

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015DS020
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Happy Tots
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	20 Foxborough Lawn, Lucan, Co. Dublin
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<b>Eircode:</b>	K78 TY05
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Caoimhe Fitzpatrick
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<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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<b>Date(s) of Inspection:</b>	02/12/2024
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	31	PM	8
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Floor 7, Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, Kilmainham, Dublin 8
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<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	Fiona Carty
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<b>Title:</b>	Early Years Inspector
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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).

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

Happy Tots is a privately operated early years service located in Lucan, Co Dublin offering sessional, part time and full day care. The service is provided from an adapted domestic building used solely as a pre-school service.

A service is provided to children aged between 2 and 6 years. The service is open on Monday to Friday between 7.30am and 6.30pm (including a sessional service from 9.00am to 12.15pm for 38 weeks of the year).

The service consists of 3 care rooms, a kitchen, toilet facilities and a secure outdoor play area to the rear of the building.

### Staffing

There were 7 adults present on the day of inspection including the service manager. Six adults were working directly with the children.

### 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.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under the following regulations:

*Regulation 9 – management and recruitment*

*Regulation 11 – Staffing Levels*

*Regulation 15 – Information and records*

*Regulation 16 – Information and records*

*Regulation 19 – Health, welfare and development of the child*

*Regulation 23 - Safety*

. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 15 and 16. As a result, the scope of the inspection included a sample of ten child records reviewed and a sample of ten accident and incident records.

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 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

*(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

The recruitment records of all adults employed in the service were reviewed. The following records were available:

(2)

(a)(b) There were sixteen validated references available from a past employer or reputable source for all eight staff members.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for all adults. All records were dated within the past three years as per the Regulatory Notice to review Garda vetting every three years.

(d) International Police vetting was available for three adults who had lived outside the State for a period exceeding six months.

(4)

Qualifications at a minimum level 5 on the National Framework of Qualifications was available for all staff.

## 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) An adequate number of adults were working directly with the pre-school children throughout the inspection.

(2) The adult to child ratios were always maintained during the inspection. Seven adults facilitated the programme of care and education for thirty-one pre-school children on the morning of the inspection. Eight children were present on the afternoon of the inspection being supervised by one adult.

## 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

(1)

(a) to (i)

A sample of ten records were reviewed by the inspector. All records kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service contained the information contained from (a) to (i) as required.

## Part IV – Information and Records

### Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

*(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:*

- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

### Compliance Information

- (1)
- (h) A written record was available in each care room detailing the attendance of each preschool child on the day of inspection.
- (i) A staffing roster was available in the service detailing hours of work for each staff member on the day of inspection.
- (k) Written records of accidents and incidents which occurred in the service were available on the day of inspection.

### 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*

*(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)(a)(b)

The person in charge and staff of the service had ensured that each child's learning, development and well-being was being facilitated as observed by the following:

On the day of inspection drinking water was always available to the children in their rooms. The service provided all meals to the children. On the day of inspection a morning snack, a hot lunch and hot evening meal were served to the children.

Staff were observed to sit with the children during snack time, engaging in conversation and assisting younger children if required.

Children were encouraged to look after themselves according to their ages and stages of development. Staff supported children to develop independence with using the toilet, washing their hands and taking care of their belongings.

There were three preschool rooms, named the Happy Tiggers, Happy Owls and the Happy Bunnies room.

All care rooms contained low level shelving including various activities that promoted the development of various interests including arts and crafts, home corner, puzzles, small world play and a construction area. The service adopted a play based curriculum. Low level tables and chairs were provided to meet the children's age.

Evidence of the children's artwork and recent learning was displayed on the walls of the care rooms.

The children had access to a fully enclosed outdoor play area to the rear of the premises. The outdoor area contained a variety of equipment which afforded children opportunities for exploration, play and development of gross motor skills. Equipment available to the children included a mud kitchen, ride on toys, slides and seesaws.

The adults demonstrated sensitivity and warmth towards the children by using soft tones and positive language when interacting with the children.

Adults listened to the children at their level and responded to individual requests when needed.

A variety of methods of language development were observed such as discussions during circle time and singing where children were practicing for an upcoming concert.

The curriculum was child led, and the children were encouraged to work together during activities. Staff offered praise and encouragement to the children throughout the inspection. Minor disagreements were resolved in a positive manner. The various cultures of children were represented in the service with hello being displayed in various languages on the walls of the service.

Staff communicated with parents upon arrival and collection and worked with other stakeholders regarding the individual needs of the children in the service.

### 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

The inspector found by observation of practice, review of documentation, discussion with staff and inspection of the premises that the registered provider had taken the following steps to safeguard children attending:

#### General Safety:

The entrance door to the service was adequately secured with a buzz in system to ensure the safety of the children within and to avoid unauthorised persons accessing the service or children exiting unsupervised. Cleaning products and hazardous materials were stored safely out of reach of children. The toys and play equipment observed in use by the children on the day of inspection were safe and in good working order and no hazards were identified in the indoor or outdoor environments

#### Infection Control:

Schedules were in place and maintained to ensure the service, equipment and materials are regularly cleaned. Waste was managed appropriately with the use of pedal-operated, lidded bins throughout the service. Liquid soap, warm water and paper towels were available to facilitate hand washing.

#### Fire Safety:

Regular fire drills took place in the service. All fire exits were kept clear.

#### Non-Compliance Information

**Infection Control:**

1. Some children did not wash their hands prior to snack time. It is acknowledged that they used hand sanitiser however hand washing is required for effective infection control.
2. A snack of brioche was placed directly on the table. Using a plate would prevent cross infection.

**Action submitted by the Registered Provider**

**Corrective & Preventive Action**

**Infection Control:**

1. At our weekly staff meeting, the importance of washing of hands and not using the hand sanitizer pumps on the wall was addressed and were capped on our hygiene policy.
2. We also addressed and informed on the importance of cross contamination when serving rolls, to be put on a plate and not a tissue on the table. Owner and manager will monitor this on a weekly basis.  
Regroup at weekly meetings to make sure all team are on board.

**Supporting documentation submitted**

**Infection Control:**

No supporting documents submitted.

**Summary Comment**

The corrective and preventive actions were reviewed by the inspector and are deemed to meet the requirements of Regulation 23.