

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DS223		
Name of Service:	Happy Feet Early Learning Centre		
Address of Service:	Rathcoole community centre, Main Street, Rathcoole, Dublin 24, Co. Dublin		
Eircode:	D24 DX57		
Name of Registered Provider:	Kelly O' Hickey		
Service type:	Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	24/05/2023		
No of pre-school children:	AM	49	PM n/a
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla Child and Family Agency, 7 th Floor, Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, Dublin 8.		
Inspection undertaken by:	E. Mulhern and R. Brien		
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		

Description of service

Happy Feet Early Learning Centre is one of three early years services operated by the registered provider. The service operates out of three rooms in Rathcoole Community Centre with access to the centre's hall. An outdoor area is available at the rear of the premises. The outdoor area is shared with another early years service. The service is registered to accommodate children aged 2-6 years. The Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme is offered between 9am and 12pm and 9:15am and 12:15pm, Monday to Friday.

Staffing

There are seven staff employed to work in the service including the person in charge. The person in charge reports directly to the registered provider. The registered provider was present in the service on the 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 areas of governance, health, welfare and development of child and safety. The inspections 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 16 - Record in relation to Pre-School Service
- Regulation 19 - Health, Welfare and Development of Child
- Regulation 23 - Safeguarding, Health, Safety and Welfare of child
- Regulation 25 - First Aid
- Regulation 26 - Fire Safety Measures

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 19 – Health, Welfare and Development of Child. As a result, the scope of the inspection under this regulation included rooms CC1 and CC2.

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, 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 inspection focused on the recruitment records of adults who had commenced working in the service since the previous inspection dated 25 September 2020. Three staff had started working in the service since that date.

- (2)
- (a) & (b) A minimum of two references with a record of verification was available for all adults. References from another source were available for adults who had only one or no previous employer.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for all adults.
- (d) Not applicable as none of the adults had lived in another state as an adult.
- (4) Records were available evidencing that all adults held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

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) There was an adequate number of adults available to the children.
- (3) The minimum ratio of adults to children was always maintained. Six adults were allocated to work with forty-nine children. Forty-eight children were aged 3-6 years and one child was aged 2-3 years. All children were attending on a sessional basis. The staff roster provided for the minimum ratio to be maintained daily.

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;
- (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (i) A daily staff roster was available.
 - (j) Staff reported that none of the children had been given medicine while attending the service. A medication record book and parent consent forms were available for use if required.
 - (k) Records of accidents and incidents involving children were available. A sample of ten records were reviewed. The records included the necessary information relating to the accident, incident or injury.

Non-Compliance Information

(h) It is acknowledged that the service had a system of recording the attendance of children. However, on the day of inspection there was no record made of the attendance of one child who was present.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider will ensure that all children present in the setting have been recorded in the attendance record for the day with full name included, time of arrival and time of departure. Any child who is present in the class will be registered and recorded in the class attendance record each day. The attendance record will be completed daily once all children have arrived with a time of arrival and a time of departure recorded.

Supporting documentation submitted

No supporting documents submitted.

Summary Comment

The action has been deemed appropriate in addressing the non-compliance. This will be reviewed on the next 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

Compliance Information

The inspector observed that the children's learning, development and well-being was supported by the environment and the staff. All children spent time outdoors. The outdoor space had natural elements including grass, plants, butterflies, sand, and stones and was laid out with equipment and free space to support children's play and physical movement. Children had access to swings, slides, climbing frames, ride-on toys, play kitchens and a playhouse. The inspector observed children running, climbing, role playing, and exploring the environment. They appeared engaged and content, participated in collaborative and turn-taking play and discussed their play and ideas with staff.

The indoor areas had some designated areas including home corners and construction areas. All areas were laid out to support children's independence. Low level hooks were provided for the children's coats and belongings. Equipment and materials for play were visible and accessible. These included dolls, puzzles, blocks, and mark making materials. Areas were provided for children to rest or take a break from activities with soft seating, cushions, and mats.

Children's identity and belonging was promoted through art displays and family photograph walls. The staff communicated with parents/guardians when children were arriving or leaving.

Children were supported to be independent with their personal care. The children used the toilet as they needed with staff reminding and assisting them to wash their hands afterwards. The inspectors observed the staff interacting warmly with the children, engaging positively, and supporting them in their work and play. The staff provided the children with comfort when they became upset. The children brought food and drinks from home. The inspector observed lunch to be a social occasion; the children and adults sat and ate together and engaged in conversation.

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 inspectors observed that measures had been taken to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of the children as outlined in the examples below.

General Safety:

- Emergency doors were kept clear to allow for timely evacuation in the event of an emergency.
- Heavy furniture was secured to prevent tipping.

Infection Control:

- Children's hands were washed at required times including before eating and after using the toilet to prevent the spread of infection.
- Tables were cleaned before children had their lunch.
- Waste was disposed of appropriately in pedal operated, lidded bins to prevent the spread of infection.

Administration of Medication:

- The registered provider and staff reported that none of the children registered to attend had been given medication. A medication policy was available which outlined the procedures to administer medicine safely. Staff demonstrated a knowledge of the procedures including obtaining parent/guardian consent and recording the administration.

Outings:

- The registered provider reported that they have plans to bring one of the pre-school classes to a play centre with a number of their parents. A detailed policy was in place to guide safe practice before and during outings. Staff demonstrated an awareness of measures to take to safeguard the children including obtaining parental consent, carrying out a risk assessment and ensuring a person trained in first aid is always available.

Non-Compliance Information

The inspectors observed that all reasonable measures had not been taken to safeguard the children as outlined below.

General Safety:

1. The entrance doors to the three pre-school rooms were unsecured, posing a risk of unauthorised entry. One gate to/from the outdoor area was not secured posing a risk of unauthorised entry or a child leaving unsupervised onto the adjacent carpark.
2. Trailing cables from air purifiers and a vacuum cleaner were not secured out of reach of children in rooms C1 and C3. These posed a risk of injury if accessed by the children.
3. Aerosols were stored within reach of the children posing a risk of injury if accessed. One aerosol was stored in an unlocked low-level cupboard in room C1. A second aerosol was stored beside the sink used by children in the community centre's sanitary facilities.

Infection Control:

4. Room C1 was not adequately cleaned to prevent the spread of infection. A build-up of dust was visible on shelving units and play equipment. The cleaning schedule for 'toys' had not been completed for the week of the inspection or the previous week.
5. Toilet paper was stored on the cistern of the toilet in room C1 posing a risk of cross infection. There was no toilet paper dispenser or holder available.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The registered provider and staff will ensure that the classroom doors are secured daily. This safety requirement has been added to the daily risk assessment checklist. A latch on the gate in the outdoor area has been installed at adult height, along with a sign stating that all users must always latch the gate when the children are using the outdoor area. A risk assessment will be completed by all staff in relation to the safety and security of the outdoor area prior to the children playing outside. The new latch has been added to the outdoor daily risk assessment.

2. All trailing cables have been enclosed and secured to the walls by conduit. The vacuum cleaner with cord has been removed. Any trailing lead used within the classroom setting will be secured with conduit. Trailing leads has been added to the daily risk assessment document.

3. All aerosol cans have been removed. All aerosols will be stored out of the reach of children and/or in a locked cabinet where children cannot access them. Aerosols have been added to the daily risk assessment checklist.

Infection Control:

4. The classrooms have been adequately cleaned to prevent the spread of infection. All shelves and play equipment have been thoroughly cleaned and disinfected. All classrooms, including toys, play equipment, soft toys, dress ups, skirting, and shelves will be deep cleaned weekly per the rota. Any equipment that requires cleaning prior to the scheduled deep clean on Fridays, will be cleaned immediately. The cleaning sheet will be checked weekly and signed off by a manager once the cleaning has been completed and verified.

5. A toilet roll holder has been installed in the children's toilet. All toilet roll will be distributed by a wall mounted toilet roll holder to avoid cross contamination. Toilet rolls will be maintained in appropriate holders in all bathrooms to avoid potential cross contamination and maintain infection control.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic images were submitted.

Summary Comment

The actions have been deemed appropriate in addressing the non-compliances.

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) There was always a person with a recognised first aid certificate available to the children. The staff roster provided for a person trained in first aid to be available at all hours of opening.
- (2)
- (a) A suitably equipped first aid box was stored in a conspicuous position within reach of adults.
 - (b) The first aid box was always available for use.

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) Records were available of fire-drills carried out in the service. The last fire drill recorded was dated 18 May 2023.
 - (b) The service had a record outlining the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the service. The last recorded dates of maintenance were June and December 2022 consecutively.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in a conspicuous position.