

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WX069
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Name of Service:	Little Acorns Montessori
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Address of Service:	Enniscorthy Road, Ferns, Co. Wexford
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Name of Registered Provider:	Jennifer Doyle
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	19/11/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	7	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Child and Family Agency, Early Years Inspectorate, Ely Hospital, Wexford.
Inspection undertaken by:	E Cullen
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

This sessional service is registered to provide an Early Years Care and Education programme to children from 2 to 6 years of age. It operates 38 weeks per year from 9:00am to 12:00pm, Monday to Friday. It is situated on the outskirts of the village of Ferns to the rear of an office building. The service consists of a preschool room, a toilet, a kitchenette and a large outdoor play area to the rear of the service. This service is one of two operated by registered provider in the Wexford area.

Staffing

The service currently employs four staff members, two of whom work in the service daily with others available for relief cover as required. The registered provider does not work directly in the service. The staff working directly with children in the service held the minimum Quality Qualifications Ireland (QQI) at level 5, 6 and 8 qualifications in Childcare and Early Childhood Care and Education 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 regulations 9 (1)(2)(4)– Management and Recruitment, 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service, 11 (1)(3) – Staffing levels, 16 (1) - Record in

relation to pre-school service, 21 – Equipment and Materials, 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance, 25 - First Aid, 26 – Fire Safety. However, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 23. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service and Regulation 16 (1) Record in relation to pre-school service.

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)(b) There was a designated person in charge on the day of inspection and a named person was available to deputise as required.

(2) Documentation was reviewed for four staff members employed by the service.

(a)(b) Two validated references were available for each staff member from either a past employer, or from a reputable source.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all staff. However, evidence was not available on the day of inspection to demonstrate adherence to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. Please refer to the information outlined under regulation 23 of this report.

(d) International Police vetting was available for one staff member who had lived outside the state for a period over 6 months.

(4) Certificates of qualification were available on file demonstrating that staff members held a qualification at the minimum level 5 and above on the National Framework of Qualifications.

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.

Compliance Information

There were written policies, procedures and statements, as specified in Schedule 5, available for the service. The policies reviewed for this inspection were the following: the statement of purpose and function, policy on managing behaviour, policy on fire safety, policy on inclusion, and the policy on recruitment in the service. These policies and procedures were appropriate and specific to the setting.

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) On the day of inspection there were adequate numbers of staff working directly with the children.

(3) The staff to child ratios were maintained above the minimum requirements. There were 7 children aged 2 to 6 years being cared for by two staff members.

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;
- (b) details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services;
- (c) details of the adult:child ratios in the service;
- (d) the type of care or programme provided in the service;
- (e) the facilities available;
- (f) the opening hours and fees;
- (g) the policies, procedures and statements the service is required to maintain in accordance with Regulation 10;
- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;
- (i) details of staff rosters 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)(a) – (h)

The registered provider ensured that all relevant information was accessible and available for inspection by authorised persons. The service’s policies and procedures including the statement of purpose and function provided information on the staffing profile, confirmation of the class of service registered, adult to child ratios, type of care programme, opening hours and fees. Staff members were responsible for maintaining records of attendance.

Non-Compliance Information

(j) There was no administration of medication record form available for use by staff members should a child require medication to be administered while in attendance.

(k) The method of recording accidents and incidents in the service did not provide sufficient information to parents/guardians, staff, management or the Early Years Inspectorate. Of the three records reviewed none

recorded unique identifiers such children's surname or date of birth. There was no reference to who was present when the incident occurred or numbers of children in attendance.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(j) There is now an administration of medicines record book in place. The medicine book has been discussed with staff and will be used if a child needs medication during school hours. All staff know where this book is and how to correctly fill it out.

(k) The records of incidents have now been updated to include all relevant information. All staff have been informed of how to correctly fill this out and the forms are left in an accessible area.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographs of new record forms.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The noncompliance identified has been adequately addressed.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

The early years classroom was well equipped with a variety of early learning materials. Low-level shelving was mounted to the wall on three sides of the room and offered easy access to resources. A library corner contained books, mat and a puppet theatre. A selection of real-life role play props such as hairdressing, beauty and mobile telephones were available. A wooden kitchen and resources, small world play materials such as a train track, cars, animals and dinosaurs provided opportunity for role play.

Sensory play materials such as playdough, natural pinecones, timber rounds and conkers, along with thematic sensory bins with coloured rice, kinetic sand and shredded paper were observed. A soft foam matting and bean bags created a cosy space in the room. A large selection of jigsaw puzzles, construction and Montessori materials were present.

Non-Compliance Information

A table used by children was worn and part of the covering had broken away.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The new table is in place. Staff will now record on a monthly basis if any furniture needs fixing or replacing.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photograph.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The noncompliance identified has been adequately addressed.

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.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

Garda vetting was available for four staff members. However, one of these vetting disclosures were not dated within the previous three years in adherence to with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

The garda vetting that was necessary was in the registered providers second early years service. In future all files will be double checked that the correct staff vetting is in the correct file.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Vetting records

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The noncompliance identified has been adequately addressed.

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) Records confirmed that each child was checked in on arrival at the service and checked out on departure by a staff member.

(3)(a) The early years inspector's entry to the service was facilitated by staff members.

Non-Compliance Information

(3)(b) A method of recording visitors to the service was not available on the premises.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The visitor book is in place and will be left in a common area so that it can be filled out by any person who visits the school.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photograph

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The noncompliance identified has been adequately 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) Two staff members were trained in first aid response and 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 and conspicuous position on the premises available for the use of the children attending the early years 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.

Compliance Information

(1)(a) There was a record of monthly fire drills which had taken place in the service over the last twelve months. The most recent fire drill was recorded as having taken place on 12 November 2025.

(b) There was a record available demonstrating that the firefighting equipment was last serviced on 05 February 2025 and the smoke alarm system was last serviced on 20 November 2024.