

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2016CW003
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Name of Service:	Kloyda Montessori School
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Address of Service:	The Urglin Centre, Ruthland, Bennekerry, Co. Carlow
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Eircode:	R93 YF72
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Name of Registered Provider:	Marie O'Connor
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	09/11/2023
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Date 2 of Inspection:	10/11/2023
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No of pre-school children:	AM	14	PM	N/A
Day 2	AM	17	PM	N/A

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla Child & Family Agency, Athy Road, Carlow.
Inspection undertaken by:	N. Thornton
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

Kloyda Montessori is a sessional Montessori service, for children aged 2 to 6 years, operating from the Urglin community centre in the rural area of Ruthland, Benekerry in county Carlow. The service operates from 09:00 to 12:30 hours, Monday to Friday, for 38 weeks of the year in accordance with the early childhood care and education (ECCE) scheme. There are two classrooms, each with adjacent children's toilets, which can also open into one large room. A designated secure outdoor play area is provided onsite at the back of the building.

Staffing

There were four staff members employed in the service including the registered provider. The registered provider was not present onsite, on day one of the inspection but was available for the inspection feedback meeting on day two. All four staff members worked directly with the children in the service and held qualifications in early childhood care and education ranging from the minimum level five to level 8 on the Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) 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.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 15.

Regulation 9(1)(2)(4)-Management and Recruitment,

Regulation 10-Policies, Procedures etc. of a pre-school service,

Regulation 11(1)(3)- Staffing Levels,

Regulation 15(1)-Record of a Pre-School Child,

Regulation 20-Facilities for Rest and Play,

Regulation 25- First Aid,

Regulation 26- Fire Safety,

Regulation 28- Insurance.

As a result, the scope of the inspection included both Montessori classrooms and the outdoor play area.

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 to the registered provider, on day two of the inspection process, as the registered provider could not assure the inspector that there was always a staff member available in the service, with a current paediatric first aid responder training certificate.

The registered provider responded to the immediate action notice on the 13 November 2023.

Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the designated person in charge, staff and children who were present on day 1 of the inspection, and the registered provider who was present for day 2 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) The service had a designated person in charge and a named person who was able to deputise in the absence of the designated person in charge.

(b) At all times during the inspection, either the registered provider/ designated person in charge or both were present on the premises.

2) Staff files for the three staff members present were reviewed by the inspector.

(a)(b) Two validated references were on file for each of the three staff members, from either a past employer or from a reputable source.

(c) Garda Vetting certificates were on file for each of the three staff members working directly with the children.

(d) Not applicable as no staff member had lived outside of the State for longer than six months.

(4) The inspector observed that there was a certificate of qualification in early childhood care and education in each staff member's file, demonstrating that each staff member held a qualification ranging from Level 5 to Level 8 on the National Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) framework.

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

On review of documents, the inspector observed that the following written policies, procedures, and statements specified in schedule 5 of the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Service) Regulations 2016 were available in the service and open for inspection. The following policies were reviewed and found to be appropriate to the service and contained adequate information, the service's statement of purpose and function, policy on infection control, fire safety policy, policy on outdoor play, risk management policy and settling in policy.

Non-Compliance Information

While it is acknowledged that the following policies were available, they were observed by the inspector not to provide adequate details required and specific to the service. It is acknowledged that since the inspection, the registered provider engaged with a support organisation, to develop and revise the service's policies and procedures.

1. The inclusion policy did not detail how the service recognises and responds to bias or discrimination.
2. The policy on outings did not include the following details, that a risk assessment is carried out prior to an outing and the checklist to be followed in preparation for an outing. The policy did not specify the adult / child ratio maintained while on an outing. Details regarding first aid provision, for example, assurance that an adult trained in first aid responder (FAR) training for children accompanies the group on an outing with an adequately supplied first aid box was not included. The policy did not detail any methods used for checking children while on an outing, for example roll calls. The policy did not provide assurance that for the duration of the outing, that a charged mobile phone was always accessible, with contact details for parents.

The details of the procedure to be followed in the event of any critical incident that may occur while on an outing, for example if a child went missing, were not specified.

3. The policy on authorisation to collect children did not detail the routine for drop off and collection times.

4. The service's policy on healthy eating did not provide sufficient information as to how the service ensures that sufficient, suitable, and nutritious food and drink are provided to the children while attending the service and what must be included in the snack, while attending the sessional service. The policy did not describe how food is safely stored and served, and how children are supported and supervised while eating and drinking.

5. The policy on use of the internet and photographic and recording devices, named in the service as the multi-media policy and procedure did not state that consent is required from a parent before the child is photographed and/or recorded. The policy did not include a sample consent form. The policy did not set out how photographic images or recordings are stored, details of how long they are retained in the service, how they are provided to parents or how they are destroyed.

6. The following policies were not available for inspection on both days, complaints policy, policy on accidents and incidents, policy on staff absences, recruitment policy, staff training policy and supervision policy.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider submitted evidence of revised policies as required, specific to the service. The registered provider's response stated that these policies will be revised on an annual basis and as required.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copies of revised policies and correspondence demonstrating that the registered provider had engaged a support organisation to support the service in revision of the policies.

Summary Comment

The actions submitted are appropriate to address the non-compliances. The implementation of these actions will be reviewed on next inspection.

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) The registered provider always ensured that there was an adequate number of staff members directly caring for the children in attendance on both days of inspection.
- (3) There were 2 qualified staff members directly caring for 14 preschool children on day 1 and on day 2 there were 3 qualified staff members, including the registered provider, caring for 17 preschool children.

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.*

(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-
(c) an authorised person.

Compliance Information

Seven of nineteen records of preschool children were reviewed by the inspector.

(3)(c) These records were available onsite and open to inspection to the inspector.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) While it is acknowledged that the inspector observed that elements of regulation 15 (1) (a) to (g) were clearly recorded in each of the preschool records, the following two elements (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child and (i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency were not recorded.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider submitted a response stating that the template for the record of a preschool child had been revised to include all details required under regulation 15(1)(a) to (i). Going forward, at registration of each child wishing to attend the service, all details will be obtained and accurately recorded.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copy of revised preschool record template.

Summary Comment

The actions submitted are appropriate to address the non-compliances. The implementation of these conditions will be reviewed on next inspection.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

- (1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-
- (a) having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day, and
 - (b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.
- (2) A registered provider-
- (a) of a full day care service, a part-time day care service, a sessional preschool service or a childminding service that is registered for the first time on or after 30 June 2016, shall ensure that a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the preschool children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises.

Compliance Information

- (1)(a) The service provided a large suitable indoor play area which was divided into two Montessori rooms by a sliding door. Each classroom had clearly defined interest areas and a wide selection of Montessori equipment which was easily accessed by the children from low level shelves and storage. Areas of interest included painting /creativity areas and kitchen home areas. The five learning areas of Montessori pedagogy were clearly displayed on individual shelved areas in each classroom. A variety of practical life, sensorial, mathematical, language and cultural equipment was available to the children in each classroom. Manipulative and connective materials, board games, pegboards and small world figurines were also available.
- (b) A quiet library area in each classroom provided the children with opportunities to sit and rest, to read or just take a break from activities.
- (2)(a) The service provided a safe secure outdoor play area at the back of the building. This was secured with a five-foot wooden fence and accessed through a wooden gate at the side of the building.
- The outdoor play area had a gravel surface and contained two large stable wooden play structures, a large ride on tractor and trailer. The tractor had an integrated lookout tower and telescopes. From here the children could view the animals and farmers working in the nearby fields and play imaginarily.

The trailer consisted of a sloped climbing board on one side which led to the top and had twin slides for the children to slide down on the other side. An outdoor mud kitchen, play shop, balance beams and colourful playhouse were also available to challenge the children’s physical development and encourage their imaginary play.

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 suitable and adequately equipped first aid box was available on the premises and observed to always be available to the children, if required.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) On review of staff files, the inspector observed that one staff member had trained in first aid responder (FAR) training, however the certificate had expired on the 1 December 2022, and refresher training had not been followed up. An immediate action notice for safety, regarding not having a current qualified staff member in FAR was issued to the registered provider.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider submitted a response to the Immediate Action Notice (IAN) stating that First Aid Responder (FAR) training had been booked for two staff members, commencing on the weekend of 25 November 2023, for three consecutive weekends.

In the corrective and preventive response submitted by the registered provider, assurance was provided that a staff member trained in FAR will be onsite while children are present at all times.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copy of Booking for two staff members to FAR training.
Copies of certificates of accreditation for two staff members.

Summary Comment

The actions submitted are appropriate to address the non-compliances. The implementation of these actions will be reviewed on next inspection.

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) On review of fire records maintained by the registered provider, it was observed that fire drills were carried out in the service monthly, with details of each fire drill recorded. The last fire drill was recorded as having taken place on the 18 October 2023.

(b) Maintenance records of the service's firefighting equipment and fire alarms were available. The last maintenance check for the fire-fighting equipment and smoke alarms was recorded as having taken place on the 05 September 2023.

(4) A fire procedure notice was clearly displayed at the entrance of the service, detailing the procedures to be carried out in the event of a fire in the service. A fire assembly point was clearly signposted in the carpark.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

There was a current insurance certificate for the Montessori school available for inspection. The insurance certificate detailed insurance cover for a sessional service for 25 preschool children.