

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2016GY011		
Name of Service:	The Growing Tree Montessori School		
Address of Service:	Cahergowan, Claregalway, Co. Galway.		
Eircode:	H91 X7KE		
Name of Registered Provider:	Mary Fleming		
Service type:	Sessional		
Date(s) of Inspection:	24/01/2024		
No of pre-school children:	AM	19	PM 0
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla – Child and Family Agency, Early Years Inspectorate, Quality and Regulation Directorate, Clinical & Administration Building, Block A - (1st Floor- Green Corridor), Merlin Park, Co. Galway.		
Inspection undertaken by:	S. Meehan.		
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

The service is in Claregalway village in a purpose-built Montessori sessional service. The service offers an Early Childhood Care and Education sessional care programme and the service caters for pre-school children aged between 3 years – 6 years of age. The service opening hours are from 9 am to 12.30 pm, Monday to Friday. There are 3 playrooms, a kitchen unit, multi-purpose room and sanitary facilities. The service has an outdoor area at the front and side of the service and children have access to outdoor play in a secured outdoor play area.

Staffing

There are 4 adults working in the service which includes the register provider. The adults working directly with the children in the service have completed a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at a minimum of a level 5 in Early Childhood 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, 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) The registered provider ensured that there was a named designated person in charge. There was a named person who could deputise as required.
- (b) The designated person in charge was present in the service for the duration of the inspection.
- (2)(a)(b) There were 8 written, validated references from past employers or a reputable source available in respect of the 4 adults working in the service.
- (c) Vetting disclosures from the Garda Síochána were available in respect of 4 adults working in the service.
- (d) Police vetting from the police authorities in another jurisdiction where a person had lived for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months was available and required for 1 adult.
- (4) The registered provider ensured that all adults working directly with children had a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education; the 4 adults had at least a minimum of a level 5.

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 attendance records for the past week were reviewed by the inspector indicating that an adequate number of staff were working directly with the pre-school children.

- (2) The adult and child ratio were correct and maintained on the day of inspection. Four adults were working with and caring directly for 19 pre-school 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.*

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) is retained for a period of 2 years from the date on which the child to whom it relates ceases to attend the service.

Compliance Information

(1)(a),(b),(c),(d),(e),(f),(g),(h) &(i).

There was a total of 23 children's records and a sample of 6 children's records were reviewed by the Early Years Inspectors.

The entries reviewed were factual, consistent, and accurate.

The 6 random records of children contain the following:

- The name and date of birth of the child.
- The date on which the child first attended the service.

- The date on which the child stopped attending the service (where relevant).
 - The name and address of the child’s parent or guardian, and a telephone number where that parent or guardian (or a relative or friend of the parent or child) can be contacted during the hours of operation.
 - Written authorisation and permissions for collecting the child.
 - Details are recorded of any illness, allergy, or additional need(s) the child had, together with all the information relevant to the provision of specific care or attention.
 - The name and telephone number of the child’s registered medical practitioner.
 - A record of any immunisations the child has had.
 - Written parental or guardian consent was included to allow the child to have appropriate medical treatment if there was an emergency.
- (4) The registered provider advised and documentary evidence from file review indicated, that all relevant children’s records were kept for 2 years from the date a child stops attending the service.

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

(1) A registered provider shall, in providing a pre-school service, ensure that-

(b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.

Compliance Information

19 (1),(a)&(b)

BASIC NEEDS:

- Healthy eating was promoted within the service and the food observed was healthy and nutritious. The service had a rolling snack system in place for children, the snacks provided by parent and guardians consisted of a selection of sandwiches, fruit and yogurts.

- The children were afforded plenty of time to enjoy their snack in a relaxed and unhurried manner. Crockery and plates were given to children during snack times, laid out on low tables in the outdoor play area.
- The children had access to a water station on a low-level table, that allowed them the opportunity to take a drink if thirsty.
- Children were encouraged and supported to manage their own personal care appropriate to their own level of independence.
- Children were either toileted independently or with some assistance as required. All children were toilet trained that were in attendance on the day of inspection.
- The children had the opportunity to rest or relax with soft seating in the form of child size couches, in a designated rest and relaxation area, in the playroom. Stackable beds were available for children attending on a part time care basis.
- On the day of inspection, the children were observed playing in the outdoor area which had a variety of special interest areas.

SUPPORTING RELATIONSHIPS AROUND CHILDREN:

- A key person system was in place for each child to support their development and to inform curriculum planning. The role of the key person was to liaise with parents and guardians. Individual care programmes were in place where required.
- On speaking with staff, the inspector was informed that they verbally provided parents with daily information on their child's experiences in the pre-school including the child's likes, interests, preferences, and play activities engaged in. This information was provided at collection and drop off times, via text messages, formal meetings and by phone calls.
- The staff were observed to be caring and supportive in their interactions with the children. During observed interactions, the staff demonstrated that they knew the children well, recognising and valuing their individual interests, needs and learning. The staff were observed to be interested in the children, spoke in low tones, listened to them, and responded to their requests. The staff interacted in a positive way with the children e.g., they sat at children's level, maintained good eye contact, showed empathy and a good understanding of each child.
- Staff were observed helping children find solutions, supporting them and talking to children in a variety of ways, discussing, questioning, modelling, commentating, extending a child's activities, and initiating games and activities.

- The programme of care was flexible and guided by the children’s choices. Children were supported by the staff during periods of individual and group-based activities, the staff sensitively supervised and intervened when necessary.
- On the day of inspection, the children played and interacted well with the staff and their peers. The children were observed at imaginative play, action songs, arts and crafts, circle time, playing in the in the outdoor play area, developing their gross motor skills and at tabletop activities.
- The themes were ‘Evolution’, ‘Winter Time’ and ‘The emerging Spring’.
- The service is linked in to the local community and had various professionals in throughout the year.
- The service is also linked in to the local childcare committee for on-going professional support.

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) The service did provide evidence that a person trained in first aid responder for children was available at all times to the children attending the pre-school service. There were 3 adults present on the day with a first aid responder in date cert.

(2)(a) The first aid box was accessible and in a conspicuous position in the playroom.

(b) The first aid box was fully equipped and available to the children attending the pre-school service.