

TUSLA REGULATORY INSPECTION REPORT



TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015TY152					
Name of Service:	The Den Montessori					
Address of Service:	Fort Aengus Community Tennis Club, Racecourse Cross, Cashel, Tipperary.					
Email Address:	ruthymolony@yahoo.co.uk					
Name of Registered Service Provider:	Ruth Molony					
Type of Service Registered:	Sessional		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
Date of Inspection:	2	1	0	6	2	2
No of Pre-School Children present during Inspection:	AM	18	PM	NA		
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla Child and Family Agency, Ferryhouse, Clonmel, Tipperary.					
Inspection undertaken by:	E Cullen					
Title:	Early Years Inspector					

Areas which were the subject of this Inspection

Governance	Health Welfare and Development of Child	Safety
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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).

Conditions If Applicable Not applicable



Description of Service	<p>The Den Montessori is a private early years service which was established in 2014. It provides a sessional service for children aged from 2 to 6 years old. The early years service operates Monday to Friday, 09:00am to 12:00pm and an afternoon sessional service is also provided from 12:30pm to 3:30pm. This is a sister service of The Den Montessori, Boherlahan and The Den Montessori, Kilfeacle.</p>
Premises	<p>The service is operated from a detached premises in a rural setting on the grounds of Fort Angus tennis club near Cashel, Co. Tipperary. The service has sole use of the building which consists of one large early years classroom and sanitary accommodation. There are two enclosed outdoor play areas available to the children.</p>
Staffing	<p>There were six staff present on the day of inspection; three staff members, two volunteers and the registered provider who were working directly with the children. The manager was the designated person in charge on the day. Staff held qualifications in Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) ranging from level five to eight on the National Framework of Qualifications. As well as additional qualifications in Leadership for Inclusion (LINC), special needs assisting and some staff members were working towards completion of level 5 and level 6 programmes in ECCE.</p>
Methodology	<p>Tusla’s Early Years Inspectorate (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.</p> <p>The findings on inspection are based on;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information obtained through examination of documentation • Direct observation • Discussion with relevant staff <p>This inspection was unannounced and focused on areas of Governance, Health, Welfare and Development of Child and Safety. Inspections may also focus on other areas as required. The inspection process has been amended to minimise the amount of time that inspectors spend in the service. A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 19 health welfare and development of child and regulation 23 Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child. As a result the scope of the inspection included time spent in the indoor and outdoor environments.</p> <p>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.</p>
Acknowledgements	<p>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.</p>

GOVERNANCE

Part III - Management and Staff

Regulation 9 - Management and Recruitment

- (1) A registered provider shall ensure that—
- the service has a designated person in charge and a named person who is able to deputise as required,
 - 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
- (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—
- consideration of references from the person's past employers, if any, and in particular the most recent employer, if any,
 - consideration of references from reputable sources in the case of a person who has no past employers,
 - 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
 - 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.
- (6) Paragraph (4) shall not apply before 1 September 2021 to a person who—
- has signed a declaration on or before 30 June 2016 to the effect that he or she intends to retire from employment in a pre-school service before 1 September 2021, and
 - is in possession of a letter from the Minister confirming that paragraph (4) shall not apply to him or her before that date
- (6A is inserted by S.I. No.632 of 2016 CHILD CARE ACT 1991 (EARLY YEARS SERVICES) (AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS 2016 which states; Regulation 9 of the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations (S.I. No. 221 of 2016) is amended - in paragraph (4), by the substitution of "paragraphs (5), (6) and (6A)" for "paragraphs (5) and (6)", and (b) by the insertion of the following paragraph after paragraph (6): "
- (6A) Paragraph (4) shall not apply to an employee of a registered provider where - (a) the registered provider receives funding for the employment of the employee pursuant to a scheme funded by the Minister and known as the Access and Inclusion Model, and (b) the employment of the employee is for the purpose of providing support, pursuant to the scheme referred to in subparagraph (a), for a child attending the service to enable the child to participate in the programme known as the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) funding Programme."
- (7) A registered provider shall ensure that all employees, unpaid workers and contractors are appropriately supervised and provided with appropriate information, and where necessary training, including in relation to the following:
- the policies, procedures and statements of the service specified in Schedule 5;
 - Part VIIA (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013)) of the Act, and
- (c) these Regulations.

Compliance Information:	(1)(a) There was a designated person in charge and a named deputy designated person in charge who was able to deputise, as required. (b) The designated person in charge was present for the inspection.
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Part III - Management and Staff

Regulation 9 - Management and Recruitment

	<p>The files for seven staff members were reviewed on the day.</p> <p>(2)(a)(b) Two validated references were available for each staff member and were kept in each individual's file.</p> <p>(c) Garda vetting was available on file for all staff working in the service.</p> <p>(d) Not applicable as no staff member had lived outside of the state for a period of longer than six months.</p> <p>(4) Certificates of qualifications for three staff members working directly with children were available on file demonstrating that they held a qualification at the minimum level 5 and above on the National Qualification Framework or qualification.</p> <p>(6)(a) Not applicable as no staff have availed of this declaration.</p> <p>(6)(A) Two staff were employed under the scheme known as the Access and Inclusion Model.</p> <p>(7)(a)(b)(c) The inspectors observed that there was additional evidence of certificates of continuous professional development and induction processes in the staff files reviewed.</p>
<p>Non-Compliance Information:</p>	<p>(3) There was no evidence that two staff members who were employed to work directly with children held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Framework of Qualifications, or a qualification deemed to be equivalent.</p>
<p>Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider</p>	<p><u>Corrective and preventive action</u></p> <p>Going forward it will be ensured that all staff employed under the Access and Inclusion Model will hold a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Framework of Qualifications.</p> <p><u>Supporting documentation submitted</u></p> <p>Copy of recruitment policy.</p>
<p>Summary Comment:</p>	<p>All evidence submitted meets the requirements Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.</p>

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) thereof at that reference number is satisfied.
- (8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)—
- (c) a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that, where the person in charge operates the service single-handedly, a second person familiar with the operation of the service and in a position to provide assistance to the person in charge in operating the service is, at all times, within close distance of the service and available to attend the service to assist the person in charge in the event of an emergency.

Compliance Information:	<p>(1) On the day of inspection there were adequate numbers of staff working directly with the children.</p> <p>(3) During the morning session there were 18 children being directly cared for by 4 staff and two volunteers.</p> <p>(8)(c) Not applicable as the service did not operate as a single-handed provider.</p>
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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

Compliance Information:	<p>BASIC NEEDS:</p> <p>Staff were warm and responsive to the needs and interests of the children. A key worker system was in place and staff members were very familiar with each of their key children and groups. Staff provided appropriate emotional support to children if they became upset or frustrated. The adult to child ratio was higher than the minimum requirements and this supported staff to provide lots of individual attention to the children. Children's independent skills could be seen, as they confidently selected materials they wished to play with and sought assistance from staff when needed. Children were given time to complete tasks at their own pace. An example of this was seen when a child was given the time to complete a craft activity while the other children transitioned to morning snack.</p> <p>Snack time was a pleasant social experience during the morning, children chatted freely with each other and staff. All food was provided by parents and stored in the service's fridge. The use of a drinks station ensured drinks were freely accessible to the children throughout the morning. Children's snack consisted of sandwiches, fruit, vegetables, crackers and yogurts. The service had a healthy eating policy in place. One</p>
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Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 19 - Health, Welfare and Development of Child

child demonstrated their knowledge of this policy by telling the inspector that they were “not allowed chocolate in school”.

Personal hygiene was promoted throughout the morning. Children were supported to wash hands when needed and if required a staff member provided assistance with toileting.

Step ups and toilet seat inserts were available for children who required them. A nose blowing station was also available to children to promote correct nose blowing practices.

PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

The large rectangular classroom was bright and spacious. A variety of defined areas of interest were provided for the children to play with. These included a construction area, home corner, role play area, reading area, large blackboard and craft area. Low-level shelving provided children with access to a wide selection of activities and Montessori materials. Adequate space was available for children to engage in both floor and table play independently and in groups. There was a suitable rest area available to the children, this consisted of soft wipeable matting and cushions. The room was laid out with appropriately sized furniture and a large range of developmentally appropriate equipment and materials which were well maintained and organised. Pet fish were also available to the children, to care for in a fish tank.

The outdoor area consisted of two linked areas accessed directly from the classroom. In the first area children had a range of materials to play with, including a mud kitchen, sand pit, large climbing frame, slide, playhouse and a storage shed. This area had concrete, stone, bark mulch and astro turf surfaces. A planting bed was also in use, with lettuce and onions growing. The second area was accessed via a concrete ramp down to a large tarmacadamed surface. This area had tyres and cones laid out for activities and running games and had an additional sand pit and tuff tray. A wide range of wheeled toys such as balance bikes, bikes with stabilisers and cars were used by the children in this spacious 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:

The entrance door to the classroom was safe and secure, it could only be opened from the inside and prevented unauthorised persons gaining access. Facilities for storing cleaning products were safe and out of reach of children and no hazards were observed. The external gate to the premise was secured at both the bottom and top to ensure children could not exit unsupervised. Pinch guards covered the hinges on all doors to prevent injury to children.

INFECTION CONTROL:

Children were observed washing their hands before snack and after toileting. There was warm running water, liquid hand soap, hand dryer and paper hand towels for hand washing.

There were designated children's toilets available directly off the classroom. A nose blowing station was available for the children to use, with a visual display of the steps to follow. There was documented evidence of routine cleaning of the early years environment.

ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATION:

An appropriate administration of medication policy was in place, which provided details for parents and staff on the policy and procedures of 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) There was a person trained in first aid for children immediately available to the children attending the early years service.

(2)(a)(b) There was a suitably equipped first aid box stored in an easily accessible position on the premises and was available to the children attending the early years 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 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:	<p>(1)(a) There was a record of fire drills which had taken place in the service. The last fire drill had taken place 09 June 2022 and the record confirmed that monthly fire drills were completed.</p> <p>(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.</p>
Non-Compliance Information:	<p>(1)(b) Firefighting equipment and the smoke alarm system were not maintained adequately through regular servicing and checks by a competent person or contractor.</p> <p>The firefighting equipment was last serviced 24 March 2021. There was no record available of maintenance checks for the smoke alarm system. This non-compliance identified posed a significant risk to the safety of staff and children in the service in the event of a fire.</p>
Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider	<p><u>Corrective and preventive action</u></p> <p>Firefighting equipment and the smoke alarm system were served. New contracts were taken out with contractors to complete these service and maintenance in the future.</p> <p><u>Supporting documentation submitted</u></p> <p>Service record of firefighting equipment and smoke alarm system.</p>
Summary Comment:	<p>All evidence submitted meets the requirements Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.</p>