

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WW158
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Name of Service:	Footprints Montessori Pre-school
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Address of Service:	8 Carrig Villas, Killincarrig, Greystones, Co. Wicklow
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Eircode:	A63 NX63
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Name of Registered Provider:	Suzanna Grace-Carney , Linda Grace-Devine, Helen Grace
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	19/02/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	38	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Loughlinstown Health Centre, Loughlinstown Drive, Loughlinstown, Co. Dublin.
Inspection undertaken by:	Mona Condon
Title:	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).

Conditions if applicable	Not applicable
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Description of service

Footprints Montessori Pre-school provides sessional care and education to pre-school children from two and eight months to six years of age. The service operates two sessions each morning one from 9.30am to 1pm and a second from 10am to 1.30pm. The pre-school operates in a domestic home which has been adapted for use as a pre-school. It is located on the outskirts of the village of Greystones, Co. Wicklow. There are three childcare rooms. The Busy Bee and Clever Cats rooms are together on one side of the hallway while the other two rooms, Dippy Ducks and Eager Elephants Rooms are located on the other side of the hallway. Sanitary areas for the children are available on the ground floor and on the first floor of the premises. The service has an outdoor area at the rear of the premises where children have access to outdoor play equipment.

Staffing

There are three registered providers, one of whom was present during the inspection. The service employs five staff members to provide direct care to the pre-school children. The registered providers and the adults who are employed hold an Early Childhood Care & Education qualification on the National Framework for 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.

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) One new staff member was employed since last inspection.

(a)(b) Two written past employer validated references were available in respect of one new adult employed.

(c) Completed Garda Vetting disclosures were available for all adults employed by the service.

(d) Not applicable as the new adult employed had not lived outside the jurisdiction for more than six consecutive months as an adult.

(4)

All staff members held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education on the National Framework for Qualifications.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels

(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) There were four adults present working directly with thirty-eight pre-school children on the day of the inspection. A fifth adult was available to give support wherever needed during the morning session.

(3) The adult/child ratios were maintained throughout the morning.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:

- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;*
- (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;*
- (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;*
- (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;*
- (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;*
- (f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;*
- (g) the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner;*
- (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;*
- (i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.*

(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-

- (c) an authorised person.*

Compliance Information

(1)(a)-(i)

Twelve files were examined.

In relation to the files examined, the record required in writing in relation to (a)-(i) above was kept for each child.

The children's files were located in a secure place in the service.

(3) (c) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) (a)-(i) was open to inspection on the premises by the inspectors.

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;*
- (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) A record was available of each child's attendance with their time of arrival and departures.
- (k) Written details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service were available. This was signed by a staff member, manager, and the parent of the child.
- (j) Documentation was available to demonstrate that signed parental consent was required prior to administering medication to a pre-school child. A method to record medication administration was in place.

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

The care rooms had defined areas of interest providing children with the freedom to play and explore. Designated areas of interest included a home corner, construction toys, Montessori equipment, art materials, and a library area beside the rest areas. A selection of materials was observed to be accessible to the children on low level shelving provided which enabled children to select and replace items and materials of interest. The inspector observed children moving freely, exploring their environment, playing, and engaging with each other and the adults.

The service provided a healthy snack. The staff assisted the children when needed and encouraged conversation. Plenty of time was given to each child to finish their snack.

The children were supported to use the toilet independently while being supervised by staff. Staff were observed to engage warmly with children in their care. Transitions were handled well by staff with notice given to the children as they changed from one activity to another. Information was shared with parents at drop off and collection times. The pre-school communicates with parents by phone and email also.

All children spent time outdoors. There were two areas both with an artificial grass surface. A range of suitable equipment was available in each area which included a play house with play kitchen and suitable props, table chairs, ride-on toys, sand play, water play, and a slide.

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 secure. The service met the necessary safety requirements in respect of the indoor environment, toys and equipment and safe storage of cleaning agents.

Infection Control:

Thermostatically controlled hot water, liquid hand soap and paper towels were readily available for hygienic hand washing and drying. The staff members supervised children's handwashing and handwashing routines were well established. Foot pedal operated bins were provided for the disposal of used tissues. Written cleaning schedules were on display for the room environment and sanitary area which were observed to be maintained in a clean and hygienic condition.

Administration of Medication:

Medication was not given at the time of the inspection, written parental consent was available should medication be required to be administered to a child. The staff members were familiar with required safe practice when administering medication in the service. Medicine was safely stored.

Fire Safety:

Fire exits were unobstructed.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

Annual fire alarm checks were not carried out in the service as required. The last maintenance for the smoke alarm was 26/11/2021.

Corrective and Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

An electrical contractor carried annual smoke/fire alarm testing on 29/2/2024. Going forward this will be carried out annually.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Copy of certificate for the maintenance of the smoke alarm dated 29/02/2024.

Summary Comment

The actions taken by the Registered Provider and the evidence received have been accepted. The non-compliance which was identified on inspection in relation to Regulation 23 has been addressed.

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) An adult trained in First Aid Response was present and immediately available to the pre-school children. In addition five adults employed had a qualification in paediatric first aid.

(2)(a) The first aid box for children was safely stored in an accessible and conspicuous position in the pre-school room.

2(b) At all times the first aid box was available to the children.

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 record in writing was kept of all fire drills that took place in the premises. The last fire drill was recorded on the 23rd of January 2024

(1)(b) Records were available detailing the number, type, and maintenance of fire- fighting equipment and smoke alarms dated November 2021 and November 2024 respectively.

(4) Notices were displayed detailing the procedures to be followed in the event of fire.