

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015CC175
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Happy Days Montessori Pre-School
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Ardnagaoithe, Bantry, Co. Cork
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<b>Eircode:</b>	P75 Y009
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Mary Hennessy
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<b>Service type:</b>	Part Time, Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	02/12/2025
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	34	PM	14
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Department, Child & Family Agency, Hospital Grounds, Coolnagarrane, Skibbereen, Co Cork P81 PD78
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	M. O Reilly
<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
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### Description of service

Happy Days Montessori is an established part time and sessional early years service that first opened in 1981. It is registered to accommodate a maximum of 44 children aged from 2 to 6 years. At time of inspection the service was catering for children from 2 years 6 months to 6 years including the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme. The service is registered to operate from 08:45 to 14:00 hours and from 12:30 to 17:30 hours. At time of inspection the service was operating from 08:45 to 14:00hours each day Monday to Friday.

The service is situated within a purpose-built building with interconnecting rooms in the registered providers private residence located in the outskirts of Bantry town in Co Cork.

Facilities include 4 interlinked playrooms with adequate adults and children’s toilets and nappy changing accommodation. The children have access to a secured courtyard to the rear of the property and a large front garden, named Everland.

### Staffing

There were eight persons associated with the service. Seven staff were employed to work directly with the early years children, including the named registered provider/the person in charge in the service. The staff who work directly with the early years children all hold a recognised qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education. In addition, there was one transition year student on work placement in the service, not present in the service on day of inspection.

### 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 registered provider and 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.*

### Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) There was a person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.
  - (b) The deputy was present when the inspector arrived on the premises and the person in charge arrived later and both remained for the duration of the inspection.
- (2)
- The recruitment records in relation to 8 persons associated with the service were reviewed; 7 adults were employed at the service and 1 student on placement were the subject of the inspection.
- (a) Of the 16 required references, 9 references were from previous employers with records of validation on file.
  - (b) Of the remaining references, 7 references were from another source other than a previous employer with the required records of validation on file.
  - (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for each of the 7 adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
  - (d) Police vetting records were available for 2 adults who had resided outside of the jurisdiction for a period longer than 6 consecutive months while over the age of 18 years.
- (4) The 7 staff attached to the service had achieved major awards in Early Childhood Care and Education with copies of the relevant qualifications 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.*

*(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.*

#### Compliance Information

(1) A sufficient number of adults were observed to work directly with the children who attended the service.

(2) At the time of inspection, the adult to child ratios were in adherence to the requirements of regulation.

There were 19 children with 3 adults in attendance in the younger year adjoining rooms in the morning. There were 20 children in attendance in the morning with three adults present in the adjoining playrooms for the older children.

In the afternoon the children came together there were 14 children in total with 5 adults in attendance.

The adult child ratio was correct and from the staff roster it was noted there was always two adults in attendance in the service while the service was in operation.

### 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

##### Basic needs:

- On inspection, a relaxed and calm environment was provided for the children, and it was observed that the adults spoke kindly and offered encouragement to each child. Children presented as relaxed, happy, and familiar with their environment.
- Staff were observed to demonstrate patience and kindness in their interactions with the children, as was noted when the children's efforts were readily acknowledged.

- Children were delegated to be helpers in turn on a daily basis to carry out tasks such as laying the table, fetching and distributing lunches from the fridge and providing cutlery.
- Lunchtime was a sociable and unhurried and staff members sat with the children and were actively assisting with opening yogurt cartons and peeling fruits. The children had access to their labelled water bottles in the playrooms.
- The children were largely independent using the toilet and were supported appropriately by the adults to use the toilet when required.
- The children were assisted to address appropriately in waterproof overalls and protective boots for outdoor play. Children had sufficient space to move about freely indoors and outdoors.
- Parents were communicated with via a digital application to inform of service notices. One-to-one communication with parents was utilised via the application, for example photographs of their child's activities.

### PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

- Happy Days Montessori Pre-School operated 4 inter-linked playrooms which the supervised children rotate around so that they capitalise on each individual setting. The rooms were spacious, child-friendly, bright, and well-presented.
- The playrooms were furnished with a sufficient number of child sized tables and chairs that were clean and well maintained.
- The rooms were laid out in a manner to encourage thematic play and provide a wide range of Montessori and play experiences. Low-lying open display units displayed many resources which were easily accessible to the children, for example, tabletop, fine motor skill materials such as jigsaws and matching games. The layout of the rooms promoted the independent access to all the materials to foster children's autonomy and freedom of choice.
- Construction play with blocks and bricks were observed being enjoyed adjacent to a wall of arts and crafts depicting Africa to inspire the children's imagination.
- There was generous clear floor space in each of the play areas to allow each child to enjoy free play, socialisation and investigation of their environment in a closely supervised manner.
- The indoor environment of the playroom was laid out in defined interest areas, including home, construction area, painting, crafts area and tabletop activities area.
- Quiet corners were in place to facilitate quiet time. A supply of soft padded mats and cushions were available for the children to sit and relax. The quiet areas were beside the book area where books were

displayed at child height. Staff encouraged the children to pick a book of choice and later at storybook time a staff member was observed reading a story to the children.

- Both the courtyard to the rear of the premises and the front garden, namely Everland were generously equipped with a wide range of activities for the children’s learning and entertainment.
- The courtyard provided a hard surface for the riding of bikes and gross motor skill equipment. A canopied area was available so that children could play and avail of fresh air in wetter weather.
- Everland provided a lawned and bark surface so that the wooden playhouses, see saws, balance boulders, slides and climbing frames could be enjoyed safely.
- Mature trees and shrubs were well maintained and provided the children with secret tunnels and hidey holes decorated with fairies, ladybirds, bugs and wide life animals. There were multi-sensory play experiences for example of the children’s planting. There was a large sand pit to provide messy play with spades, buckets and wheelbarrows.

### 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 service had a healthy eating policy in place and this was closely adhered to by parents and guardians as observed by the healthy, varied and nutritious lunches observed being eaten by the children. For example, sandwiches, wraps, rice cakes, chopped fruits and vegetables.
- There were generous supplies of cutlery and plates.
- It was observed that the children attending for the additional hour on a part time basis enjoyed an additional lunch when the sessional children had departed.
- The service offered a drink of milk or water with the mid-morning snack.

### 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:

- Happy Days Montessori was suitably secured so that a child could not leave the premises unsupervised.

- The main door which led to the playrooms was secured so that unauthorised was restricted.
- The staff members bags and belonging were stored out of reach of the children in the registered provider's home.
- Montessori and play materials and resources were found to be in a good state of repair with no pinch points or sharp edges.
- Cables and flexes were not accessible to the children.
- The emergency exit doors were unobstructed.
- All of the available cleaning agents were stored out of children's reach on day of inspection.

### Infection Control:

- Throughout the service, wash hand basins were equipped with warm running water, liquid soap and paper towel dispensers, for hygienic hand washing and drying. Handwashing by the children was observed before the two food breaks and after toileting and outdoor play.
- The children had access to four separate child sized toilets and four wash hand basins. There was a designated toilet for adult use in the registered providers home.
- Thermostatically controlled hot water registered at 29 degrees Celsius, liquid soap, toilet tissue and wall mounted paper dispensers for hand drying.
- Lidded, foot pedal operated bins were available for waste and disposal of single used papers towels throughout the service.
- A fridge was situated within the room for the safe storage of the children's perishable items of their lunches.

## 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) The registered provider did ensure that there were staff available at all times with appropriate first aid responder (FAR) training. The FAR certification on file indicated that two staff member held current up to date training and four staff members held current up to date paediatric first aid training.

(2)

(a) The first aid box was safely stored out of children's reach in the service. The first aid box was stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position in the playroom.

(b) The fully equipped first aid box was available at all times to adults if in the event that a child may require treatment.

### Part VI - Safety

#### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

### Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured the service was adequately insured, with insurance for 44 children attending until 27/03/2026. The records detailed the category of service covered which was part time and sessional, the name and address of the premises and details regarding public liability cover, fire, theft, buildings, and outings cover.