

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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| NotTUSLA Identifier: | TU2016CC009 |
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| Name of Service: | An Tobar Eolais Montessori |
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| Address of Service: | Lisvaird National School, The Pike, Clonakilty, Co. Cork |
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| Eircode: | P85 HK88 |
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| Name of Registered Provider: | Eilish Kingston |
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| Service type: | Part Time, Sessional |
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| Date of Inspection: | 24/04/2023 |
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|-----------------------------------|----|----|----|---|
| No of pre-school children: | AM | 15 | PM | 3 |
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| Address of the Early Years Inspectorate: | Child & Family Agency, Hospital Grounds, Coolnagarrane Skibbereen, West Cork. |
| Inspection undertaken by: | M Carney |
| 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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| Conditions if applicable | Not Applicable |
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Description of service

An Tobar Eolais Montessori is a private based part time and sessional service providing an early years care and education for children aged from 2 to 6 years.

It operates from 09:00am to 14:00pm daily.

The service is situated within a static cabin on the grounds of Lisvaird national school in a rural setting a short distance from Clonakilty town in west Cork.

Facilities include a large playroom and toilet accommodation. The children have access to a secured outdoor garden.

There is ample road car parking for the safe arrival and departure of the children with their families.

Staffing

There are 2 registered providers that work directly with the children. Additional staff members include a relief staff member and an adult employed under the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM).

Each of the 4 childcare professionals had attained Quality Qualification's Ireland (QQI) in childcare training

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 inspections 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.

Additional Information

An Immediate Action Notice was issued in relation to Regulation 25 – First Aid

Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered providers, 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,

(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)

Both the registered providers worked directly with the children, one of which managed the service and the other acted as deputy.

(b)

On review of the staff roster it was evidenced that the registered providers were on the premises for the duration of service operation.

(2)(a) & (b)

Each of the staff members files were reviewed, the following information was available –

There were 8 written references on file from past employers with the correct records of validation attached.

(c)

There were 4 up to date Garda vetting disclosures on file, dated from October 2020 to January 2023.

(d)
Police vetting was not required as the adults had not lived outside the jurisdiction of Ireland for a period longer than 6 consecutive months.

(4)
Quality Qualifications Ireland (QQI) in childcare training were on file for each staff member, ranging from Level 5 to Level 8.

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)
On the day of the inspection there was an adequate number of adults working directly with the children.

(2)
There were 12 children aged 3 to 5 years attending on a sessional basis with 3 children availing of the part time session. There were 3 adults in attendance.
The adult child ratio was correct

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

Compliance Information

(1)
Each of the children's registration forms were reviewed and the following sections of the Regulation were found to be compliant –

- (a), (b), (c), (d), (e), (f), (g), (h) and (i).

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)
The following records were available which pertained to the service –
- (g) The policies and 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) Staff rosters on a daily basis.
 - (j) Details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent
- The most recent entry was dated in 2017.
- (k) Details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service. The most recent entry involved a minor incident in March 2023. The entry had been counter signed by a parent to evidence that the information had been relayed.

Non-Compliance Information

The following records were not available –

- (a) The name, position, qualifications, and experience of the staff members.
- (b) Type of service and age profile of children for which the service is registered.
- (c) Details of the adult child ratio
- (d) The type of care programme provided.
- (e) The facilities available
- (f) The opening hours and fees.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action & Supporting Documentation Submitted

The registered provider stated that information in respect of Regulation 16 (a) to (f) has been typed out, laminated and displayed for parents' information.

A scanned document of the information was submitted.

Summary Comment

Documentation submitted to the early years office. It was reviewed and found to satisfactorily meet the Requirements of the above subsections of Regulation 16.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 17 – Information for parents

A registered provider shall ensure that a parent or guardian of a child proposing to attend the service is provided with the information referred to in subparagraphs (a) to (g) of Regulation 16(1).

Non-Compliance Information

Although the registered provider stated that information in respect of Regulation 16(1) (a) to (g) was verbally imparted to the parents or guardians, a hard copy or digital document was not made available of this information.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider stated that the above required information has been completed in letter form for parents and guardians' information.

The letter was submitted to evidence this action.

Summary Comment

The Requirement has been met.

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 lunch meal was offered in a timely manner at approximately at 10:30am.
- Children attending on a part time basis had additional food items to consume when the sessional children had departed.
- Lunch time was a sociable unhurried event, the children were observed engaging in conversation as they ate.
- Staff members sat with the children and assisted with cutting fruits and opening yogurt cartons.
- Drink bottles were observed to be easily accessible to the children so that they could help themselves to drinks when thirsty.
- Staff members assisted with toileting and gently reminded the children to wash hands afterwards.
- Additional hand washing was observed after the children had played outside and prior to lunch.
- The children were encouraged to dress appropriately in waterproof overalls and protective boots for outdoor play.
- Aprons were available to protect the children's clothes during art and messy play activities.
- slippers were available to the children for safe, indoor play which were stored in their individual photographed cubby boxes to encourage the children to help themselves.
- Each child had their own low hooks to stow bags and coats.
- A rest area had been developed in circle corner. It had been furnished with 2 low child sized couches and mustard cushions for the children's comfort and relaxation.
- There was generous clear floor space in the playroom for the children to enjoy free play, socialise and investigate their environment in a supervised manner.
- The children had direct access to a secured playground and canopied outdoor room.

Physical and Material Environment –

- An Tobar Eolais consisted of a large playroom which was suitably furnished to provided a sessional and part time service.
- It was furnished with a sufficient number of child sized tables and chairs that were clean and well maintained.
- There were many low-level display units so that the children could easily access play resources.
- The room was laid out in a manner to encourage thematic play and provide a wide range of opportunities and play experiences, such as the dress up area with hairdressing station, pink playhouse and associated figurines, large construction, trucks and cars.
- A low-lying open display unit provided Montessori items.
- There was a selection of books situated by the circle/rest area for the children to enjoy.

- There was a selection of tabletop activities to prompt and promote fine motor skill play.
- Art works included butterflies and bumble bees. There were posters of Irish garden birds.
- On the day of the inspection the children were observed enjoying outdoor play, using the large slide, jumping and balancing on the large tyres, digging with spades and buckets and playing with the sand.

Supporting Relations around the Children

- The staff members were observed to be observed to be kind, patient and caring to each child.
- Children were spoken to in low soft tones in a gently manner, for example when a child was given additional time to eat their meals and encouraging outdoor play.
- The children were supervised when taken to the toilet and gently encouraged to use the toilets and hand wash independently.
- It was reported that 2 staff members had completed Quality Qualifications Ireland (QQI) at an advanced level, to improve and enhance their childcare skills and practices.
- Additional courses included child protection training.
- Parents were communicated with via a digital application to inform of service notices.
- One-to-one communication with parents was utilised via the application, for example videos of their children performing or engaging in specific activities.

Non-Compliance Information

Implementation of Programme of Care

- A daily timetable was not displayed to evidence that a wide range of activities were offered to the children, for example to the time allotted for free play, mealtimes, outdoor play and socialisation.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action & Supporting Documentation Submitted

The registered provider stated that a timetable has been developed, laminated and displayed. The timetable was submitted to evidence this action and to depict that time was allotted to free play, socialisation, outdoor play, meals and scheduled activities.

Summary Comment

The Requirement has been suitably met.

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 service had a healthy eating policy in place.
- All food and drink items were supplied by the parents.
- Food was stored in the service fridge.
- Only healthy, nutritious, varied and suitable food items were observed being eaten during the children's lunch meal, such as, ham and cheese sandwiches, wraps, rice cakes, fruits and cereal bars.
- Children attending on a part time basis had additional food items for consumption.
- Each child had access to their own water bottles so that they could help themselves to fluids when they were thirsty.
- The service also supplied bottled water for the children to enjoy.

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:

- An Tobar Eolais was suitably secured so that a child could not leave the premises unsupervised.
- The main door which led to the playroom was secured so that unauthorised was restricted.
- The staff members bags and belonging were stored out of reach of the children in the cordoned area in the corridor.
- Play materials were found to be in a good state of repair with no pinch points or sharp edges.
- Cables and flexes were not accessible to the children.
- There were no glazed doors that required visibility strips.
- The emergency exit door was unobstructed.

Infection Control:

- The service was clean and well maintained.
- Hand washing practices were observed regularly during the session.
- The children had access to 2 separate child sized toilets and 2 wash hand basins.
- Thermostatically controlled hot water registered at 29 degrees Celsius, liquid soap, toilet tissue and wall mounted paper dispensers for hand drying.
- There was a wheelchair access toilet which was designated for staff use.
- Pedal bins were in operation in the service.

Administration of Medication:

- It was reported that there were no children in the service that required medication, however an appropriate recording book was made available in the event of a child requiring medications.
- Staff members were familiar with the procedures that are to be followed when administering either prescribed or non-prescribed medications.

Safe Sleep:

- The service was categorized as a part time service and a sleep facility was required. It was stated that and evidenced that a sleeping bag and linen was available for children that required a sleep.

Fire Safety:

- In conversation with the staff members, it was apparent that they were aware of the procedures that were needed to be followed in the event of a fire.
- The fire exit was unobstructed.

Outing:

- It was reported that outings were not conducted at this time.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

The following issues posed a risk of danger to the children -

1. The adult toilet door was not suitably secured.
2. The outdoor play area had artificial grass which was inadequately fitted in places posing a trip hazard to the children.
3. The fire cylinder was not tethered to the wall.

Administration of Medication:

4. Although it was observed that parents and guardians had signed for emergency temperature reducing medication could be administered as required, it was stated by the registered provider that the service did not store this medication which posed a risk to the children should they require it.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action & Supporting Documentation Submitted.

The registered provider stated that the above non compliances have been corrected.

Submitted documentation to evidence that these issues had been addressed included –

1. A photograph of the secured toilet door,
2. A photograph of the newly repaired artificial grass
3. A photograph of the newly purchased fire cylinders tethered to the walls.
4. A photograph of the newly purchased bottle of temperature reducing medication, stored in a safe place out of reach of the children

Summary Comment

The Requirements have been suitably 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

(2)(a) and (b)

A first aid box was stored in a storage corner of the cabin which was not accessible to the children. The first aid box was inspected and found to be well stocked with the recommended requisites.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) Although the staff members had certificated documentation to evidence that they had completed first aid training, it was observed that a staff members first aid responder training (FAR) certification had expired in October 2022. This posed a risk to the children as there was no staff member on site with the appropriate training.

An Immediate Action Notice was issued

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action & Supporting Documentation Submitted

The registered provider responded to the Immediate Action Notice within 24 hours of issue and stated that an application to attend a first aid responder course had been requested.

An email was submitted from the service provider to evidence that a place had been secured for the 03 June 2023.

The registered provider stated that certification on completion will be forwarded to the early years office.

Summary Comment

Documentation to evidence that the non-compliance will be addressed as soon as practicable was reviewed and found to be satisfactory.

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)

The registered provider submitted a file with details of the fire drills that had been conducted in the service. The last recorded fire drill had taken place 21 March 2023. It recorded that there were 13 children and 2 staff members present. The drill took 3 minutes to complete.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(b)

1. Records informed that the fire alarm systems had been serviced in March 2022 which had expired as it is required to be service on an annual basis.

2. There were no written records of the number and type of firefighting equipment available on the premises.

(4)

3. A fire evacuation plan was not displayed to provide a visual route to exit in the premises in the event of a fire.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action & Supporting Documentation Submitted

1. The registered provider stated the firefighting equipment has been serviced on the 27 April 2023.

2. That records have been completed to indicate the type of firefighting equipment in the service.

3. A fire evacuation plan has been developed and displayed.

Documents in the form of photographs and templates were forwarded to the early years office to evidence that the above issues had been corrected.

Summary Comment

The Requirements have been adequately met.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider made available an up-to-date insurance certificate, which detailed that up to 22 children were adequately insured at any one time to attend on a sessional and part time basis.
The expiry date was 27th March 2024

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-

- (a) of sound and stable structure,*
- (b) safe and secure,*
- (c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated*
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

Compliance Information

- (a)
The service was situated in a static cabin on the grounds of a national school. It was observed to be of sound and stable structure. It was in a good state of repair with no visual cracks or building defects. There was no evidence of pest infestations.
- (b)
The service was suitably secured. The playground was fenced, and gates were adequately secured.
- (c)
Lighting in the service consisted of strip lights which were functioning. There were many openable windows which permitted natural ventilation and light. The toilet accommodation had openable windows.
- (d)
The service was found to be clean and well maintained.
- (e)
There were sufficient number of child sized toilets and wash hand basins for the number of children attending.
There was 1 adult /wheelchair access toilet with a wash hand basin.