

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WW112		
Name of Service:	Sonasámh Montessori Scoil		
Address of Service:	Kiltegan Road, Baltinglass, Co. Wicklow		
Eircode:	W91 KW80		
Name of Registered Provider:	Catherine Flynn		
Service type:	Part Time, Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	25/04/2024		
No of pre-school children:	AM	46	PM 38

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Child and Family Agency First Floor Trinity Building IDA Business Park Southern Cross Road Bray Co. Wicklow
Inspection undertaken by:	H. Bourke and M. Redmond
Title:	Early Years Inspectors

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
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Description of service

This privately owned pre-school service was first established in 2006. The service is open from Monday to Friday between the hours of 09.00am and 03.15pm. The service is registered to provide care and education for children aged between 2 years and 6 years of age, this includes two sessional ECCE services for 38 weeks of the year, from 09.00am to 12.00pm and 12.15pm to 03.15pm. The service also runs a concurrent part-time service. The Montessori operates from a single storey property that has been adapted to accommodate the service. There are two care rooms, one small care room for the morning sessional service and a large room that was subdivided during the Covid pandemic to provide two care rooms in the service. The service is located in Baltinglass Co. Wicklow.

Staffing

There are eight full time members of staff currently employed in the Montessori and this includes the registered provider. There was also a student on work experience attending five days a week.

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/ safety/ premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under :

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment,(1)(a)(b)(c), (2)(a)(b)(c)(d), (4), (6A)

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels (1), (2), (8)(a)

Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play (1)(b)

Regulation 22 – Food and drink

Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child, General Safety and Infection Control

Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures (1)(a)(b), (4)

Regulation 28 – Insurance

Regulation 29 – Premises (a),(c),(d)

However, on inspection additional non-compliances which posed a risk were identified under:

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

Regulation 16(1)(a) – Record in relation to pre-school service

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

(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.

(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."

Compliance Information

Following a discussion with the registered provider, examining the staff roster and counting the number of staff present on the day of inspection, it was confirmed that there were eight full-time staff members working in the service and a childcare student. These files were reviewed.

(1)(a)

The registered provider was the person in charge of the service and there was a named staff member who was able to deputise as required.

(b)

The registered provider was on the premises at the time of arrival of the inspectors and remained on the premises for the duration of the inspection.

(c)

There was a clear management structure in place.

(2)(a)(b)

Written validated references were available in respect of the seven staff members.

(c)

The required three-year Garda vetting disclosures were available in respect of nine adults.

(d)

Police vetting was not required as no adult had lived outside the State for a period of longer than six consecutive months since turning 18 years of age.

(4)

Seven members of staff held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or higher on the National Framework of Qualifications.

(6)(A)

One staff member was employed pursuant to the scheme known as the Access and Inclusion Model.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a)(b)

Written validated references were not available in respect of two adults in the service. This was noted on last inspection.

(4)

There was no evidence available for one adult of having obtained a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education on the National Framework of Qualifications.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(a)(b)

Validated references were sought in respect of two adults in the service. All staff references and awards to be in Tusla folder for inspection and checked regularly.

(4)

No written response.

Supporting documentation submitted

(2)(a)(b)

Photographic evidence of validated references was sent in with the CAPA response.

(4)

Photographic evidence of major award in Early Childhood Care and Education on the National Framework of Qualifications, was submitted for one adult with the CAPA response.

Summary Comment

The non-compliances in relation to Regulation 9 (2)(a)(b) and (4) have been addressed and will be reviewed on next inspection.

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.

Non-Compliance Information

There were no clear guidelines for effective nappy changing available as a procedure within the Infection Control policy of the service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

A new nappy changing procedure is now available. A nappy changing policy and procedure will be reviewed and changed if needed on a regular basis.

Supporting documentation submitted

A revised Nappy Changing procedure was submitted with the CAPA response.

Summary Comment

The non-compliance found in relation to Regulation 10 has been addressed and will be reviewed on next inspection.

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.

(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)
Throughout the inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the service.

(2)
There were eight adults employed and present with 46 children on the day of inspection.

(8)(a)
There were more than two adults present on the premises throughout the inspection and the staff roster confirmed there were at least two adults present at all times.

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:

(a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(a)

There was no curriculum vitae available for one adult who was present in the service on the day of inspection

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)(a)

The name, position, qualifications and experience of all employees to be kept on record at all times even the students who come in for work experience. To validate all CV'S and ensure they are evident for inspection

Supporting documentation submitted

(1)(a)

Photographic evidence of a CV was submitted with the CAPA response.

Summary Comment

(1)(a)

The non-compliance found in relation to Regulation 16 (1)(a) has been addressed and will be reviewed on next inspection.

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-

(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.

Compliance Information

(1)(b)

There were adequate rest facilities for the children who were attending the service in the small sessional room to the back of the service and in one area of the larger area of the subdivided room, to the front of the service.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(b)

There were no rest facilities available to the children in the second area of the subdivided room (sessional room 2) for use during their day. This was noted on last inspection.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)(b)

Rest facilities were put back in place i.e. bean bags and soft matting for rest areas indoors, to ensure that rest facilities are provided indoors at all times

Supporting documentation submitted

(1)(b)

Photographic evidence of the cosy rest area was submitted with the CAPA response.

Summary Comment

(1)(b)

The non-compliance in relation to Regulation 20 (1)(b) has been addressed and will be reviewed on next inspection.

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

There was a healthy eating policy available in the service and it was noted that some of the children's lunches were compliant with the policy. Drinking water was available throughout the day for the children attending the service.

Non-Compliance Information

1. High sugar snacks, such as chocolate spread, chocolate biscuits and jam sandwiches were observed in lunch boxes and eaten for lunch by a large number of children in the service. These snacks were supplied by parents. This is in direct contradiction of the Healthy Eating policy of the service.
2. There was also no extra food available in the service should a child forget their lunch or require additional food.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (1) Parents are going to be more informed about our healthy eating policy and treats to be allowed only on a Friday. Food pyramid to be displayed in a more obvious position for parents.
- (2) Food will be supplied for those children who may need extra lunch and this will be kept in the food cupboard if and when needed.

Supporting documentation submitted

- (1) A photograph of the letter sent out to parents in relation to a healthy eating policy, and a photograph of the food pyramid displayed in the service were submitted with the CAPA response.
- (2) No supporting evidence supplied.

Summary Comment

The above actions when implemented in addition to the evidence submitted will address the non-compliances found in relation to Regulation 22. This will be reviewed on next inspection.

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 service was appropriately secured to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the pre-school.
- The emergency exit routes in the pre-school rooms were clearly marked and free from obstruction.

Infection Control:

- The sanitary areas had warm running water at 36°C, liquid soap and paper towels.
- Foot pedal bins were available throughout the service, for the safe disposal of used paper towels.
- Table cleaning was observed before and after snack time.
- Hand washing by adults and children was observed before snacks and after using the toilet.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. There was an open paint tin containing wet paint and a paint brush on a shelf in the sanitary area of larger subdivided room, that could have been accessed by children in the service.
2. Following a conversation with the registered provider, it was confirmed that fire drills were carried out on different days from individual rooms. This poses a general safety risk to both staff and children, as staff have no experience on how to manage the entire service needing to be evacuated, all at once, in an emergency.

Infection Control:

1. The nappy changing procedure observed was not effective for infection prevention. The adult did not remove contaminated gloves before redressing the child and did not clean the changing mat between changes. This poses a risk of cross infection.
2. The nappy changing mat was torn in one corner and a large piece of the internal foam was exposed, meaning the mat could not be cleaned effectively between nappy changes. This poses a risk of cross infection.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

- (1) The paint can was removed from sanitary area. Checking shelves for hazard materials will be checked as part of our risk assessment each morning.
- (2) Fire drills are going to be performed as a whole school going forward. Understanding that fire drills should be conducted as a whole school.

Infection Control:

- (1) The staff were informed again of the appropriate procedure of nappy changing to prevent infection and contamination. The staff will be inspected on a regular basis around the whole area of nappy changing procedure and they were all given the policy and procedure to read and adhere to.
- (2) A new nappy changing mat was bought for the changing unit. The nappy changing mat will also be added to our morning risk assessment checklist to make sure it isn't damaged, and staff will inform management of any tears etc.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

- (1) No supporting documentation submitted.
- (2) A photograph was submitted with a record of fire drills carried out for the entire service at the one time.

Infection Control:

- (1) A revised nappy changing procedure was submitted with the CAPA response.
- (2) A photograph of a new changing mat was submitted with the CAPA response

Summary Comment

The actions and evidence submitted will address the non-compliances found in relation Regulation 23 General Safety and Infection control. These will be revised on next inspection.

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)

The registered provider showed evidence that fire drills were carried out in the pre-school service.

(b)

There was a record available relating to the number and type of firefighting equipment dated the 22nd of August 2023.

(4)

Notices of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were displayed in the pre-school rooms. The fire assembly point was identified.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(b)

There was no current up to date record available of servicing for the smoke detection and fire alarm system. This is a potential risk to the safety of the children and adults attending the service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)(b)

The company who installed the smoke alarms were contacted to administer the updated forms for the smoke detection and fire alarm. The company were informed that they have to give a yearly report on the fire alarm system as previously promised.

Supporting documentation submitted

(1)(b)

A photograph detailing servicing of the smoke alarm system in the service was submitted with the CAPA response.

Summary Comment

The non-compliance found in relation to Regulation 26 (1)(b) has been addressed and will be reviewed on next inspection.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider demonstrated that there was adequate insurance in place for the service for 50 children attending on a sessional basis that expires on the 27th of March 2025.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-

- (a) of sound and stable structure,*
- (b) safe and secure,*
- (c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated*
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

Compliance Information

- (a)
- The premises appeared to be of a sound a stable construction.

Non-Compliance Information

- (c)
- While the room temperature in the small sessional room was maintained at 18°C throughout the morning, the large, subdivided care room's ambient temperature did not reach above 16.2°C. The room temperature was recorded at 11.15am and 11.45am and the temperature remained the same. The recommended ambient temperature of a care room is 18°C to 22°C. This was noted on the last report.

(d)

Despite cleaning schedules being in place both pre-school rooms, there was marks and paint on the walls, the windowsills, skirting boards and floors. The paintwork on the walls, windowsills and skirting boards was visibly in need of up grading.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(c)

As the children are mostly in our outdoor classroom, the staff were advised to keep the external doors closed to maintain the required temperature in the sub-divided room indoors, this will also be our preventive action.

(d)

The school gets a refurbishment of paint every summer, so we are awaiting the painter to arrive this summer to upgrade the school. To be aware of keeping the school looking well and upgraded regularly.

Supporting documentation submitted

No supporting evidence was supplied with the CAPA response

Summary Comment

The actions in relation to Regulation 29 (c) should address the non-compliance and will be reviewed on next inspection.

The non-compliance in Regulation 29 (d) remains outstanding.