

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DS152
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Name of Service:	Happy Friends Playgroup
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Address of Service:	35 Raheen Road, Tallaght, Dublin 24, Co. Dublin
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Eircode:	D24 Y6R6
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Name of Registered Provider:	Keri O'Reilly
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	13/01/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	11	PM	No.
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Level 7 Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, Kilmainham Dublin 8
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Inspection undertaken by:	R Phillips
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Title:	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).

Conditions if applicable	N/A
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Description of service

Happy Friends Playgroup is a sessional service which provides care to children aged 2 to 6 years. The service is registered to operate a morning session from 09:00 to 12:00 and an afternoon session from 12:30 to 15:30, Monday to Friday. The service operates from a purpose-built single preschool room located in the rear garden of a domestic dwelling. There is an outdoor play area in front and beside the preschool room.

Staffing

There are four adults employed in the service, including the registered provider who also manages the service and works 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 regulations:

- 9 (1)(2)(4) Management and recruitment,
- 11(1)(3) Staffing levels,
- 19 (1) (b) Health Welfare and Development of the child,
- 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of child,
- 25 First Aid and

26 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c) (4) Fire Safety measures.

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, 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) There was a designated person in charge and named person to deputise as required.

(b) The person in charge was present when the inspector arrived unannounced for the inspection. The named person in charge remained on the premises throughout the inspection.

(c) There was a clear management structure in place. The manager and staff demonstrated an awareness of their roles and lines of authority within the service.

(2) Following discussion with the manager it was confirmed that two new staff commenced employment since the last inspection on 07 February 2024. Documentation was reviewed in respect of all four adults employed and met regulatory requirements as follows:

(a)(b)

Seven references had been sourced from past employers, one from a reputable source and all had a record of verification as required.

(c) Garda Vetting had been sourced for all adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years for all other adults employed.

(d) Police Vetting was not required for any of the adults employed by the service.

(4) A record was available evidencing that the adults working directly with the children held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework or equivalent.

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.*

Compliance Information

- (1) The inspector observed that there was an adequate number of staff working directly with the preschool children.
- (3) There were three adults working directly with eleven preschool children.

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-*
- (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)(b)
- Appropriate and suitable care practices were observed on the day of inspection.
- The children's water bottles were available to them throughout the morning. The staff encouraged the children to be independent with their belongings and personal care.
- The staff spoke kindly to the children, engaging them in conversation sitting down at their level, for meals and activities. The service is taking part in the Bia Blasta scheme, they enjoyed making their meal before eating it together in a relaxed manner.
- Staff managed transitions between activities using timers and letting the children know what to expect. The children appeared to be familiar with the routine, which was also on the wall. Activities were child led, with some children choosing to rest in the cosy corner or opt out of group activities. The children were supported by the adults to participate when they chose to do so. Children chose to play outside while the others were finishing their meal, the staff facilitated all the children's individual needs.

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 following are examples of the measures undertaken by the registered provider and staff members to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of the children attending the service.

General Safety:

The entrance doors and outdoor area were appropriately secured preventing children from exiting the premises unsupervised and prevented unauthorised persons from gaining access to the service.

Thermostatically controlled warm water was available in the children's sanitary facilities.

Cleaning agents were stored appropriately up on high shelving 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.

Infection Control:

Children's hands were washed before meals, after returning from outdoor play and after using the toilet.

Waste was appropriately managed throughout the service with the use of pedal operated bins in the sanitary areas and the care rooms.

Staff were observed cleaning down the tables before and after mealtime.

Fire Safety:

The fire exits were unobstructed. There was emergency lighting in the sanitary area and highlighting the fire exits.

The staff identified the assembly area for the inspector.

Outing:

The registered provider confirmed that the service doesn't take the children on outings.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

1. Cleaning records were not maintained although cleaning of tables and sweeping of the floor was observed during the inspection.
2. A child sized couch in the cosy area had a damaged cover, which was worn and torn and didn't appear clean on inspection. In conversation with the registered provider, the cover was removable for cleaning, but no record of cleaning had been maintained.

3. A child sized chair was also worn and appeared dirty. The cover was not easily removed for cleaning, as required to maintain a hygienic environment.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control:

1. Cleaning records are now up to date. Cleaning and maintaining records are part of the daily routine and include the new washable couch. All staff are aware of the importance of cleaning and maintenance of cleaning records.
2. The old couch has been removed and replaced with a washable couch. In future only washable furniture will be purchased.
3. The single chair, with a cover that was difficult to remove for washing has been removed from the playroom.

Supporting documentation submitted

Infection Control:

Up to date completed cleaning schedules were submitted.
Photographic evidence of the removal of old furniture and placement of new washable furniture was submitted.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions taken by the registered provider, and evidence submitted has been reviewed by the early years inspectorate and deemed to address the noncompliance.

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) It was confirmed by review of staff files, and discussion with the registered provider that two staff held in date First Aid Responder (FAR) training certificates. The roster evidenced that one or both were available to the children at all times of opening.

(1)(a) Adequately equipped first aid boxes were stored in conspicuous locations that were easily accessible throughout the service.

(b) The first aid boxes were available to the children in the service at all times.

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.

(2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-

(c) an authorised person.

(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) A record was available detailing fire drills that had taken place in the service. The record showed the last fire drill had taken place on 17 December 2025.

(b) There was a record to show that the firefighting equipment had been serviced on 04 March 2025, and that maintenance of the fire detection and alarm system was last carried out on 23 September 2025.

(2) (c) The records were made available for inspection.

(4) The procedures to be followed during a fire drill and in the event of a fire were displayed in a conspicuous location within the service.