

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2021KY005
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Name of Service:	Children's House Montessori, Milltown
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Address of Service:	Old Schoolhouse, Church Street, Milltown, Co Kerry
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Eircode:	V93 EV97
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Name of Registered Provider:	Carol Dempsey
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date of Inspection:	07/04/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	12	PM	11
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate, 13 Market Square, Mallow, Co Cork, P51 DD5Y
Inspection undertaken by:	N O'Donoghue
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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Description of service

Children's House Montessori is a private early years care and education facility providing a Montessori curriculum which has been in operation since 2021. It provides a choice of full day, part-time and sessional services. Opening hours are from 8.00am until 6.00pm, Monday to Friday, incorporating the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme in the morning from 9.45 am until 12.45pm and in the afternoon from 2.00pm to 5.00 pm. The service is located in Milltown in County Kerry and was previously in use as an Old School House. It consists of a reception area, three care rooms (one of which was in use on the day), a sanitary area with two children's toilets and one adult toilet incorporating a fold down children's nappy changing table. In addition, there are kitchen and storage rooms in the corridor, which runs the length of the service. There is a large one-way parking area located at the front of the service and a number of outdoor play areas including a playground and grass area.

Staffing

There were 10 adults attached to the service on day of inspection. This included the registered provider who is not service based, person in charge, six early years educators, one relief early years educator and one maintenance worker.

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

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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 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*
- (c) there is a clear management structure in the service that identifies the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and unpaid worker.*

(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,*

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(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 deputy person in charge on the premises on the day of inspection.

(b) A person in charge or named deputy person in charge were on the premises at all times during the operation of the service.

(c) There was a clearly identified management structure in the service. This included person in charge, deputy person in charge and early years educator.

(2) A total of 10 adults were attached to the service. All 10 files were open to inspection and were reviewed.

(a) Of the 20 references required, 18 validated references were available from past employers.

(b) Of the 20 references required, 2 validated references were available from an alternative source other than a past employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures has been obtained for all adults with direct access to children. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Police vetting was deemed to be required for 1 of the 10 adults working in the service and copies of the relevant documents were maintained on file for the adult.

(4) The nine adults working directly with children held relevant qualifications in Early Childhood Care and Education at least at Level 5 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

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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.

(8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-

(a) a registered provider of a pre-school service other than a child-minding service or a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that there are at least 2 adults on the premises at all times,

Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider ensured that there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children.

(2) On the day of inspection, the adult to child ratios were in adherence to the requirements of the regulation.

- The Sunshine room in the morning, there was 2 staff working with 12 children aged between 2 years and 9 months and 5 years, 1 of the 12 children was a school age child. In the afternoon, there was 2 staff working with 11 children aged between 2 years and 9 months and 5 years.

(8)

(a) The registered provider ensured that there were at least two adults on the premises at all times during the service operation hours. This was evident through the staff rota.

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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) Thirty-Six children were registered to attend the service. A copy of all 36 enrolment records was available on day of inspection and open for review. 12 records were inspected on the day, and 9 records had the detail required as listed from (a) to (i).

Non-Compliance Information

- (h) One record did not contain contact details of the child's registered medical practitioner.
- (i) Two of the sampled records did not contain written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (h) The registered provider gathered the relevant information of the child's medical practitioner and put the documentation on file.
- (i) Written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment was signed by parents/guardians in the event of an emergency, and these forms were put on file. A checklist was created to ensure all required children's information is gathered on registration going forward.

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Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence of the completed forms and checklist was forwarded to the Early Years Inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The noncompliance identified under Regulation 15 has been adequately addressed.

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:

- (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)
- (j) A review of the four medication administration forms that were available contained all required information.
 - (k) A review of 10 accident, injury or incident forms was completed on the day. Each form contained all required information.

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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

(1) (a)

Basic needs:

- Children had access to drinking water throughout the session.
- Children had access to tissues throughout the day and staff supported with cleaning children's noses as required.
- Children were encouraged in developing their independence skills such as putting on their own coat and wet gear and zipping it up. Staff were available to support children if required.
- Parents/guardians provided a mid-morning snack which consisted of sandwiches, fruit and yoghurts.
- The children were observed independently accessing the sanitary areas. The staff were available to provide assistance, if required.
- Children had access to additional clothing in the event it was required.

Supporting relationships:

- Staff spoke with children at their level, in a calm and relaxed tone. Staff used positive reinforcement language with the children.
- Children engaged in parallel play and were observed to check in on their friends and include them in play.
- Staff were observed meeting with parents at drop-off and collection, updating them on the activities of the day. The staff explained to the inspector that they communicate regularly with the parents, this occurs at collection and drop-off times.
- During mealtime staff sat at the table and engaged in social conversations with the children.
- Staff ensured that each child was given an opportunity to discuss their Easter weekend during circle time. Each child was encouraged to listen to their friends and everyone got a chance to share.

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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:

- The main entrance to the service was secured to prevent unauthorised access or unsupervised exit of a child.
- All low laying cables were safely secured out of reach of the children.
- The outdoor area was secured to ensure no unsupervised exit of a child.
- Cleaning materials were stored out of sight and reach of children.
- The openable windows were out of reach of children.
- All blind cords were secured and out of reach of children

Infection Control:

- Regular handwashing was observed by staff and children. Children's hands were washed prior to mealtimes and after outdoor play.
- Windows were opened for natural air ventilation.
- Staff cleaned the tables between activities and mealtimes.
- Perishable food was stored in the onsite refrigerator.

Administration of Medication:

- No administration of medication was observed on the day of inspection. Discussion with staff ensured staff were aware of the correct process for administering medication in the event it was required.
- All medication observed on the premises on the day of inspection, was in date and stored out of reach of children.

Fire Safety:

- Fire exits were clear of any obstruction and were clearly identified in the room.
- Fire equipment was available in the event they were required.

Non-Compliance Information

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General Safety:

1. The sand pit box in the outdoor area was observed to have one broken sharp edge piece. This posed a safety risk to the children.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The sandpit was fixed promptly by the service. The staff will ensure to conduct regular risk assessments of outdoor equipment going forward.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

The registered provider's statement was accepted by the Early Years Inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The noncompliance identified under Regulation 23 has been adequately addressed.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) no person other than-

(i) pre-school child attending the service,

(ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,

(iii) an employee, or

(iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and

(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.

Compliance Information

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- (1) The person in charge ensured each child was signed in and out of the service throughout the day.
- (3) (a) The registered provider ensured that any person other than a child, parent/guardian, employee or unpaid worker could not enter the premises without their entry being approved by an employee.
- (b) A daily record in writing was available on the premises of any such person.

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) The service had maintained a record on the following:
- (a) Each fire drill that had taken place in the service. The last recorded fire drill was 20 March 2026.
 - (b) A record of the number, type and maintenance checks of the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarm. The records on file demonstrated the last check on the fire extinguishers was 07 December 2025 and the smoke alarm was 16 December 2025.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire was displayed in the service.