

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2018DS507
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Name of Service:	Castle Kids Montessori
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Address of Service:	3 Castle Crescent, Clondalkin, Dublin 22,
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Eircode:	D22 R5W4
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Name of Registered Provider:	Aileen Tracey
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	06/06/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	21	PM	n/a
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, ,Floor 7 Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, St. John's Road West, Kilmainham, Dublin 8
Inspection undertaken by:	H Sutherland
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

Castle Kids Montessori is a privately owned early year's service located in Dublin 22. The service operates from the ground floor of a purposefully adapted commercial premises and comprises of two care rooms, sanitary facilities and an outdoor space to the rear of the building. The Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme is offered from 9.00am to 12.00pm for children aged between 2.5 and 6 years of age Monday to Friday.

Staffing

The registered provider works directly with the children in the service and employs two staff. Additionally, the service has a relief staff member appointed to support as necessary. On the day of inspection three staff members were present working directly with the children.

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 and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under the following regulations:

- 9 (1) (a) (b) 2 (a) (b) (c) (d) 4 Management and recruitment
- 11 (1) (3), Staffing levels
- 19 (1) (a) Health, welfare and development of child
- 23 Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

25 First Aid

26 Fire safety measures

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, 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 to deputise as needed.
 - (b) The designated person in charge was present when the inspectors arrived unannounced to the service and remained present for the duration of the inspection.
- (2)(a)(b)(d) (4) No new adults had been employed since the last inspection on 19 January 2022. Staff records were reviewed at that time and met the requirements.

Vetting disclosures were reviewed for all four adults and met compliance as follows:

- (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for four adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda Vetting every three years.

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) On the day of inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children to meet their care needs. There were three adults available to twenty-one children.
- (3) The required adult to child ratio was maintained for the duration of the inspection.

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

The service had a library area which consisted of a rug, a large bean bag and a variety of books for children to sit, read and rest. Children were observed using this space during the inspection to take a break from group activities. Lunches were provided by the parents and were observed to contain a selection of healthy options in line with the services healthy eating policy. Drinking water was available and accessible to children throughout the morning. Children were observed completing self-care tasks independently such as, using the toilet and handwashing. Verbal cues were used to signal to children that the end of an activity was approaching. This provided the children with the opportunity to prepare and transition to the next activity in an unhurried manner.

Staff demonstrated warmth and sensitivity in their interactions with the children. For example, when a child became upset staff immediately reacted and dropped to the child's level and offered the child comfort and reassurance. Staff sat with children at lunch time and were observed to actively listen and engage with children's interests promoting positive social interactions. Children displayed pride and a sense of responsibility when given the job of helper for the day. A helpers chart displaying images of the children was in place to support fairness and ensure all children had the opportunity to participate. Staff described how the service uses a range of ways to communicate and share information with parents. For example, the service provides daily opportunities to share information with parents and families about their child's daily experiences. The service also uses an app to share information, news and updates. On the day of inspection, a prospective parent was welcomed into the setting and given the opportunity to observe the practice offering an insight into the daily learning environment.

The learning environment was equipped with a rich variety of resources and Montessori equipment to promote stimulation, exploration and imaginative thinking. The materials were arranged on open low-level shelving at the children's level supporting independence, enabling choice and encouraging spontaneous play. Children's literacy and language development and sense of identity and belonging was supported through a print rich environment. For example, the learning environment had clearly labelled interest areas and community and family walls were displayed at children's level. A sports day took place on the day of the inspection and the indoor environment was adapted to allow for a wide range of physical activities supporting physical development, coordination and wellbeing.

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:

- Doors both internal and external were appropriately secured to restrict unauthorised access and prevent children from exiting the service unsupervised.
- Medication and cleaning agents were stored in a press in the kitchen which was inaccessible to children.
- Toys and play equipment used by the children were observed to be safe for the age of children using them.

- Documented risk assessments were observed to be carried out prior to members of the community coming into the service to speak with children about the work they do.

Infection Control:

- The service was observed to be clean and well maintained and documented cleaning schedules were in place.
- Pedal operated bins were in use in the sanitary areas and the care rooms to support effective hygiene practices.
- Liquid soap, warm water and single use paper towels were available at wash hand basins.
- Children were supported to wash their hands after toileting and before mealtimes.
- All perishable food brought by the children from home for morning snack time was observed to be stored in a fridge reducing the risk of bacteria multiplying.

Administration of Medication:

- Staff demonstrated clear understanding of the procedure for administering medication. Appropriate documentation was available in the service to record the administration of medication should the need arise.

Fire Safety:

- Emergency exits were observed to be unobstructed throughout the inspection.
- Staff demonstrated knowledge of the procedure to safely evacuate children from the service in the event of a fire.

Outing:

- Staff discussed the procedure followed by the service when taking children on outings. Risk assessments were observed to be in use in line with the services outings policy.

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 was evidence to show that two adults hold certification in First Aid Response training and both were available for the duration of the inspection.
- (2) (a) A suitably equipped first aid box was available and stored safely in an easily accessible and prominent position in the kitchen.
- (b) The first aid box was observed to be easily available to the adults caring for the children attending the service.

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) A written record was available detailing fire drills that had taken place in the service. The record showed that the last fire drill took place on 30 May 2025.
(b) The number, type and maintenance record of fire fighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises was up to date. Fire extinguishers and smoke alarms were serviced on 11 March 2025.
- (2) (c) The above records were available for review by an authorised person.
- (4) The procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in a prominent position in the care room.