C. Staff were familiar with the services sleep policy which was displayed in the sleep room. Cots in the sleep room and low-level beds in the toddler room were spaced the required 50cm apart. A staff member was present in the toddler room while children were asleep.

### Non-Compliance Information

#### Infection Control:

The service's nappy changing procedure was not implemented effectively and consistently by staff members, which increased the risk of cross contamination in the service:

1. Disposable aprons worn by staff were not changed between each child's nappy change.
2. Staff members did not wash their hands after removing used gloves and between nappy changes.
3. Children's hands were not washed after nappy changing.

The following items were damaged and could not be effectively cleaned to prevent cross contamination:

4. Sections of the children's couches in the senior Montessori room were torn and the internal foam was exposed.
5. Woodwork in the senior Montessori room toilet area was exposed.

### Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective & Preventive Action

#### Infection Control:

- 1 - 3. A staff Meeting was held 29 May 2023 after the inspection, a copy of the nappy changing policy was given to each staff member. It was pointed out to the staff that the policy states the importance of hand washing for both children and staff after each nappy change and all PPE gear must be replaced for each nappy change. All staff have had retrained on the nappy changing policy and the importance of infection control to avoid cross contamination. The importance of hand washing has also been revised with staff members and the fact that wearing gloves does not replace hand washing. It has also been stated that using hand sanitiser does not replace hand washing for the children it is very important that both child and staff wash their hands after every nappy change and PPE gear is replaced every time.
4. The couches were removed from the Montessori room on the day of the inspection and new couches were ordered for immediate delivery. In the staff meeting held on the 29 May subsequent to the inspection I have spoken to the staff on the importance of maintaining their rooms and to report any defects to management immediately so they can be fixed.

5. We contacted our maintenance man the day after the inspection to come and sand down the woodwork in the Senior Montessori toilet and to paint with a water-resistant paint. A monthly maintenance list has been put in place. We have a handy man that will come to the service and fix any defects.

### **Supporting documentation submitted**

#### **Infection Control:**

- 1 – 3. Copy of nappy changing and toileting policy.
4. Letter of confirmation of order from supplier.
5. Photographs of repaired woodwork.

### **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 19 May 2023.
- (b) There was a record available demonstrating that the firefighting equipment was last serviced on 11 August 2022 and the smoke alarm system was last serviced on 04 August 2022.
- (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.