

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC174
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Name of Service:	Happy Days Preschool
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Address of Service:	24 Patrick's Hill, Cork, Co Cork
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Eircode:	T23 EF43
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Name of Registered Provider:	Katie McNamara
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	19/03/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	28	PM	25
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, 13 Mallow Square, Mallow, Co Cork, P51 DD5Y
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Inspection undertaken by:	N O Donoghue and D Prendergast
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Title:	Early Years Inspectors
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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

Happy Days Preschool is a privately owned full day care service. This service is registered to cater for children from 2 to 6 years and to children attending the Early Childhood Care and Education scheme (ECCE). The service operates the ECCE scheme 38 weeks in the year. The service operates from 08:00 to 15:00, each day Monday to Friday. The service is based on the lower ground floor of an old multistorey building located within walking distance of Cork city centre. There are three care rooms, two of these cater for children aged 2 to 6 years and the third room is an extra care room for children to access. There is an enclosed secure outdoor play area located beside the premise.

Staffing

There were four staff members working directly with the children, including the registered provider and one contractor involved with 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/ safety/ premises. 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, 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) 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 available in writing.
 - (b) The registered provider was present to facilitate the duration of the unannounced inspection. Review of the staff roster indicated that the registered provider was consistently on site during operational hours.
 - (c) The names, roles and photographs of each staff member were displayed in the main entrance area of the childcare facility.
- (2) Recruitment records in respect of the four adults employed at the early years service were assessed, along with those of a contractor.
- (a) Of the 10 required written and validated references, 8 had been obtained from past employers.
 - (b) Two of the required written and validated references on file were from sources other than past employers.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all five adults. However, the service did not adhere to the re- vetting timeframes outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. Please refer to the information outlined under Regulation 23 of this report.
 - (d) Police vetting was deemed to be required for two of the adults and copies of the relevant documents were maintained on file.
- (4) Copies of completed qualifications in Early Childhood Care and Education, as listed on the National Framework of Qualifications, were available in respect of two of the adults. Awards recognised by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) were held by two additional staff members. A qualification was not required in respect of the contractor.

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.*
- (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) There was an adequate number of adults working directly with the children at all times.
- (3) At the time of inspection, the adult to child ratios were in adherence to the requirements of the regulation. The rooms were in operation as follows:
- In the toy room, there was 1 staff member working with 6 children aged between 3 to 5 years, all attending full day care.
 - In the classroom, there were 3 staff working with 22 children aged between 3 to 6 years, 14 attending on a sessional basis and 8 children attending full day care.
- (8) (a) The register provider ensured that there were at least two adults on the premises at all times during service hours. This was evident through the staff rota.

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

From the 44 child records available, a sample of 10 were reviewed and were deemed satisfactory in meeting the requirements from (a) to (i).

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 was identified on the day of inspection through direct observation, review of documents and discussions with the staff:

Basic Needs:

- Children had sufficient space to move about freely between the two playrooms and outdoors. Transitions were smooth as possible when children moved from room to room or the outdoor area.
- Children had access to a variety of equipment and play materials in the classroom including natural materials such as acorns and seashells, puzzles, building blocks, cars and dolls.
- The children in the classroom had access to a rest area which consisted of a sofa, cushions and rocking chairs. Children were observed freely moving to and from this area throughout the day, relaxing and reading books. Children had the option to opt out of planned activities by accessing the rest area.
- In the toy room, children had access to a rest area which consisted of a low laying bed, mattress, blanket and cushions. Children were able to go to this area when they required it.
- Both rooms had a supply of tissues available to the children. Children would clean their own noses and staff supported children when required.
- Children's toileting and hygiene needs were attended to regularly and staff assisted children when they need it.
- Children's handwashing was supported and supervised by staff. This was observed prior to meals, after playing outside and after toileting.
- Mealtimes were observed as relaxed and calm, staff sat with children and supported children with feeding when required.

Programme of activities:

- During free play, the children were observed to engage in a range of activities, which included construction, imaginary play and magnet play. A language rich environment was also evident, with conversation encouraged throughout the daily routine.
- Staff member advised inspector that short-term, medium-term and long-term plans are stored on a mobile application used by the service. This application is accessible by parents and are updated regularly on the child's activities.
- Children's interests were documented by staff through circle time and discussed through free play. The week's theme consisted of the life cycle of a frog. The group activities consisted of drawing tadpoles and circle time activities.
- Images of individual children's cultures were displayed throughout the building with family photos and posters created by children. Through discussion with staff, they advised they have culture days where food and games from each child's nationality is celebrated.
- Children's fine motor skill development was observed in the classroom through table top activities, these included painting, peg boards, threading, clothes peg games and placing elastic bottles on different size bottles.
- Children's gross motor skill development was seen through circle time with exercise such as jumping and stretching.

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

- Parents/guardians provided the snack to children attending on a sessional basis. Children attending full day care, received snacks provided by the service. This consisted of rice cakes, freshly cut cucumber, carrots and cheese.
- A hot meal was provided by an external catering company and reheated on site, the hot meal served on the day was rice and vegetable curry. Additional servings were available when children required it.
- Water and milk were provided by the service to the children.

- Additional snacks were available on site and given to children when they wanted. There was also a variety of fruit available.
- The service displayed a menu plan, and this was also available to parents/guardians through the mobile application.
- Children were encouraged to feed themselves, and the textures of the meals were observed to be appropriate of the age/stage of development of the children observed in the care rooms.

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 door was adequately secured which prevented unauthorised access by an unauthorised person or unsupervised exit by a child.
- The play materials, resources and equipment were in good, well-maintained condition.
- The cleaning products observed securely observed out of reach of children.
- The emergency exit/fire doors were observed to be unobstructed.
- The storage room was rendered inaccessible to the children.
- Flexes and cables were stored out of reach of the children.
- Hot water for hand washing was heated by electric water heaters that were thermostatically controlled not to exceed 43°C.

Infection Control:

- Hand washing by the children took place under the supervision of the adults prior to mealtimes and after using the toilet.
- The cleaning template schedules were available for inspection and demonstrated the service had daily specific cleaning records.
- The playrooms were adequately ventilated by open windows.
- A supply of liquid soap, disposable tissues and foot operated bins were available in the sanitary facilities.

- The children's snacks which contained perishable food was stored in a refrigerator.

Administration of Medication:

- On the day of inspection, no administration of medication was observed.
- Staff advised the inspector, that no children were in receipt of medication.
- Anti-febrile medication is stored on site, out of reach of children and accessible to staff in the event a child requires it.

Safe Sleep:

- No children were observed sleeping on day of inspection.

Fire Safety:

- All fire doors were unobstructed.
- Fire safety procedures were displayed throughout the service.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

The Garda vetting disclosure available for one of the adults was not dated within the previous three years, in adherence to the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

The registered provider stated that Garda vetting has been applied for, in respect of the adult attached to the service. Going forward, renewal of Garda vetting will be monitored by the manager.

Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of the updated Garda vetting was forwarded.

Summary Comment

All correspondence was examined. The non-compliance has been rectified and the requirement has been met.

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) Review of the staff roster demonstrated that an adult with current First Aid Response (FAR) training was available to the children at all times, while the service was in operation.
- (2)
- (a) A first aid box was accessible to adults. This was stored at a high-level in the kitchen.
 - (b) The first aid supplies were consistently available during the hours of operation.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

- A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-*
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*
 - (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

Compliance Information

- (d) The register provider ensured that the service was regularly cleaned and maintained. This was evident through historic review of cleaning records.
- (e) The service adequate and suitable sanitary facilities available for the number of children attending.