

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

waTUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DR084
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Name of Service:	Daisy Chain Montessori & Childcare
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Address of Service:	15 The Rectory, Stepside, Dublin 18.
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Eircode:	D18 HH64
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Name of Registered Provider:	Gemma Rave, Lucy Madigan
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Dates of Inspection:	27/07/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	27	PM	27
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla-Child and Family Agency, Loughlinstown Health Centre, Loughlinstown, County Dublin
Inspection undertaken by:	Olivia Quill
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

Daisy Chain Montessori is registered to provide full day, part-time and sessional care to children aged 0 to 6 years and is one of four services operated by the registered providers. The service operates from three rooms in a purposely adapted domestic building. There are two rooms on the ground floor; the Wobbler room catering for children aged 1 year and the Toddler room catering for children aged 2-3 years of age. The Montessori room was located on the first floor and caters for children aged 3-4 years. A separate sleep room and sanitary accommodation is provided together with an outdoor area which is located at the rear of the building. The service opens from 7:30am to 6:30pm Monday to Friday.

Staffing

In total ten staff are employed in the service. On the day of inspection nine staff were present including the manager, deputy manager, six childcare staff and a domestic worker. The area manager arrived after the inspection commenced and remained in the service and attended the feedback meeting. The registered providers do not work in the service.

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.

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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 person in charge, area manager, 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.*

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(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(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 who was able to deputise.
- (b) The designated person in charge was on the premises at all times during the inspection.
- (2) Following a discussion with the person in charge and review of the staff roster and service file, it was confirmed that five adults commenced employment in the service since Regulation 9 was last inspected on 20 June 2024. Documentation required under Regulation 9 (2), (3), (4) was reviewed in respect of the adults as detailed below. In addition, Garda vetting disclosures for five staff members whose vetting required renewal were reviewed as part of the inspection.
- (a) Ten written validated references provided were from a past employer.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for six adults including the area manager who was present. The service did adhere to the re-vetting timeframes for five staff as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d) International police vetting was available for three adults who had lived outside Ireland for a period exceeding six months as an adult.
- (3) Documentation reviewed evidenced that the procedures specified in paragraph (2) had been carried out prior to the adult's commencing employment in the service.
- (4) Documentation was available to show three staff members employed to work directly with children attending the service held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications. The qualification for one staff member, which did not meet these criteria, had been assessed by the Minister for the Department of Children, Disability and Equality (DCDE) and a letter of qualification recognition was available. One staff member was employed in a domestic role and therefore, was not required to hold a relevant childcare qualification.

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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) An adequate number of adults were working directly with the children at all times during the inspection.

(2) The minimum ratio of adults to children for full day care services was adhered to at all times during the inspection. There were twenty seven children attending the service being supervised by six adults on the day of inspection. The person in charge, deputy manager and area manager were available to provide additional support to staff as required.

(8)(a) The staff roster provided to the inspector by the person in charge showed that a minimum of two staff members were on the premises at all times during the operational hours of the service.

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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-

(b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.

Compliance Information

(1)(b)

Staff reported that parents provide the morning and afternoon snacks, while the main meal is supplied by an external catering company and reheated on site daily by staff.

Staff were observed supporting children appropriately during mealtimes. At lunchtime, children were served a hot meal consisting of meatballs and rice. Suitable cutlery was provided, enabling children to feed themselves independently while being appropriately supervised. Drinking water was freely available to children throughout the day, both indoors and outdoors.

Children in the Toddler and Montessori rooms were observed requesting additional helpings, which were readily provided by staff. Mealtimes were calm and relaxed, with children given sufficient time to enjoy their food without being rushed.

Transitions throughout the day, including from play to mealtime and from mealtime to sleep time, were planned and managed effectively. Children were given advance notice of transitions, and staff used songs and stories to engage children while they waited for meals to be served. Children appeared relaxed and familiar with the daily routine. For example, children independently removed their shoes before rest time.

Staff consistently communicated with children in warm, gentle, and respectful tones and responded promptly to their individual care needs. Appropriate hygiene practices were observed. Children washed their hands before meals, and staff ensured that younger children received assistance with cleaning their hands and faces after eating. Staff were also observed attending sensitively to children's personal care needs, including assisting younger children with wiping their noses.

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Care plans were available for children with identified care needs. Staff demonstrated a clear knowledge and understanding of these plans and described how they implemented them in practice.

During sleep time, staff remained in the care rooms, providing reassurance and comfort to children as required. The sleep environment was made conducive to rest, with blinds drawn and soft music played to promote a calm atmosphere.

Parents were observed entering the service and accompanying their children to their designated rooms. Positive interactions between staff and parents were observed. Staff reported that an electronic communication application is used to share information with parents, including details of children's meals, sleep routines, nappy changes, and daily activities.

All children had opportunities to access the outdoor play area during the inspection. A range of age-appropriate play materials were available, along with child-sized seating to allow children to rest or take a break from activities as needed.

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 entrance door to the service was secured to prevent unauthorised access and to prevent children exiting unsupervised. A camera intercom system was in place on the main door to the service.
- Cleaning products and hazardous materials were stored securely out of reach of the children.
- The kitchen and storage areas were inaccessible to children. Childproof locks were in place on low level cupboards.
- Fire safe window restrictors were provided on the windows on the first floor.
- Cord blinds were secured safely.

Infection Control:

- Liquid soap, warm water and paper towels were available to facilitate hand washing. Children were supported to wash their hands after outdoor play, using the toilet and before meals.

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- Suitable pedal operated bins were provided for the disposal of waste.
- Nappy changing practice observed was completed as per the nappy changing policy.
- A system was in place to sterilise soothers and staff were familiar with the procedure. Soothers were stored in individual labelled containers.

Administration of Medication:

- Staff demonstrated an understanding of the procedures to administer medication safely if needed including obtaining written parent /guardian consent.
- Records were available of medicines given. These had been signed by the person who gave the medicine, a witnessing staff member and the child's parent /guardian.

Safe Sleep:

- Staff were observed to carry out sleep checks on sleeping children every ten minutes.
- A sleep plans and risk assessment was provided for a child under 2 years who slept on a floor bed.
- The temperature of the cot room and other areas where young children were sleeping was maintained within the recommended range.

Fire Safety:

- The fire exits and fire assembly point were clearly marked and unobstructed.

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) Evidence was provided to confirm three staff who were present on inspection and employed to work in the service have current certification in First Aid Responder (FAR) training.

(2)(a), (b) Suitably equipped first aid boxes were available in each care room in the service. They are clearly identifiable and readily accessible.

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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) The monthly record of fire drills was available. The last fire drill was completed on 24 June 2026.
 - (b) The number type and maintenance record for fire fighting equipment and smoke alarms was available. The fire fighting equipment was serviced on the 03 July 2026 and the smoke alarm was serviced on the 16 of June 2026.
 - (4) A notice of the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire and the fire escape route was displayed in the main hall and each care room.