

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2016CC006
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Name of Service:	Yellow House Montessori
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Address of Service:	63 North Street, Skibbereen, Co. Cork
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Eircode:	P81 FH39
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Name of Registered Provider:	Jennifer O'Connell
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	02/12/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	11	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Department, Child & Family Agency, Hospital Grounds, Coolnagarrane, Skibbereen, Co Cork P81 PD78
Inspection undertaken by:	Ms. O'Reilly
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	N/A
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Description of service

Yellow House Montessori is an established early years service in operation since 2016. It is a privately owned service, that provides sessional care. It is registered to accommodate a maximum of 22 children aged 2 to 6 years. The service currently caters for children from the age of 2 years 8 months to 6 years and for children attending the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme. While the service is registered to operate from 09:00 to 14:00 hours each day, the services current opening hours are from 09:00 to 12:00 hours each day Monday to Friday. The premise is situated on a main road leading into Skibbereen town in Co Cork. The service is situated within a terraced, period style, three storey premises. The service occupies the ground floor only and has been suitably adapted and modernised to provide a childcare facility. It consists of a compact lobby leading to 2 interlinked playrooms. It has sufficient children's toilet facilities, a separate adult toilet and a staff kitchen. The children have direct secured access to a compact outdoor play area to the rear side of the service.

Staffing

There were two staff employed to work directly with the early years children. The registered provider/person in charge is based between two early years services. The sister service is located a few doors down the street. The registered provider/ person in charge and the staff who work directly with the early years children all hold a recognised qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education.

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.

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/ 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) There was a named person in charge and a deputy available to deputise as required.
 - (b) The deputy was present on the premises on day of the inspection and the registered provider/person in charge arrived later to the service on day of inspection
- (2)
- The recruitment records in relation to 3 staff who were employed at the service were the subject of the inspection.
- (a) Of the 6 required references, 4 references were from previous employers with the required records of validation on file.
 - (b) Of the remaining references, 2 references were from another source other than a previous employer with records of the required validation on file.

(c) A Garda vetting disclosure was available on file in respect of the 3 staff. However, the service did not adhere 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) There was one processed police vetting record on file for the one adult who had resided outside the jurisdiction for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months.

(4)
There was evidence that the three staff members had attained at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Framework for Qualifications, or a qualification deemed to be equivalent.

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)
The person in charge ensured that there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children in the room on day of the inspection.

(2)
During the period of inspection, the ratio of staff to children was maintained as per the regulations and an adequate number of adults were working directly with the children in the playroom.

There were 11 children present in the morning with 2 adults in attendance and the registered provider arrived later to assist with the care of the children.

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;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (h) The service had a record that indicated the arrival and departure time of each child on a daily basis that attended the sessional service.
- (i) The service had a record that indicated the arrival and departure time of each staff member on a daily basis.

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

Basic needs:

- The children appeared to enjoy the food offered and were afforded ample time to eat and drink at a relaxed pace. A staff member was readily available to provide assistance at this time and ensured that suitable crockery and cutlery were available.
- The care rooms were adequately resourced with a variety of play materials that were accessible to the children on low level shelving units, providing the children with choice in their chosen activities.
- The programme of care in place in the service was observed to be play based and child led in approach.

Supporting relationships around children:

- Staff were observed to interact in a caring manner with the children building their confidence and communication skills within the setting.

- The adults were observed to demonstrate patience and kindness in their interactions with the children, as was noted when the children's efforts were readily acknowledged and when children were calmly assisted to resolve minor conflicts.
- Staff helped children to recognise and understand the rules for being together as seen on day of inspection when decorating the Christmas tree. Each child picked a decoration and hung it on the tree. When the Christmas tree was decorated, the children were observed watching the Christmas tree lights turned on. Another creative activity the children were given the opportunity to take part in was picking a star from the advent tree. One child will be nominated to pick a star each day between now and Christmas. Inside each star, will be a task or thought for the day for example an act of kindness. On day of inspection, it was a physical exercise the group completed. The children were observed waiting their turn, sharing the experience and the activity fostered the children's confidence in completing a group task together.
- Staff were observed to interact in a caring manner with the children building their confidence and communication skills within the setting. The children and staff were observed singing renowned songs associated with Christmas and talking about the Christmas tree lights turned on in the town of Skibbereen over the weekend. The children's language skills, emotional, cognitive and social skills were all enhanced during these activities.

Physical and Material Environment

- The service comprised of two large, interlinked playrooms. The service was clean, bright and in a good state of repair.
- The playroom had a range of play-based materials and equipment that offered stimulation, exploration, and imagination. They were positioned at an accessible level with interest areas and open shelving which nurtured independence, facilitated choice, and encouraged curiosity, spontaneous play and movement. There was adequate space in the room to accommodate a variety of play activities.
- There was a variety of Montessori resources which were displayed on low wooden shelves. The room had a designated cosy areas for children to rest and relax as required. Books were displayed. The home corner was equipped with a play kitchen made from natural materials accompanied by a wide range of child sized utensils.
- There was a miniature dolls house, puppet theatre, small construction, floor play items such as large jigsaws and matching games. A nature table displayed a variety of items such as cones and leaves.

- The room was furnished with sufficient child sized tables and chairs which were clean and well maintained.
- There was a partially covered outdoor play area provided beside the premise. The outdoor play area has an artificial grass surface. Play equipment in the outdoor area included a slide, see-saws, and play balls. The outdoor play area was available to the children who were all provided with the opportunity for outdoor play on day of inspection.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 22 – Food and drink

A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

- The children’s parents and guardians provided all food items. A designated dining area was developed within the playroom where the children could sit and eat the mid-morning snack when they felt hungry. This was an unhurried, sociable experience which was overseen by a staff member to ensure that each child had eaten during the session. Lunches were stored in snack boxes which had been labelled with the child’s name and stored in the service fridge.
- Healthy, nutritious lunches were observed being eaten such as sandwiches, rice cakes, rolls, yogurts, a selection of fruits and chopped and diced vegetables.
- Age-appropriate crockery and cutlery was provided by the service.
- The service provided the children with a choice of milk or water to drink at snack time.

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:

- Upon the inspectors' arrival at the service, the main entrance door was found to have been secured and was maintained secure when not in use.
- Cleaning agents were stored on high-level shelving, out of the children's reach.
- The first aid box was appropriately stored and inaccessible to children.
- Water temperatures at the wash hand basins were thermostatically controlled, so as not to exceed 43C. Recorded water temperatures in the wash hand basins in the children's and adult toilets were between 30°C to 32°C on day of inspection.
- No cables were within reach of children on the day of inspection.
- The door into the kitchenette was found to have been adequately secured and was maintained secure when not in use.

Infection Control:

- Suitable handwashing facilities were available in the playroom and toilet facilities. Warm water, liquid soap and paper towels were in place. Handwashing by the children was observed before mid-morning snack and after toileting.
- The children who attended were observed to freely access and use the adjoining toilet facilities, as needed.
- Pedal operated bins were in place for the disposal of paper towels.

Fire Safety:

- Fire exit doors were unobstructed

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

- Garda vetting was available for one staff member. However, this vetting disclosure was not dated within the previous three years in adherence to the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

- Received a copy of the renewed Garda Vetting record for one adult. The registered provider will ensure going forward that each staff members garda vetting will be renewed every 3 years.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

- A copy of the renewed Garda vetting was submitted and deemed satisfactory

Summary Comment

- Based on the supporting documentation submitted, the requirement of Regulation 23, General Safety, has now been met.

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 two staff with a current certified First Aid Responder certificate (FAR).

(2)

(a) The first aid box was safely stored out of children's reach in the service.

(b) The first aid box was available at all times to adults if in the event that a child may require treatment.

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 was available and indicated that the last fire drill took place on the 19/11/24
 - (b) Records regarding the number, service and type of fire equipment were maintained on file. The fire equipment and the smoke alarm were last serviced and tested on the 14/11/2024.
- (4)
- The fire evacuation procedure for the service which contained details in relation to the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured the service was adequately insured, with insurance for 22 children until 27/11/2025. The records detailed the category of service covered which was sessional, the name and address of the premises and details regarding public liability cover, fire, theft, buildings, and outings cover.