

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2016CC004
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Name of Service:	Circle Time Montessori Ltd
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Address of Service:	Castletlyons Pipe Band Hall, Castletlyons, Fermoy, Co Cork
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Eircode:	P61 HF25
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Name of Registered Provider:	Dawn Moore
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	22/05/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	20	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	13 Market Square Mallow Cork P51DD5Y
Inspection undertaken by:	B Fraher
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).

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Description of service

Circle Time Montessori Ltd is a private early years service operating from the local pipe band hall in the village of Castlelyons in Cork. The service facilitates the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme and operates from 09:10 to 12:10 Monday to Friday, 38 weeks of the year. The service is registered to accommodate children aged from 2 to 6 years. This one room care service has access to the hall, children's and adult sanitary facilities, a kitchen and an outdoor area.

Staffing

There is a total of five adults employed by the service including the registered provider who works in the service if required. On the day of inspection, two adults were present in the service working directly with the children. A third adult and the registered provider came to the service during the inspection.

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.

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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 children, registered provider, person in charge and staff 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*

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(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) The registered provider had assigned a designated person in charge on the day of inspection and a named deputy in the service that could deputise as required.

(b) The person in charge was on duty at the service when the inspector arrived. The staff roster indicated that either the person in charge or the deputy were on duty at all times during the hours of operation.

(2) The recruitment records in relation to five adults, all of whom were employed in the service and working directly with the children including the registered provider were the subject of inspection.

(a) Of the 10 required references, 6 were from previous employers with required records of validation on file.

(b) Of the 10 required references, 4 were from another source other than a previous employer with a record of validation on file.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained and were on file for each of the five adults. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Police vetting was available on file for three adults, who had lived outside the state for a period of six consecutive months or longer, as adults.

(4) Records demonstrated that five adults had achieved a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education, at level 5 to 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

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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) At the time of inspection, there was an adequate number of adults responsible for the direct care of the children in attendance at all times.

(3) The service maintained the minimum ratio required as per regulation in the care room. The 20 children attending the service were supervised directly by 2 adults.

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;*

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(i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.

Compliance Information

The service had 23 early years children registered and all records were available. A sample of 10 records were reviewed. They were found to contain the required information as listed (a) through to (i).

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

On the day of inspection, the following information was obtained through direct observation and discussion with the adults and examination of relevant documents.

Basic needs:

- Snacks were provided by the parents and guardians and they were observed to be healthy and nutritious. Children were observed eating filled sandwiches, rice cakes, crackers, cheese, yogurts and a variety of fruits.
- Adults interacted with the children during snack time and were observed helping and assisting the children where necessary.
- Drinking water was accessible to the children throughout the day.
- While outdoors, the children were noted to be dressed appropriately with coats.
- Children's independence was promoted by adults in the care room. Examples of this were when they put on their own coats and tidied up after play.

Supporting relationships:

- Adults engaged with the children in both group and individual activities by getting down to their level and discussing topics with the children and helping them with their chosen tasks. Group activities such as singing, in practice for the graduation, circle time and storey time were observed on the day of inspection.

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- The adults were observed to be kind and caring towards the needs of the children in their care. This was observed throughout the inspection.
- The adults promoted positive behaviour among children encouraging them to take turns and use of gentle hands as observed in the care room.
- Family photos and a birthday calendar were displayed on the wall in the care room which promoted a sense of belonging for the children.
- The service supported links with the local community. A display of local services was evident on the wall and parents were encouraged to attend on fáilte Friday to discuss their job or do an activity with the children.
- Individual care plans are in place for children that require them.
- The person in charge stated that the service communicated with the parents through the use of a learning journal, email and text messages or verbally at drop off or collection. Parents are also given the opportunity to have an individual meeting about their child.

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

An adequate number of low-level chairs and tables were provided for the children for indoor use.

The care room was suitably resourced with age-appropriate interest items, which were stored on low level open shelving and in boxes with pictures on them at the children's eye level. Examples included puzzles, books, construction toys, a train set, musical toys, dolls, a kitchen, and a shop with play items. All indoor equipment and material assessed were found to be in good condition. The care room had a cosy rest area for children to relax and take some time away from the larger group.

The equipment used in the outdoor area was in good condition and was able to be stored under a roofed area when not in use. A timber climbing frame, a slide, goals, balance beam, hula hoops, basket balls and an outdoor kitchen were available for use.

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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 was secured appropriately. This restricted unauthorised access to the building and helped to prevent the risk of children exiting unsupervised.
- The windows in the care room were out of reach and adequately secured to ensure the safety of the children.
- Cleaning agents were stored in the kitchen area and out of reach of the children.
- The outdoor area was enclosed with a combination of timber fence, metal wire fence and concrete walls. It was observed to be a safe and secure space for the children with an alarmed gate to exit.
- There were no cables or trailing flexes observed to be accessible to the children on the day of inspection.

Infection control:

- Handwashing facilities were accessible to the children with warm running water, liquid soap and paper towels.
- Children were observed to wash their hands before snack and after using the sanitary facilities.
- An adult was observed to clean the tables before and after snack time.
- Lidded pedal bins were in use for the disposal of waste in the care room.
- Children's coats were stored on hooks.
- A refrigerator was available for the storage of perishable foods.

Administration of medication:

- The person in charge informed the inspector that no regular medicine was being administered to a child currently in the service. Temperature reducing medicines were stored out of reach of the children in the kitchen area and was observed to be in date.

Fire safety:

- Fire extinguishers were secured to the walls.
- Fire exits were noted to be free from obstruction.

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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.
- (2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-
- (c) an authorised person.
- (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) Written records of the fire drills that took place in the service were furnished to the inspector. The last date recorded for the care room was noted to be on 7 May 2026.
 - (b) Written records were available of the servicing of the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarms. The firefighting equipment certificate was dated 5 November 2025, and the smoke alarm certificate was dated 5 November 2025.
- (2)
- (c) The records referred to in paragraph (1) were available on the premises for review by the inspector.
- (4) The fire procedure notice was displayed on the wall near the front door in the care room.

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Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.

Compliance Information

There was appropriate supervision of children for the duration of the inspection. Children were able to move freely within the care room. There was two staff members assigned to the care room.

The layout of the care room and outdoor area allowed for clear lines of sight of the children. Children were encouraged to use the toilet independently and staff were within hearing range if required. Staff remained with children during snack time, ensuring appropriate supervision while food was being consumed.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-
(e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.

Compliance Information

(e) There were an adequate number of adult and child sanitary facilities with two children's toilets and one adult toilet available. In addition, there was one changing unit available for nappy changing.