

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2024CC005
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Name of Service:	The Miles Montessori and Daycare
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Address of Service:	The Miles, New Road, Clonakilty, Co. Cork
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Eircode:	P85 H942
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Name of Registered Provider:	Sinead Brady
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Service type:	Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	07/11/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	17	PM	14
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate Administration Building St Mary's Health Campus Gurrabraher Cork
Inspection undertaken by:	D Prendergast & R Phillips
Title:	Early Years Inspectors

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	N/A
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Description of service

The Miles Montessori and Day Care was recently registered as a part time service, that caters for children aged two to six years. This includes children attending the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme, which is provided from 9.00am to 12.00pm and from 12.30pm to 3.30pm. Morning part time hours are between 9.00am and 2.00pm and in the afternoon, children can attend part time hours from 12.30pm to 5.30pm.

There is one operational care room within the single storey, purpose built premises, which is located in a residential area of Clonakilty in Co. Cork. Adjoining children's and staff sanitary facilities are available, along with an office and a store room. At the rear of the building, the children have access to an enclosed outdoor play space.

Staffing

The four adults employed at the early years service are all involved in the direct care of the children. This includes the registered provider. Each of the four adults has achieved a major award in Early Childhood Care and 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 announced 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 inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, deputy, 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 person in charge of operating the service was the registered provider. A named deputy had also been appointed, to deputise in the event of her absence. Written information to this effect was visible in the care room.
- (b) The registered provider was present to facilitate the duration of the announced inspection. Review of the staff roster indicated that either the registered provider or the deputy were on site during operational hours.
- (2) Recruitment records in respect of the four adults employed at the early years service were assessed and the following was noted:
- (a) Of the eight required written and validated references, five had been obtained from past employers.
- (b) Three of the required written and validated references on file were from sources other than previous employers.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all four staff. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d) Not applicable. Review of the curricula vitae indicated that police vetting was not required.
- (4) Copies of completed certificates in Early Childhood Care and Education, as listed on the National Framework of Qualifications were available on file in respect of the four adults.

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) At all times during the period of inspection, it was observed that there was an adequate number of adults working directly with the children in attendance.
- (2) The requirements of the regulation in relation to the minimum ratio of adults to children, were exceeded. During the morning ECCE service, there were 4 adults working directly with 17 children, who were aged 2 to 4 ½ years. In the afternoon, a total of 14 children, aged 2 to 4 years were present and there were 4 adults on duty.
- (8)
- (a) The service was operated with at least two adults present at all times. This was observed in practice and demonstrated through review of the staff roster.

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:

(h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;

(j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;

Compliance Information

(1)

(h) A ten week sample of attendance records was reviewed and was found to meet the requirements.

(j) Signed parental consent was in place for staff to facilitate the administration of medication to a child.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)

(j) The signature of a second staff member, as a witness to the administration of medication, was not included on any of the 10 administration of medication records that were sampled. This was inconsistent with the policy on Administration of Medication, which outlined that the medication record *is signed by both staff members administering the medication*. The time of administration was also omitted.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The written response outlined that a new record of administration of medication, which includes provision for a signature and the signature of a witness, has been created and printed. This is now used daily. The registered provider will ensure that the record of administration of medication is in line with the policy and that it includes the two signatures.

Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of the updated administration of medication template, which includes provision to document the time of administration and staff signatures.

Summary Comment

The response and evidence submitted by the registered provider were assessed and accepted in meeting the regulatory requirements.

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:

- During the morning sessional service, a snack was accommodated at 10.30am. This was followed by a second snack at 1.00pm, for the children who remained at the setting for part time care.
- Staff members sat with and chatted to the children, as they ate. This helped to create an unhurried environment, while the children enjoyed their food. Assistance with opening food packaging and lunch boxes was ensured by the adults and suitable crockery and cutlery was also supplied.
- One of the staff members was observed to check that each of the children had water to drink at snack time and the deputy subsequently stated that drinking water was offered to the children during the day.
- The inspector was advised that children who required nappy changing were attended to at regular intervals and as the need arose. Corresponding written checks were recorded on the notice board in the care room.
- Toilet trained children were encouraged and supported to utilise the adjoining sanitary facilities independently, with appropriate supervision provided, as deemed necessary. During free play, one of the adults was also observed to gently remind children to use the toilet.
- Any child who wished to rest or relax could avail of the spacious cosy corner, as needed. A supply of stackable beds and linen were held in storage, for any child who may require sleep while in attendance.
- The generously sized care room facilitated the free movement of children, as they initiated their chosen activities and explored materials. A period of active play in the adjacent outdoor play environment, was also accommodated.

Supporting relationships around children:

- The adults demonstrated sensitivity, warmth and positive regard for the children in their care, as was evidenced through the use of positive language, reassurance and prompt assistance with self-care tasks.

- The registered provider advised that a messaging application, face to face discussion, phone calls and email were used to share information with parents. Examples of the messages communicated to parents were viewed by the inspector and were noted to include updates on children’s progress and photographs of recent activities.
- Staff members also incorporated the use of a messaging application, to share new information with one another, as well as ideas for upcoming activities. During conversation, the inspectors were informed that some informal staff meetings had taken place since the service began operating and that going forward, the registered provider planned to organise more formal meetings, on a monthly basis.

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

- Age and stage appropriate furniture, in the form of child sized tables and chairs, were available to and utilised by the children.
- Examples of the play resources on offer included soft toys, dolls, hand held vehicles, connectable shapes, number based materials, books, jigsaws and a play kitchen with an adjacent supply of utensils and play food.
- Most of the equipment and toys were located on display units, which comprised both low-level and high-level shelves. The inspectors were advised that the items displayed on the lower shelves were rotated frequently, in order to ensure that the children could access a variety of play resources.
- Outdoors, the children were observed using ride on toys, footballs and hula hoops, while playing in the concrete surface area. The wider, grass covered play space included a wooden school bus, a climbing frame and a sand tray.
- All examined equipment and materials were found to be in good working order.

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

- A Healthy Eating policy was in place at the setting.
- Snacks were supplied by the children’s parents or guardians. The range of foods available for the mid-morning meal break included sandwiches, crackers, cold meats, yogurts and a variety of fruit, with water to drink.
- The registered provider advised the inspectors that none of the children had any specific dietary requirements or food allergies.
- During conversation, it was confirmed that if any of the children became hungry outside of designated mealtimes, they could choose a snack from their lunchbox.

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:

- A key lock mechanism on the exterior of the main entrance door, reduced the risk of unauthorised access to the service. The door leading from the care room to the entrance lobby was fitted with a high-level door handle, which minimised the risk of a child exiting, while unsupervised.
- A secure enclosure, which combined walls, fencing and gates was provided in the outdoor play area.
- It was noted that the door to the store room was maintained secure when not in use, with the key stored on a high-level wall hook.
- There were no electrical cables or flexes within the children’s reach.
- Water temperatures at the children’s wash hand basins were maintained below 43°C, which reduced the risk of scalding. Recorded temperatures ranged from 37.8°C to 38.4°C.
- Cleaning agents were stored at a height that was inaccessible by children.

- Firefighting equipment was safely wall mounted.

Infection Control:

- Handwashing practice was supported through the availability of warm running water, liquid soap, electric hand dryers and foot pedal operated bins, at each of the wash hand basins.
- It was observed that the children washed their hands after outdoor play, before beginning the mid-morning snack. Staff were also noted to wash their hands before snack time.
- Perishable foods such as yogurts and meat, were refrigerated, which reduced the risk of food spoilage.
- Single use aprons and gloves were provided for nappy changing procedures.
- Labelled drawer storage was incorporated into the nappy changing unit, for the children's toiletries.
- The care room, adjoining sanitary facilities and the office appeared clean and well maintained. Cleaning records were available for review and were noted to have been completed to date.

Administration of Medication:

- During the inspection, medication was not observed to be administered.

Safe Sleep:

- None of the children were observed to sleep at the time of inspection.

Fire Safety:

- Fire exit doors were clear and unobstructed.

Outing:

- Not applicable, as an outing was not conducted.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. An unsecured drawer in the care room contained three small plastic bags of nails, which posed a risk of injury to a child.

Administration of Medication:

2. The expiry date had passed on one of the medications that were held in respect of a child. This posed a risk that expired medication, which may be unsafe to use, could be administered to a child. It was also at variance with the service's policy on Administration of Medication, which stated that *medication provided to the service must always be in date.*

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The written reply stated that the small bags of nails have been removed from the drawer. Going forward, the drawers will be checked to ensure that there are no harmful items inside.

Administration of Medication:

2. The medication in question has been removed. As a preventive measure, medications dates will be checked weekly.

Supporting documentation submitted

The statements from the registered provider are accepted as evidence.

Summary Comment

Based on the statements from the registered provider, regulatory compliance is determined to have been met.