

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015KE137
--------------------------	-------------

Name of Service:	Happy Hands Creche
-------------------------	--------------------

Address of Service:	01 Old Chapel Court, Caragh, Naas, Co. Kildare
----------------------------	--

Eircode:	W91 EE76
-----------------	----------

Name of Registered Provider:	Elaine Moore
-------------------------------------	--------------

Service type:	Full Day
----------------------	----------

Date of Inspection:	21/11/2023
----------------------------	------------

No of pre-school children:	AM	25	PM	16
-----------------------------------	----	----	----	----

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate Child and Family Agency Suite 7, Vista Primary Care Centre Ballymore Eustace Road Naas Co. Kildare, W91 X38W
Inspection undertaken by:	F. Maher, T. Duignan
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

N/A

Description of service

Happy Hands Crèche is a private childcare service located in the village of Caragh Co. Kildare. A full day care service is provided to children aged between 0-6 years old, currently, the service accepts children aged between 2-6 years old and opening hours are currently Monday to Friday from 08:00am-17:30pm. Part time care is offered, and sessional care and education is available for 38 weeks of the pre-school year.

The service is registered to accommodate school age children also.

The service operates from a purpose-built premises on the ground floor of a small complex of apartments and retail units on the main street. Four pre-school rooms, a sleep room, kitchen, staff room and an office are provided. A large outdoor play area is located to the rear of the premises with a smaller play area leading from one school room at the side of the building. Two pre-school rooms are currently operational. Two pre-school rooms and the sleep room are not in use for operational reasons.

Car parking is available at the rear of the premises.

Staffing

There were eight staff members employed in the service. Seven people were present in the service on the day of inspection, this included the person in charge and three staff members working directly with the children, one student, one school age staff member and one kitchen staff member. Three staff members working directly with the children held recognised qualifications in Early Childhood Care and Education on the National Framework of Qualifications. The registered provider was not present in 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 and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The Sunshine and Rainbow rooms were inspected, the remaining two pre-school rooms were closed for operational reasons.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under

Regulation 9- Management and recruitment (1)(a)(b)(c), (2)(a)(b)(c)(d), (4), (7)(a)

Regulation 10- Policies procedures etc. of Pre-school Service

Regulation 11- Staffing Levels (1),(2),(8)(a)

Regulation 16- Record in relation to Pre-school Service (i),(k)

Regulation 19- Health, Welfare and Development of Child (1)(a), (3)

Regulation 20- Facilities for Rest and Play (1)(b)

Regulation 23- Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child

Regulation 24- Checking in and out and record of attendance (1), (3)(a)(b), (4)

Regulation 25- First Aid (1), (2)(a)(b)

Regulation 26- Fire Safety Measures (1)(a)(b), (4)

Regulation 27- Supervision

Regulation 28- Insurance

However, on inspection an additional non-compliance was identified under,

Regulation 8- Notification of change in circumstances

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.

Additional Information

1. Conditions were applied to the registration of the service on 12 June 2023: Part VI, Article (23) Child Care Act 1991 Early Years Regulations 2016

The Registered Provider is required to:

- Ensure that all reasonable measures are taken to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of pre-school children attending the service and that the environment is safe at all times.
- Ensure that all reasonable measures are taken to identify and promptly address any matter that would negatively impact on the safety and wellbeing of children in attendance in the service.

These conditions are in place for 12 months.

On Inspection there was evidence that the conditions attached to the registration of this service were complied with.

Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the person in charge, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Part II - Registration and Register

Regulation 8 - Notification of change in circumstances

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a temporary pre-school service shall, subject to paragraph (3), notify the Agency in writing of any proposed change in the details in relation to the pre-school service contained in the register pursuant to section 58C(2) of the Act or Regulation 7(2) at least 60 days before it is proposed that the change would take effect.

Non-Compliance Information

On inspection the service was found to be operating outside their registration status, the registered provider had not submitted a proposed change in circumstances following the appointment of a new person in charge, who was in post since April 2023, or of the change in the hours of operation of the service, from 07:30am-18:30pm to 08:00am-17:30pm.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

A Change of Circumstance has been sent in on the Friday the 15th of December 2023.

Preventive Action

Going forward we will allow the appropriate timing for change of circumstances to be submitted before the change commences

Supporting documentation submitted

Document X 1

Summary Comment

The requirement for Regulation 8 has been met.

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.

(7) A registered provider shall ensure that all employees, unpaid workers and contractors are appropriately supervised and provided with appropriate information, and where necessary training, including in relation to the following:

(a) the policies, procedures and statements of the service specified in Schedule 5;

Compliance Information

(1)(a),(b)

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

The records of eight staff members employed and/or present in the service, including the registered provider, and one student were reviewed.

(2)(a),(b)

Fourteen written and verified past employer references or references from a reputable source, in the absence of a past employer, were available in respect of seven records reviewed.

(c)

Garda Vetting disclosures were available for eight employed staff members.

(d)

Police vetting was not required as no staff member had lived in a state other than the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months.

(4)

Three members of staff employed and who work directly with the children whose records were reviewed held a major award at Level 5 or higher in Early Childhood Care and Education on the National Qualifications Framework.

(7)(a)

Staff members advised they were familiar with and had received the policies of the service, including child safeguarding and behaviour management policies which were visually displayed throughout the service. There was evidence provided that management engaged in staff supervision for each staff member on a monthly basis. Staff had recently completed part one of a three step training programme with the local county childcare committee and had engaged with a recent onsite workshop provided by an early years specialist currently mentoring the service.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(b)

Two written and verified past references from a reputable source, were not available in respect of one record reviewed.

(4)

There was no documentary evidence provided to state that one employed adult, working directly with children in the service, held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or equivalent on the National Framework of Qualifications.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Action

(2)(b)

Two references have been verified by management. All staff files have now been reviewed to ensure they have met the requirements.

(4) Contact made with the college re full award in childcare for one staff member, response awaited. In the interim, the staff will support the room and carry out household duties; the person in charge will be rostered to the pre-school room.

Preventive Action

(2)(b) Going forward, a staff folder checklist has been created to follow before any staff member begins their employment at Happy Hands.

(4)

Going forward, regular checks of files will be done by management to prevent this issue in the future.

Supporting documentation submitted

Documents X 3

Summary Comment

The requirement for Regulation 9 (2)(b),(4) has been met; this will be reviewed at the time of the next inspection.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured that the required written policies, procedures, and statements specified in schedule 5 were in place in the service. The content of the following policies was reviewed and met the requirement of the regulations:

- Behaviour management policy
- Accidents and incidents policy
- Staff training policy
- Staff supervision policy
- Complaints policy
- Statement of Purpose & Function
- Safeguarding Statement/Policy
- Induction policy
- Infection control policy
- Risk management policy
- Outings policy

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 were 25 children attending the service being supervised directly by four staff members during the inspection.
- (2)
The minimum ratio of adults to children was adhered to during the day as specified in column (3) of Part 1 of Schedule 6.
- (8)(a)
There were at least two adults on the premises at all times for the duration of the inspection, this was confirmed by the staff roster.

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:*
- (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

- (i)
The staff roster was displayed in the entrance lobby of the service; it was up to date and displayed the relevant information relating to staff breaks and the persons trained in first aid response (FAR).
- (K)
A sample of 16 records relating to any accident or incident occurring in the service for a three month period were reviewed. All records were correctly completed and a copy provided to the child's parent/guardian.

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

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that no practices that are disrespectful, degrading, exploitive, intimidating, emotionally or physically harmful or neglectful are carried out in respect of a pre-school child whilst attending the service.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

Physical and material environment

The Sunshine and Rainbow rooms were observed with significant improvements since the last inspection. Both environments were bright and interesting and were constructively planned to provide a range of developmentally appropriate, creative, and enriching experiences for the children.

Both rooms were equipped with low level child sized tables and chairs to enable the children sit comfortably for meals and tabletop activities. The play and learning equipment and tabletop materials were easily accessible for the children to independently choose from low level open shelving units in the room. Areas of interest included well-resourced home/kitchen corners, rest areas with library, mark making areas, sand and water trays, construction and dress up. Materials and equipment provided for fine and manipulative skills tasks, arts and crafts and imaginary play and learning.

The outdoor area was spacious and secured by a high perimeter wall. There was a combination of bricked paving and impact absorbent tiles around the fixed climbing / slide activity wooden play unit. There was a covered area in the corner of the outdoor area which had tables and chairs for eating lunch or tabletop work and also enabled the children to be outdoors even in inclement weather. There was plenty of space for the children to run freely and for playground games.

Equipment included a mud kitchen, blackboard and chalk, two fixed rocking units, tyres, push along trikes, tuc tuc tricycles and single tricycles.

(3)

The staff members in each pre-school room were observed being very kind and respectful towards the children in their care. First names were used and children were observed being listened to and encouraged to express their thoughts and feelings. There was emphasis on positive praise and encouragement as observed throughout the inspection.

Following an incident that was made aware to the inspectorate, all staff, in conversation with the inspectors, were very clear on what are and are not acceptable ways of responding to behaviours that they may find difficult if a child becomes upset or distressed.

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.

Compliance Information

Both the Sunshine and Rainbow rooms had comfortable rest areas equipped with child sized soft sofas and cushions. Soft floor matting increased the size and comfort of the area if a group of children wished to use the area together. The areas were cosy and inviting and created spaces for children to take a break from activities, relax, play quietly or read a book as observed.

Low level sleep beds were available with individual bed lined should any child wish to have a period of sleep when attending on a part time or full day care basis.

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 main entrance to the service was at the rear and the entrance gate was electronically secured with an intercom system; this was controlled by staff to prevent children from exiting the service unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the pre-school.

Daily indoor room and outdoor risk assessments were completed and maintained to ensure safe play and work environments for the children and staff. The service met the necessary safety requirements in respect of the indoor environment, toys and equipment.

Infection Control:

The premises were observed maintained in a clean and hygienic condition and cleaning schedules were completed for all room environments.

Hand washing routines were well established as stated by the staff and children washed their hands before all meals and snacks, after toilet use and as needed; this was consistent with the hand washing practices observed during the inspection.

Thermostatically controlled hot water was supplied at all sinks and liquid soap and paper hand towel was provided for hygienic handwashing and drying. Foot pedal operated bins were available throughout the service for the hygienic disposal of waste.

Administration of Medication:

Medication was not given at the time of the inspection and during conversations with various staff members, they advised they were aware of the procedures to be followed to administer medicine safely to a child if required while attending the service.

Fire Safety:

Regular monthly fire drills were carried out and records maintained. All fire exits were easily identifiable and unobstructed.

Outing:

A yearly outing has taken place as confirmed by staff members and an outings policy is in place to guide practice.

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.

(2) Where there are more than 15 children attending a pre-school service in a drop-in centre, the registered provider shall ensure that one employee or unpaid worker is assigned responsibility for the checking in and out of children.

(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.

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (3)(b) is retained for a period of one year from the date to which it relates.

Compliance Information

(1)
The person in charge ensured that each child was checked in and out of the service. This was confirmed by the written attendance records maintained for the pre-school rooms inspected.

(2)
Not applicable as this was not a drop-in service.

(3) (a),(b)
The person in charge ensured that any person entering the service was approved and a record in writing was maintained.

(4)
The person in charge confirmed that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (3)(b) is retained for a period of one year from the date to which it relates.

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)
Persons were trained in first aid for children including First Aid Response (FAR) and were immediately available to the children attending the service.

(2)(a),(b)
The first aid boxes were suitably equipped and stored in conspicuous positions in the service and immediately available for the children 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.

(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 written record was available of fire drills which were completed monthly in the service, the last recorded fire drill took place 21 October 2023 2023.

(b) A record was kept of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises. Firefighting equipment was last serviced February 2023, and the smoke/fire detection system was last serviced 18 July 2023.

(4)
Notices of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were conspicuously displayed in the service

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.

Compliance Information

Children were observed being supervised at all times throughout the inspection by the staff caring for them both indoors in their care rooms, in the sanitary areas and in the outdoor play area.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

A registered provider shall ensure that the pre-school service is adequately insured.

Compliance Information

There was evidence of current insurance cover valid until 27 March 2023. The insurance provided cover for 50 children.