

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CN023
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Name of Service:	Happy Days Childcare Services Ltd
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Address of Service:	17 Fairgreen, Belturbet, Co. Cavan
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Eircode:	H14 DH56
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Name of Registered Provider:	David Coyle
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	02/07/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	18	PM	10
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Family Resource Centre, Common's Road, Navan, Co. Meath
Inspection undertaken by:	AM Cunningham & AM Coyle
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	Not Applicable
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Description of service

Happy Days Childcare Services Ltd is a community-based childcare facility located in a housing estate in Belturbet Co. Cavan. The childcare service provides full day care, part time and a sessional service to children aged from 1 year 6 months to 6 years and school aged. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme. The service operates from 08:00 -18:00 Monday to Friday. There are three pre-school rooms (Busy Bees Room, Sunshine Room, Butterflies Room) located in a two-storey building with one additional care room (Little Stars Room) and a sleep room located in a prefabricated building to the rear of the service. An outdoor play area is located to the front, rear, and side of the pre-school with on street parking is available to the front of the building.

Staffing

There are 18 adults employed, of which there is 1 manager, 2 persons in charge if the manager is not present, 9 child care staff members, 3 school aged childcare staff, 1 cook and 1 TUS staff member who assists in the kitchen whom is on statutory leave and 1 administration staff member. The registered provider is not centre based.

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 inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the manager, 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) and (b) The registered provider had identified a manager and a person in charge to deputise as required. The person in charge was present on arrival of the inspectors and the manager arrived shortly after the inspection began and remained throughout the period of inspection.

(2) The manager confirmed 18 staff members were employed in the service. These files were inspected.

(a)& (b) Thirty-six validated references were available.

(c) Garda Vetting was available in respect of the 18 staff members. However, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years for one staff member. Please refer to the information outlined under regulation 23 of this report.

(d) Police Vetting was available in respect of two adults who had lived outside the country for more than 6 months.

(4) Twelve staff members who provide direct care for pre-school children hold at least a major award in Early childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework

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) There was an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the service.

(2) The adult to child ratios were correct in the service when the inspectors arrived.

The following adult to child ratios were observed as follows:

- **Little Stars Room:** Two staff members cared for 4 pre-school children (aged between 2 years 11 months to 3 years 3 months), and 2 children also attended for induction into the service (aged 2 years and 2 years 4months) of which 4 children attended for full day care.
- **Sunshine Room:** Two adults cared for 5 pre-school children, (aged between 3 years 3 months to 3 years 10 months) all children attended for full day care.
- **Butterflies Room:** Two staff members cared for 7 pre-school children (aged between 3 years 11 months to 5 years), all children attended for full day care.
- **Busy Bees Room:** Closed.
- **Afterschool Room:** Two staff members cared for 7 school aged children.

(8) Two staff members were present, at all times in the service as required by Regulation 11 (8). Evidence noted from examination of the staff roster record and staff attendance records.

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,

Compliance Information

(1)(a) The following observations were made on how each child's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the daily life in the service:

Basic needs:

- Staff members were observed changing children's nappies regularly and in a timely manner with warm one-to-one interactions observed. The older children were encouraged to become independent and self-caring, suitable to their age and stage of development which included using the toilet, hand washing, caring for their belongings and tidying away after activities and play.
- Children were observed enjoying meaningful, sustained play with tabletop activities, art and crafts, play dough activities and free playing with lots of conversation and laughter observed. Staff supported children's learning with activities that were observed to be fun and creative.
- The staff members sat and chatted with the children at mealtimes, helping the children when required whilst encouraging conversation and extending interactions.
- The service embraces outdoor play and learning with all children observed enjoying outdoor play with their peers on the day of inspection.

Supporting relationships around children:

- The service showed a positive regard towards the families of the children and family links were nurtured in the service with family photographs displayed on "The Family Tree" in the care rooms. In the Sunshine room photograph albums were available which included photographs of both the staff members and children which the children were observed to enjoy looking at during the inspection.

- Two children were inducting into Little Stars Room for an hour and the second child for two hours on the day of inspection. When the children joined the group staff were very responsive to the children and introduced them to the children in the room and involved the children in the activities in a gentle and caring way.
- The service embraces outdoor play and learning with all children observed enjoying outdoor play with their peers on the day of inspection.
- A written record was kept in the Little Stars Room of nappy changes, sleep times, meals and issues pertaining to each child as occurred during the day and this information was passed on to parents or guardians when collecting their child at the end of the day.
- Children who required sleep slept on a stackable in the sleep room with a staff member present.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

(1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child 19 to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day, and

(3) A registered provider of a full day care service, a part-time day care service or a childminding service, other than such a service to which paragraph (2) applies, shall ensure that-

(a) a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the pre-school children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises, or

Compliance Information

(1)(b) Cosy areas consisting of suitable sized couch's, mats and cushions were available if a child needed to take a break from activities and rest. Children over 2 years were accommodated to sleep on stackable beds in the Little Stars room.

(3)(a) There were 2 outdoor spaces which were suitable and secure. The Sunshine room, Butterflies room, Busy Bees room and School aged children use the outdoor space to the front of the building enclosed by fencing with low impact covering surface. The Little Stars room use the enclosed space directly accessible from the care room. Which had a partially covered area and open area with low impact covering and a hard surface area.

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

The service was equipped with adequate and suitable furniture and play equipment and materials to meet the needs of the children as evidenced in the following examples:

- Throughout the care rooms the play materials and equipment were positioned at an accessible level for the children on open shelving which nurtured independence and facilitated choice.
- Each of the three care rooms in operation were laid out in defined interest areas and were well-resourced with equipment and play materials including real, wooden and sensory materials, art and crafts resources, well-resourced imaginary play areas including kitchens with a wide variety of accessorial materials to facilitate the children in extending their play, dress up materials, construction zones, farm area's along with a broad range of tabletop and small world materials.
- Staff members stated that the layout of the rooms was adapted with different play materials and equipment provided based on the children's particular interests, preferences and learning goals.
- A plentiful supply of books was provided in the care rooms and the children's language development was facilitated in each room through conversation, storytelling and singing.
- A variety of multi-sensory experiences were provided in the care rooms including sand trays, water trays, Play dough, paint and brushes and a plentiful supply of paper. In both the Sunshine and Butterfly room a wide range of the children's art was displayed.
- The spacious safety-surfaced outdoor play area to the front of the premises offered the children opportunities to engage in physical play with equipment provided including ride-on toys, a climbing frame, 2 static rockers along with a sand tray and a water tray. An outdoor area to the rear of the service was used predominantly by the children attending the Little Stars room both areas are directly accessible from the care room. One area was covered and can be used in all-weather types. Equipment in the outdoor areas included water play, train, blackboards, water play small climbing frame, wheelbarrow, sitting benches and water pipes. A storage box with extra equipment was also available with hula hoops and blocks. Artificial grass covered the areas.

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 weekly menu plan with a selection of meals ranging from meat and poultry with a variety of snacks. Morning snack was served at 10:00 and consisted of brown bread and banana pieces with water. For the children attending the service on a full day care basis the main meal of the day was served at 12 midday for the younger children and up to 12:30 for the older children which was chicken curry and rice. Cheese and ham wraps and fruit was served at 15:00. Water was the drink of choice with individual bottles/cups for the children 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 following safety measures were in place on the day of inspection:

- The main door to the service was secured and the outdoor spaces were enclosed and had secure gates. These security measures ensured that a child did not exit unsupervised and restricted unauthorised persons from gaining access to the service and outdoor space.
- An outdoor risk assessment was conducted on a daily basis.
- All cleaning agents were stored out of reach of the children.
- All furniture and display units had a stable base with no risk of toppling identified.

Infection Control:

The following infection control measures were observed:

- The hand washing policy were implemented in practice with appropriate hand washing for staff and children at all times for example after outdoor play, toileting and before mealtimes.
- The service cleaning records were up to date.

Safe Sleep

Safe sleep practices were observed in the service as demonstrated by the following examples:

- Temperature of the sleep room was maintained between 16° to 20° C while children were sleeping. A staff member remained in the room and 10 minutes observations were carried out and documented of the child's colour, position, and breathing.

Fire Safety:

The following fire safety measures were observed:

- The fire assembly point was located in the outdoor space to the front of the building.
- Fire drills were conducted on a monthly basis.
- The emergency exit doors were unobstructed.

Outing:

- The children attending the Sunshine room and the Butterfly room undertook an outing to the local park on the day of inspection.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

The following safety measures were not in place on the day of inspection:

1. Garda vetting was available for 1 staff member. However, these vetting disclosures were not dated within the previous three years in adherence to with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.

Outing:

2. The service does not complete a written risk assessment prior to undertaking outings from the service. On the day of inspection 2 separate groups of children went on a walk to a local park however no written risk assessment was completed.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

Garda Vetting has been reapplied for the staff member, whose vetting was out of date.

We have documented digitally all expiry dates for all staff members for their garda vetting.

Outing:

A new risk assessment form has been established that needs to be filled out prior to going on an outdoor outing with the children.

Staff have been informed that all outings need to be risk assessed and have been provided with the new risk assessment forms.

Summary Comment

The registered provider has demonstrated that risk assessments will be carried out prior to an outing taking place. Garda vetting for the staff member has been submitted to the inspectorate. This addresses the non-compliances in Regulation 23.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) no person other than-

(i) pre-school child attending the service,

(ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,

(iii) an employee, or

(iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and

(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.

Compliance Information

(1) A record was kept of each child's time of arrival and departure daily by the staff members.

(3)(b) A visitor's book was maintained, there was evidence that visitors were requested to record their name, their contact number, the reason for entry and their check in and out times.

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 ensured that a person who held in-date First Aid Response (FAR) training was at all times available to the children attending the pre-school service.

(2)(a) and (b) The first aid box was suitably equipped and safely stored in readily accessible positions out of the reach of children.

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 record was maintained of all fire drills which had been completed in the service. Fire drills were carried out monthly. The last recorded fire drill took place on 22nd May 2024.

(b) A record was kept of the number, type and maintenance of the fire extinguishers in the premises, which were last serviced February 2024.

(4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was conspicuously displayed in the premises.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(b) A record of the maintenance of the smoke alarm system was not available for inspection.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The smoke alarm system has now been serviced by our maintenance company.

The company has been asked to make sure that our maintenance of the smoke alarms to be done within the contracted timeframe.

Supporting documentation submitted

Evidence of the maintenance record for the smoke alarms has been submitted.

Summary Comment

This response from the registered provider has addressed the noncompliance in Regulation 26.

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 that the service was adequately insured for 80 children at any one time. The expiry date on the insurance certificate was 27th March 2025.