

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2023MH005		
<b>Name of Service:</b>	Carlanstown Montessori & Afterschool		
<b>Address of Service:</b>	Normanstown, Carlanstown, Kells, Co. Meath		
<b>Eircode:</b>	A82 PCK4		
<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Geraldine McCabe		
<b>Service type:</b>	Part Time, Sessional		
<b>Date(s) of Inspection:</b>	26/09/2025		
<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	12	PM 7
<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Meath Child & Parent Support Hub, Commons Road, Navan, Co. Meath		
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	AM Cunningham		
<b>Title:</b>	Early Years Inspector		
<b>Authority to Inspect</b>			
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).			
<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not Applicable		

### Description of service

The service is based adjacent to the registered providers own home in a separate building. Two rooms are in operation a room downstairs called the Montessori room, and a room upstairs called the Preschool Room. A sessional service operates from 9.30am to 12.30pm each day with the option of parttime hours available from until 2pm. A school aged service is also operating from the service in the morning before school and in the afternoon.

### Staffing

There are five staff members (one staff member providing AIM support) employed in the service which includes the registered provider. On the day of inspection four staff members were present with 12 preschool children. The registered provider was not present on the day.

### 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 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*

*(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.*

*(6A) Paragraph (4) shall not apply to an employee of a registered provider where - (a) the registered provider receives funding for the employment of the employee pursuant to a scheme funded by the Minister and known as the Access and Inclusion Model, and (b) the employment of the employee is for the purpose of providing support, pursuant to the scheme referred to in subparagraph (a), for a child attending the service to enable the child to participate in the programme known as the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) funding Programme.”*

### Compliance Information

- (1) (a) The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.  
 (b) A designated person in charge was on the premises when the inspectors arrived unannounced to carry out the inspection.

Five staff files were reviewed which includes the registered provider.

- (2) (a)(b) Eight validated written references were available either from a past employer or from a reputable source.  
 (c) Garda vetting disclosure was available for all staff members. The service adhered to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.  
 (d) Police vetting was not required as no staff member had resided outside the jurisdiction for a period of more than 6 consecutive months as an adult.

(4) Five childcare staff members had a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 and above on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

(6A) One staff member was providing AIM support to a child.

### Non-Compliance Information

2(a)(b) A second reference was not available for two staff members.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### **Corrective & Preventive Action**

Second reference now on file for both staff.  
 References will be sought prior to commencing employment.

### Supporting documentation submitted

References submitted to the Inspectorate for both staff members.

### Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider has addressed the noncompliance in Regulation 9.

## 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) On the day of inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the service.

(2) The following adult to child ratios were observed on the day of inspection:

- **Preschool room:** Two staff members cared for 4 preschool children, ranging in age from 2 years 8 months to 3 years. Two children attended a sessional service and 2 children attended on a parttime basis.
- **Montessori room:** Two staff members cared for 8 preschool children, ranging in age from 3 years to 4 years. Three children attended a sessional service and 5 children attended on a parttime basis.

### Non-Compliance Information

(8) The registered provider did not ensure that there were always two adults on the premises when the service was in operation confirmed by staff members as they informed the inspector of their working hours on the day.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective and Preventive Action

The service no longer offers parttime care before 9am.

Update TUSLA information.

#### Summary Comment

The inspectorate accepts the assurances that parttime care is not offered to preschool children before 9am and therefore the requirement for two staff to be present at all times is no longer required. The registered provider has informed Tusla by means of the change in circumstances form.

### 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:*

*(i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*

#### Non-Compliance Information

(1)(i) A staff roster was not available in the service.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective and Preventive Action

Staff roster now displayed on wall

Staff roster will be always displayed.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

Staff roster submitted to the early year's inspectorate

#### Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider has been accepted by the inspectorate. This addresses the non-compliance in Regulation 16.

## 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) The following observations were made on how each child's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the daily life in the service:

#### Basic needs:

- Children were encouraged to become independent and self-caring, suitable to their age and stage of development which included using the toilet, hand washing, caring for their belongings and tidying away after activities and play.
- The staff members sat and chatted with the children at mealtimes, helping the children when required whilst encouraging conversation and extending interactions.

#### Supporting relationships around children:

- Transitions were handled smoothly as the children were given ample time to complete one activity before starting the next.
- The adults were observed promoting positive behaviour and supported children to find positive solutions when they experienced challenge in sharing play equipment and materials. The children showed confidence around the staff members and sought out staff members for reassurance, comfort and support.
- Staff were chatting to the children settling the children into the service and completing activities at their pace and preference.

### 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-

(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.

#### Compliance Information

(1)(b) The registered provider has stackable beds available for the children if they require a sleep. Children did not sleep on the day of inspection. Cosy areas are available within the care rooms for children.

### Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

#### Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.

#### Compliance Information

Equipment in the rooms were stored on low level shelving which was accessible to the children. Children chose activities to engage with and chose to play on the tables or on the floor depending on the equipment. An outdoor area was available to the back of the service which included a mud kitchen, tyres, goal posts, ride on toys and a sand box.

#### Non-Compliance Information

There was a slide sitting on the grass in the outdoor area that children were attempting to play with, however, the slide was not securely mounted into the ground. Staff stated they put it against the picnic bench and children slide down, this would not be safe practice.

#### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

##### Corrective and Preventive Action

The garden play has minimum of 3 staff members during preschool session, so the slide is well supervised for risky play.

#### Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider has not demonstrated that the slide has been appropriately anchored to the ground, this non-compliance remains outstanding.

### 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

Children attending the sessional service brought in their snacks from home. The children attending the parttime service take in a second snack from home. Children’s drink bottles are available in the room.

### 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 following safety measures were in place on the day of inspection:

- All cleaning agents were stored out of reach of the children.
- The main door to the service was secure to prevent a child from existing unsupervised or an unauthorised person gaining access.
- All play materials were placed on stable based shelving units. Play materials and equipment were observed to be safe and suitable for the developmental age of the pre-school children present in the service.

##### Infection Control:

The inspector viewed the following infection control measures undertaken in the service to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of the children.

- Foot-operated pedal waste bins were available in the service which facilitated the hygienic disposal of waste.
- The children’s packed lunches, supplied from home, were refrigerated on arrival to the service which reduced the risk of bacteria growth in perishable food items.

### Non-Compliance Information

#### General Safety:

1. Fire drills were not carried out on a monthly basis to ensure that staff and children were familiar with the procedure. The last fire drill was recorded to be carried out on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2025.
2. Barbed wire was exposed and accessible in the fencing in the outdoor area which is a safety risk to the children.
3. Part of the fencing in the outdoor area had fallen down, when staff were alerted to this a temporary measure of raising the fencing took place, however this was not sustainable in wind or adverse conditions.

#### Infection Control:

4. The nappy changing mat was torn and therefore difficult to clean effectively.
5. Water in the taps in the children's sanitary accommodation was cold and did not support effective hand washing. Thermostatically controlled warm water is required for hand washing.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective & Preventive Action

#### General Safety:

1. Fire drills lapsed during July/August due to low numbers and holidays.  
Going forward service will continue fire drills during summer months.
2. Barbed wire removed.  
Staff will check hedging after weeding and on a weekly basis.
3. Fence made more secure  
More thorough weekly checks carried out.

#### Infection Control:

4. Changing mat replaced.  
Staff will inform registered provider when needs replacing.
5. Thermostat is on timer to come on 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday, this is in full working order. There is an on/off switch. It must have been turned off by mistake.  
Staff advised to keep a good check on the switch. Check it is on as children use the facilities.

## Supporting documentation submitted

Copy of the fire drills.  
Photo of barbed wire removed.  
Photo of fence more secure.  
Receipt for changing mat.  
Photo of the notice displayed for the staff to remember to check the water temperature.

## Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider has addressed the non-compliances in Regulation 23.

## 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.*

### Compliance Information

(1) Records demonstrated that the date and time of attendance and departure in respect of each pre-school child is recorded on a daily basis.

## 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)(b) The first aid box available in the service was suitably equipped and stored in conspicuous locations on the premises and were available for the children in attendance, in the event of an emergency.

### Non-Compliance Information

(1) A staff member trained in First Aid Response (FAR) was not available to the children attending the pre-school service. A staff member with first aid general training was available.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### **Corrective and Preventive Action**

FAR completed by all 4 full time staff members.

Book FAR well in advance of expiring.

#### **Supporting documentation submitted**

Certificates of four staff members completed FAR training.

### Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider has addressed the non-compliance.

## 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) A record was maintained of all fire drills which had been completed in the service.
- (b) A record was kept of the number, type and maintenance of the fire extinguishers. The firefighting equipment were serviced on the 4<sup>th</sup> May 2025 and the smoke alarms were serviced on the 31<sup>st</sup> May 2025.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was conspicuously displayed in the premises.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

#### Non-Compliance Information

Insurance cover for the service is inadequate as it does not cover the operation of the pre-school service from 08:00 to 14.00 hours.

#### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

##### Corrective and Preventive Action

Correct insurance now in place to cover the part time care. Full daycare cover now in place to cover all care.  
Insurance certificate kept up to date

##### Supporting documentation submitted

Up to date insurance certificate submitted to inspectorate.

#### Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider has addressed the non-compliance in Regulation 28.