

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015WX066		
<b>Name of Service:</b>	Laugh & Learn Montessori		
<b>Address of Service:</b>	Drumderry, Bunclody, Co. Wexford		
<b>Eircode:</b>	Y21 T2C3		
<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Daphne Deacon		
<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional		
<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	15/12/2023		
<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	11	PM NA
<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	C. Ryan		
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	Early Years Inspectorates Child and Family Agency Ely Hospital Ferrybank Wexford		
<b>Title:</b>	Early Years Inspector		
<b>Authority to Inspect</b>			
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		

### Description of service

Laugh and Learn Montessori is a privately operated preschool service. It offers a play-based Montessori programme to children aged 2 to 6 years of age. The service operates a morning session from 9.30am to 12.30pm in a converted farmhouse located in a rural setting between Bunclody and Clonegal. The house consists of one playroom and sanitary accommodation. A large outdoor play area is available to the rear of the premises which provides space and play opportunities.

### Staffing

There are three staff working in the service. The registered provider works directly in the service. All the staff hold qualifications in Montessori Education and Childcare above the minimum Level 5 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 focused on an examination of compliance under Regulations:

Regulation 9 Management and Recruitment

Regulation 11 Staffing levels

Regulation 19 Health, Welfare, and Development of the Child

Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety, and Welfare of the Child

Regulation 25 First aid

Regulation 26 Fire Safety 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 person in charge, 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)

On the day of the inspection there was a designated person in charge of the service. There was a second named person available to deputise as required.

(b)

The designated person in charge was on the premises for the duration of the inspection.

The staff files for three staff working directly with children were reviewed on the day.

(2)(a)(b)

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

- (c)  
Garda vetting disclosures were available for all staff working in the service.
- (d)  
Police vetting was 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 preschool 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)(2)  
Throughout the period of the inspection there were adequate numbers of staff working directly with the children attending the service. During the morning there were 11 children in the care of 2 staff ensuring the adult to child ratio was maintained.

### 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 areas of basic needs, supporting relationships and the physical and material environment of the service on the day of inspection:

The atmosphere in the service was friendly and welcoming and the interactions between the children and staff were observed to be familiar and relaxed. The service had developed and implemented a play-based programme with an emphasis on Christmas and the Arctic, the current themes and interests of the children.

Child directed free play was observed on the day of inspection in the outdoor area. The children were fully engaged in imaginative play. For example, they were "building a road" which meant the digging and moving of gravel in the outdoor area. The staff stated that this current activity was ongoing for the week. On arrival to the service, children were encouraged to choose what Montessori work they wanted to play with before going outside.

The outdoor area was spacious with a variety of surfaces including concreted area for ride on toys, a grassy area with climbing frames and swings. A large, sheltered area housed a sand pit and outdoor playroom where children engaged in tabletop activities such as painting and allowed for opportunities to eat snacks outside if they chose to. On the day, the children were observed using the outdoor area twice. The staff informed the inspector that they tried to go outside daily with the children.

When the children came in from their time outdoors, they were observed hand washing prior to eating their snack. The staff were seen supervising the hand washing. All the children were toilet trained and were observed being supported and encouraged with hand washing while using their toilet facilities.

Snack time was a social experience, with staff and children sitting together, chatting and laughing. The children took turns daily to hand out their friend's lunch boxes and drinks. Snacks eaten on the day included sandwiches, cheese, yogurt and fresh fruit. Children were allowed a small treat in their lunch box on Fridays. The snack time was relaxed with children given time to eat at their own pace.

The staff were observed to be patient, respectful and interested in what the children were saying and doing. At snack time staff were observed encouraging children to share their news and stories. Staff encouraged the children to develop independent skills, but asked the children if they would like help if needed, such as putting on their coats.

### 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 premises was secured. The outdoor area was fully enclosed. Cleaning products were stored out of reach of the children.

##### Infection Control:

All sinks for hand washing in the service were equipped with warm thermostatically controlled water, liquid soap, disposable hand towels and foot operated pedal bins. Good hand hygiene was observed on the day, with staff and children washing hands regularly. There was a fridge available in the room to store the perishable food provided by the parents for the children's snack attending 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 were staff trained in first aid for children available to the children attending the preschool 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 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 of monthly fire drills carried out in the service was available. The last recorded fire drill carried out in the ECCE room was on 15 November 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 December 2022.

(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.