

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015CN024
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Happy Days Playgroup & Crèche
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Main Street, Mullagh, Co. Cavan
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<b>Eircode:</b>	AB2 YH26
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Jacqueline Brogan
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<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day, Sessional
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<b>Date(s) of Inspection:</b>	19/10/2023
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	51	PM	35
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	No.18 The Grange, Plantation Walk Monaghan
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	S. Skinnader and M. Flood
<b>Title:</b>	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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not Applicable
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### Description of service

This privately owned service is in operation since 2000 and provides full day care services to children aged 0 - 6 years of age. The service operates from 07:30 – 18:00 and caters for a maximum of 82 children.

This service is located on the main street in Mullagh Co. Cavan in converted dwellings. There are 4 care rooms, 2 nappy changing areas, 1 sleep room, children’s sanitary accommodation, a number of kitchenettes all on the ground floors. Upstairs there is an office and staff toilet. There are outdoor areas to the back of the building.

### Staffing

The service employs 13 childcare staff which includes the registered provider and 1 student. There is a designated person in charge who manages 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 and Premises. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9,11,19 and 20 however, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 23 and 29. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

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,

(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 service had a designated person in charge and a deputy both of whom were present during the inspection.

Fourteen staff files were reviewed.

(2)(a) and (b) Two written and validated references were available from a past employer or alternative source for each of the 13 members of staff and one student.

(c) Evidence of completed Garda vetting disclosures was available for all 13 staff members and one student.

(d) From the documentary evidence available international police vetting was available for the 3 staff members who had lived outside the Irish jurisdiction for a period of 6 months or more as an adult.

(4) The 13 staff members who work directly with the preschool children had an appropriate minimum Level 5 childcare qualification.

### 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 observed working directly with the children. The required minimum adult to child ratios were met.

(2) On the day of inspection there were 4 rooms in operation namely the Creche Room, the Playschool Room and Montessori Rooms 1 and 2.

The following adult to child ratios were observed:

- **The Creche Room:**  
There were 13 preschool children aged between 11 months to 1 year and 11 months plus 4 members of staff.  
The person in charge also worked as required in this room and 1 of the 4 staff members from the room did a school pick-up.
- **The Playschool Room:**  
There were 11 children aged 2 years cared for by 2 members of staff.
- **Montessori Room 1:**  
There were 11 children aged 3 - 4 years with 2 staff.
- **Montessori Room 2:**  
There were 16 children aged 3 - 4 years with 3 members of staff and 1 student.

The child adult ratios were correct.

The registered provider and deputy person in charge were also on the premises.

(8) The registered provider ensured that there are always at least 2 adults on the premises at all times.

### 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 observations were made on how each child's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the daily life of the service. There were 4 rooms in operation on the day of inspection, namely The Creche Room, Playschool Room, Montessori 1 and 2.

#### Basic care Needs:

- The personal care provided met the needs of the children attending the service. Children were observed to have their nappies changed at appropriate regular set intervals and were changed in between as required. The nappy changing process was observed to be pleasant for children and warm one to one interaction were observed during this time. Independence was promoted for those children who were toilet trained.
- Attention was paid to the children's appearance, faces and noses were cleaned and bibs were worn at mealtimes.
- Children's drink cups were freely available on low level shelving for the children to access in the Montessori and Playschool Rooms. Staff reported that formula milk bottles were pre-made and provided by the parents in the Creche Room.
- Snacks and dinners were provided by the parents and reheated by staff.
- In the Creche Room independence with feeding was encouraged with support from the adult, and highchairs were observed to be appropriately used for feeding.
- In the Creche Room children who required sleep were placed down to sleep as per the individual child's sleep routine. The Playschool Room was converted to a sleep room after dinner for the older children attending this room who were all observed to sleep at this time.
- Most of the children in the service had a change of environment to the outdoor areas during the inspection and the children were dressed appropriately to go outside.
- The children in the Creche Room had free movement within the room and one young child was observed developing their gross motor movements by rolling along the floor.

### Supporting Relationships

- The adults throughout the service were observed to interact with the children in a warm and supportive manner. Soft tones, positive and respectful language were observed in interactions between the children in all the rooms and transitions between activities were organised and swift.
- In general, the language used by the staff in the service was positive and encouraging e.g. “...well done ... good girl...can we put this back here?? “ brilliant job...well done..”.
- The children were observed to actively seek out staff members. In the Creche Room staff were observed to try and support a child to sleep who was transitioning to a daybed in the Creche Room.
- A key worker system was in operation in the service and daily communication between the service and home was via an electronic application. Informal communication also occurred at drop off and collection.
- The staff were obviously familiar with the children and were observed to positively comment and initiate conversation about events that happened with the children at home for example, one child had been to the hairdresser and another had been to a birthday party.
- Additional support and a care plan were in place for a child with additional medical needs in one of the rooms.

### Physical and Material Environment

- Child sized furniture and equipment was in use throughout the service.
- A variety of age-appropriate materials and equipment were available in the care rooms that support many areas of development such as fine and gross motor skills, role play, speech and language and sensory development.
- Toys and equipment were positioned on open low-level shelving in all rooms which promoted independence and facilitated choice for the older children and in the Creche Room the staff also assisted the children in accessing toys.

### Programme Of Activities

- Artwork was on display throughout the service with collage art, handprint painting, body part art, healthy food chart and sensory artwork. The artwork on display was also in keeping with the curriculum planned and corresponded with the weekly/ monthly themes on display for example; “Autumn is here”, Halloween themed pumpkins and farm animals.
- Learning stories and observations were commenced and available to parents via the electronic application.
- The children were observed to engage in a variety of activities for example; nursery rhymes, songs, discussion with staff about Halloween and dressing up, free play around the interest areas in the care room, art activity making sheep and outdoor play. During the activities the children were afforded choice, and the staff were observed to engage with the children, singing songs, sitting on the floor and supporting play.

### 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-*

*(b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.*

*(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,*

#### Compliance Information

(1)(b) The children attending care rooms had access to a suitable soft area for reading or taking a rest when required. The areas consisted of soft mats, plastic covered mats cushions and plastic covered sofas.

There was a cot room directly off the Creche Room with 11 cots. Daybeds were set up in the Playschool Room after lunch for children who were aged over 2 years to sleep on.

(3)(a) The enclosed outdoor play areas were located to the rear of the premises:

**Area 1** was directly outside the Creche Room. It had a safety surface and contained equipment such as a large plastic connect game, a playhouse, a toy kitchen, tyres, a table, a sit on bouncy toy, push walker toys and some ride on toys.

**Area 2** was a large area with a number of different surfaces: a large, tarmacked area and safety surfaced area for children to use ride on toys and balance bikes. There was a large wooden bus for the children to play in and also a covered area with tables and a selection of outdoor toys and a sand tray to play with. There was a newly developed artificial surfaced football pitch and goals at the bottom of the outdoor play area.

### 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.*

#### Non-Compliance Information

##### General Safety:

1. The tables in the covered outdoor area and in a number of the care rooms had sharp unprotected corners. These are a potential injury hazard.
2. In ECCE room 1 the wooden shelving unit was unsecured and is a potential injury hazard if pulled or toppled over by a child.
3. The surface temperature of the radiator in ECCE Room 1 was hot to touch and the temperature was recorded at 52.8 °C at 11:20. This went unnoticed by the staff present until it was brought to their attention by the inspector. A recheck temperature was carried out at 11:45 and the temperature was recorded at 38.6 °C when the heating in the radiator was turned off.

#### Corrective and Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

##### Corrective & Preventive Action

- 1: All tables that had these sharp unprotected corners have now been rounded by a carpenter (pictures have been included in email)
- 2: Shelving unit in ECCE room 1 has now been secured to the wall and is no longer a hazard. (picture included in email)

3: Radiator in ECCE room 1 was recorded as to high, we have found the correct temp to leave the thermostat at that is on the radiator.

The registered provider will ensure:

- 1: that all tables purchased in the future will have rounded edges.
- 2: that checking shelving units is included in our risk assessments.
- 3: that the temp of the radiator is checked periodically and also included in our risk assessments.

**Supporting documentation submitted**

Photographic evidence.

**Summary Comment**

The Inspectorate have reviewed the registered provider's response with supporting photographic evidence. The non-compliances in Regulation 23 General Safety have been addressed.

**Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements**

**Regulation 29 - Premises**

*A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-*  
*(c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated*

**Non- Compliance Information**

(c)

1. There was no ventilation in the new children's toilet in the hall outside Montessori 1.

**Action submitted by the Registered Provider**

**Corrective & Preventive Action**

1: A ventilation system has been fitted by an electrician in the new toilet outside ECCE room 1. (picture included in email).

1: The registered provider will ensure that there will be adequate ventilation in all toilets.

**Supporting documentation submitted**

Photographic evidence of new mechanical ventilation unit.

**Summary Comment**

The registered provider's response has been reviewed and the non-compliance has been addressed.