

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2025CC004
--------------------------	-------------

<b>Name of Service:</b>	Circle Time Montessori Ltd
-------------------------	----------------------------

<b>Address of Service:</b>	Ballynoe National School, Kilphillibeen, Ballynoe, Co Cork.
----------------------------	---

<b>Eircode:</b>	P51 YD60
-----------------	----------

<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Dawn Moore
-------------------------------------	------------

<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional
----------------------	-----------

<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	22/10/2025
----------------------------	------------

<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	16	PM	N/A
-----------------------------------	----	----	----	-----

<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate, Administration Building, St Mary's Health Campus, Gurrabraher, Cork T23 X440.
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	D Prendergast
<b>Title:</b>	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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	N/A
---------------------------------	-----

### Description of service

Circle Time Montessori Ltd was recently registered as a sessional service, that caters for children aged 2 to 6 years. The setting participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme, with daily hours of operation from 9.05am to 12.05pm. The registered provider is a multiple service provider.

The early years service is provided from a room within Ballynoe National School, with adjoining children's sanitary facilities available. The children have access to a designated outdoor play space.

### Staffing

At present, there are four adults attached to the service, including one adult employed under the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) support scheme. The registered provider is not service based, but is available to provide cover, as needed. All four adults hold major awards 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 inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, 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,*

*(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) A designated person in charge and a deputy were identified in writing.
- (b) The registered provider, person in charge and deputy were on duty at the setting when the inspection commenced and remained present for its duration. Review of the staff attendance records demonstrated that a person in charge was consistently available at the setting, during the hours of operation.
- (c) Information regarding the service's management structure was documented and clearly set out the names and roles of each staff member attached to the service.
- (2) Recruitment records in respect of the four adults attached to the setting were reviewed and the following information was obtained:
- (a) Eight written and validated references were required in total. Seven of these were from past employers.
- (b) One further reference had been provided by a source other than a previous employer.
- (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) Employment history records demonstrated that police vetting from other jurisdictions was required for two of the adults and the relevant documentation was in place.
- (4) The four adults had each attained a recognised qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education and copies of the corresponding certificates were maintained on file.

### 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) An adequate number of adults were observed to be available to the children throughout the period of inspection.
- (3) The required adult child ratios were exceeded. Four adults, including the registered provider, were working with a total of 16 children, who were aged 2 ½ to 4 years.

### 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) Ten of the 19 available child registration records were sampled. Each of the records were assessed in relation to parts (a) to (i) above and were deemed to meet the 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 sessional service, snack time was accommodated at 11.00am. This part of the daily routine was conducted in a relaxed, social environment, as the children chatted freely with one another. Crockery was provided and the adults assisted the children to open food packaging and to peel fruit.
- Drinking water was accessible to the children both during and outside of designated mealtimes. The children's reusable water bottles were stored on low-level shelving.
- The children's independence was promoted throughout the day. For example, children were encouraged to put on their coats by themselves and to return materials when they had finished using them.
- Tissues were stored at the children's level, to assist with personal hygiene.
- The children wore protective aprons during an activity involving water and ice.
- Through supervision, prompts and reminders from the adults, the children were supported to use the adjoining sanitary facilities independently.
- Any child who wished to rest or relax could avail of the cosy corner, as needed. The soft floor mat, cushions and books available in this area created an inviting space for children.
- Within the indoor environment, the children were afforded ample space to move freely, as they worked with various materials and participated in routine tasks. Time outdoors was also accommodated during the sessional service.

## Supporting relationships:

- A notably engaging atmosphere was evident in the care room during work time, as the children initiated self-directed exploration and participated in adult guided, table top activities.
- Staff were observed to support positive interactions among the children. For example, the adults encouraged the children to ask each other for turns with the materials and to verbally express their perspectives.
- The registered provider advised the inspector that a key worker system was in place at the setting. The role of each key worker included documenting child development observations, linking in with the children's parents and noting children's interests, with a view to informing the emergent curriculum.
- A messaging application was predominantly used to share information with parents, along with informal daily discussion at arrival and collection times, phone calls and annual parent teacher meetings. The children's learning stories were also shared with parents.
- The inspector was informed that regular communication between staff was ensured through daily planning meetings and reflective practice, as well as more formal monthly meetings. Minutes from the two monthly meetings held to date were presented for review and were well-documented, covering topics such as curriculum updates, professional development, health and safety and parental engagement. Staff appraisals and one to one meetings were also planned as part of the school year.

## 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

- The inspector was advised that the children's parents or guardians, who supplied the food for their daily snack breaks, had been provided with information in relation to the service's healthy eating policy.
- At the time of inspection, examples of the children's snacks included sandwiches, wraps, crackers, cold meats and a selection of fruit, such as chopped grapes, bananas and apples. Water was provided as a drink.

- The registered provider confirmed that, should a child express hunger outside of the routine mealtimes, they would be facilitated to have a snack from their lunchbox.
- It was reported that none of the children had any specific dietary requirements or allergies.

### 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:

- Upon the inspector's arrival, the entrance door was secured from the exterior, which minimised the risk of unauthorised access to the care room. The door sensor alarm fitted on the interior of the door was found to be engaged and functioning. This reduced the risk of a child exiting unsupervised.
- In the designated outdoor play area, fencing and a gate were in place to create a secure enclosure.
- Blind cords were securely anchored through the use of suitable tension devices.
- All electrical flexes were inaccessible to children.
- Safe storage was provided for cleaning agents and staff belongings.
- Wall mounted storage was in place for firefighting equipment and display screens.

##### Infection control:

- Effective handwashing was promoted through the provision of warm running water, liquid soap, paper towel dispensers and foot pedal operated bins, at the children's wash hand basins. The children were noted to wash their hands following outdoor play and before the mid-morning snack.
- Perishable snacks were refrigerated prior to the children's meal break.
- Individually allocated wall hooks were in use to store the children's coats.
- The care room and adjoining sanitary facilities appeared clean and well maintained. Up to date cleaning records were also displayed.

##### Administration of medication:

- The temperature reducing medication held on site was suitably stored and was in date.

##### Fire safety:

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report Pre School

- The designated emergency exit door was clear and unobstructed.