

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WX054
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Name of Service:	Hillmount Montessori
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Address of Service:	Hillmount House, Coolacarne, Ballindaggin, Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford
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Eircode:	Y21 DF20
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Name of Registered Provider:	Joan Doyle
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Service type:	Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	09/10/2023
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No of pre-school children:	AM	12	PM	NA
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate	Tusla Child and Family Agency Early Years Inspectorate Ely Hospital Ferrybank Waterford
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Inspection undertaken by:	C. Ryan
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Title:	Early Years Inspector
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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
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Description of service

Hillmount Montessori is a privately operated service offering a Montessori based programme. It is located in a rural setting outside Enniscorthy, Co Wexford. It offers a part-time and sessional service to children aged 2 years to 6 years of age. The service mission statement says “We aim to provide a safe, fun, loving environment where each child is valued as an individual, where their sense of identity and belonging is nurtured and respected. We encourage each child to reach their full potential at their own pace. Our aim is to continue to provide a stimulating learning environment and curriculum in keeping with the Montessori Methodology /Principles and also with the principles of Aistear/Siolta, where play is valued”.

Staffing

There were four staff working in the service on the day of inspection. The registered provider works directly in the service. There was a named second adult who deputises as the person in charge when required. The staff hold qualifications in Childcare and Montessori Education at the minimum level 5 and above 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/ safety/ premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under the following regulations. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulation within this report.

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

Regulation 11 Staffing levels (1) (2),

Regulation 19 health, welfare and development of the child,

Regulation 23 Safeguarding health, safety, and welfare of the child,

Regulation 25 First aid (1) (2) (a) (b),

Regulation 26 Fire safety (1) (a) (b) (4) and

Regulation 28 Insurance.

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

(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)

The registered provider was the designated person in charge on the premises and there was a deputy named person available as required.

(2) The staff files for four staff members were reviewed on inspection.

(a)(b)

Validated references for all staff were kept in each individual's file.

(c)

Garda vetting disclosures were available for all staff working in the service.

- (d)
Police vetting disclosures were not required as none of the staff had lived outside the state for more than six consecutive months.
- (4)
Certificates of qualifications for all staff members working directly with the early years children were available on file.

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)
Throughout the period of the inspection there were adequate numbers of staff working directly with the children attending the service.
- (2)
During the morning there were 12 children being directly cared for by 4 staff, ensuring there were adequate staff available to work with the children and to maintain staff/child ratios at all times.

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, and

Compliance Information

(1)(a) The following observations and discussions with staff reflected the children's experience within the service focusing on the children's learning, development and well-being on the day of inspection:

The service consisted of two playrooms, the Junior room and Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) room. Both rooms were bright, warm and resourced with Montessori materials, interest areas, toys and equipment. On the day of inspection, only the ECCE room was open.

The staff and children were observed interacting individually and in small group activities throughout the morning. The staff interactions were kind and calm during the morning. There was plenty of laughter, talking and fun during the morning. Children enjoyed free play in the outdoor garden before snack time. Staff supported children with problem solving during the morning activities. "Do you think that will work?".

The transitions between activities were smooth as the children were familiar with the morning routine and were observed to excitedly tidy up for outdoor play after their colouring and tabletop activities. The staff helped with children with toileting as required. Children who were toilet trained used the toilet independently, with staff encouraging handwashing.

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 to the service was secured when the inspector arrived at the premises. Cleaning products were stored away and inaccessible to children. The outdoor play area was fully enclosed to the rear of the registered provider's home. A staff member carried out a risk assessment of the outdoor area daily before the children used the area.

Infection Control:

There was warm running water, liquid soap and paper hand towels available for hand hygiene available in the service. Handwashing was observed before eating and after toileting on the day. The service was clean and well maintained.

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 were staff trained in first aid for children 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 and was available for use.

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)

Monthly fire drills were carried out in the service. The last recorded fire drill was carried out on the 25 September 2023.

(1)(b)

A record was maintained of when the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms were serviced. The last maintenance carried out in the service was recorded as having taken place in September 2023.

(4)

There was a notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire displayed in a conspicuous position in the hallway of the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

An insurance certificate was available to demonstrate that insurance was in place.