

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015WH045
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Sonas Montessori Pre-school
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	13 Assumption Villas, Delvin Road, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath
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<b>Eircode:</b>	N91 RY27
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Julie Shaw, Ruth English
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<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	22/05/2024
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	33	PM	NA
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla, Child and Family Agency, SAP Office, St. Loman's Campus, Springfield, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath.
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	C O' Connor Hughes
<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 sessional service operates Monday to Friday in the morning from 09:00 to 12:00 and in the afternoon from 12:00 to 15:00. The age range of the children enrolled in the service is 2 to 6 years.

The service is located in an adapted domestic dwelling consisting of three pre-school rooms, namely the green pod, red pod and blue pod. There is an outdoor play area located to the rear of the service.

The service is based in Mullingar town.

## Staffing

The registered providers and two staff were present on the 22 May 2024 working directly with the children. A person was employed as an administrative assistant and was present in the service.

## 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.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under

Regulation 19 (1)(a) Health, welfare and development of child.

Regulation 20 Facilities for rest and play.

As a result the scope of the inspection included the Blue Pod.

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 providers, 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,*

*(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)

The designated person in charge and a named person to deputise were available as required.

(b)

The registered providers were present for the duration of the inspection.

Five staff files including the registered providers were reviewed and the following was noted:

(2)(a)(b)

Two written validated references were available in respect of the staff members and the registered providers.

(c)

A Garda Vetting disclosure was available in respect of the staff members and the registered providers.

The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d)

Police vetting was available for the one adult who had lived outside the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

(4)

The adults working directly with children attending the service held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Framework of Qualifications or an equivalent deemed by the Minister.

### 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)

The minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained during the inspection.

(3)

There were thirty-three children attending the service supervised directly by the registered providers and two staff members.

### 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

(1)(a)

Blue Pod

Children were observed to enjoy the play activities during the morning session that included free play, tabletop activities, singing songs in preparation for graduation day, creative outdoor play.

Children enjoyed a healthy lunch provided by their parents which consisted of sandwiches, fruit and yoghurt with water to drink.

Children were encouraged to be independent as they dressed for outdoor play assisted by staff as needed. Children went to the toilet independently and washed their hands supervised by staff.

The staff were positive towards children and were familiar with each child and their personalities. Staff used individual names, maintained eye contact and conversed with the children during play activities.

The Blue pod was bright and colourful with children’s artwork and family photographs displayed. A home area, a dolls house, a kitchen, arts and crafts area and a hair salon were noted. Age and stage appropriate toys and materials were accessible to children on low level shelving. Low level tables and chairs were in place. Children were observed to relax in the rest area established in the pre-school room.

The service works in partnership with parents and guardians. Parents were observed to collect their children from the pre-school room after the ECCE session. A short messaging system (SMS) was in place with parents sharing the children’s daily play and work activities. Each child has their own learning journal and individual folders depicting their play and work activities throughout the year and shared with parents at the end of the pre-school year. Child developmental observations were available for review. The registered provider stated parents are invited to attend the children’s upcoming Graduation in the service.

### 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.*

*(4) Where outdoor space to which the pre-school children attending the service have access is provided on the premises of a sessional pre-school service other than such a service to which paragraph (2) applies, a temporary pre-school service or a pre-school service in a drop-in centre, the registered provider shall ensure that such outdoor space is suitable, safe and secure.*

### Compliance Information

(1)(a)

Suitable play equipment was provided indoors and outdoors which included toys and equipment for tabletop activities, creative and imaginary play in the Blue Pod.

(b)

Soft furnishings were in place for children's rest and relaxation.

(4) A large outdoor play area was attached to the rear of the service. The perimeter was secured with a high-level wall and large gates. An all-weather surface was noted with large natural trees positioned to the rear of the play area. A large, sheltered play area was in place with low level table and chairs, a kitchen and various play items. Toys and equipment include a set of goals, a playhouse, large wooden climbing frame with slide and swings.

## 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 front door to the service was locked and secure to keep the children safe within. A bell system was in place for access to the service. The inspector signed the visitor's book on arrival.

The service met the necessary safety requirements in respect of the indoor environment, toys and equipment and the safe storage of cleaning agents in the Blue Pod. Checklists were available and reviewed for the Blue Pod and communal areas in the service.

### Infection Control:

Toys and materials were easily cleanable and cleaning records were available and reviewed for the Blue Pod.

Children were observed to wash their hands before snacks and after toileting.

Natural and mechanical ventilation was noted in the sanitary accommodation adjacent to the Blue pod and in the main sanitary accommodation.

Refrigerators were available for the storage of perishable goods.

### Administration of Medication:

A temperature reducing medication was available in the service if required.

### Fire Safety:

Fire exits were clear and free from obstruction in the service.

## 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*

*(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.*

### Compliance Information

(1)

The records of arrival and departure reviewed verified that each child attending the service was checked in and out of the service by a nominated staff member.

(3)(a)

All entry to the service with the exception of (i), (ii), (iii) and (iv) has to be approved by a staff member.

(b)

A visitor log was in place to record the details and purpose of all visitors 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)

A staff member was qualified in First Aid response (FAR) and available on the premises. The registered providers and other staff members held paediatric first aid certificates.

(2)(a)

A first aid box was located in the kitchen of the service.

(b)

A first aid box was accessible to children in the pre-school 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

(1)(a)

A written record for the completed monthly fire drills was available on the premises. The fire drill was recorded as taking place on the 9 May 2024.

(b)

A record was available demonstrating the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises. The smoke alarms and firefighting equipment in the premises were serviced on the 11 November 2023 and 9 May 2024 respectively.

(4)

A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in conspicuous positions in the premises.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

## Compliance Information

There was evidence of current insurance cover for the number of children attending the service. The expiry date noted was 27 March 2025.

## Part IX - Inspection and Enforcement

### Regulation 33 – Furnishing of information to agency

*A registered provider shall furnish the Agency with such information as the Agency may reasonably require for the purpose of enforcing and executing these Regulations and the information shall be in such form, if any, as may be specified by the Agency.*

## Compliance Information

The registered providers furnished all information as reasonably required by the Agency for the purpose of enforcing and executing these Regulations.