

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015KE137
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Name of Service:	Happy Hands Creche
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Address of Service:	01 Old Chapel Court, Caragh, Naas, Co. Kildare
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Eircode:	W91 EE76
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Name of Registered Provider:	Elaine Moore
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date of Inspection:	25/11/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	21	PM	8
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate Child & Family Agency Suite 7, Vista Primary Care Ballymore Eustace road Naas, Co. Kildare W91 X38W.
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Inspection undertaken by:	F. Maher, T. Duignan
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Title:	Early Years Inspectors
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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	Not applicable.
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Description of service

Happy Hands Creche is located in a purpose-built facility in the village of Caragh, Co. Kildare. Full day care, part time and sessional care and education is offered to children aged 0-6 years; currently, children attending are aged from 2-6 years. Opening hours are from 08:00-17:30hrs, Monday-Friday. Two pre-school rooms, Sunshine and Rainbow, a kitchen, office and staff room are provided. A large play area is located to the rear of the premises. The service is registered for school aged childcare.

Staffing

There were seven adults present in the service on the day of the inspection; this included three staff members working directly with pre-school children, one third level student on work placement and one staff member assigned to kitchen/household duties. The registered provider and person in charge arrived at the service mid-morning. The registered provider is not rostered to work 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, safety, premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under:

Regulation 9(2)(a)(b)(c)(d), (3), (4), (7)(a) - Management and Recruitment

Regulation 11(1), (2), (8)(a) – Staffing levels
Regulation 15(1)(f) - Record of a Pre-school Child
Regulation 16(1)(i)(k)-Information and records
Regulation 19(1)(a) - Health Welfare and Development of Child
Regulation 23 - Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child
Regulation 25 - First Aid
Regulation 27 - Supervision
Regulation 29(c)(d) - Premises

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

The inspection was triggered following receipt of information to the inspectorate.

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, 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.

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(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 deputy person in charge was the named person in charge until the designated person in charge arrived to the service mid-morning.

(c) There was a clear management structure in the service that identified the lines of authority and accountability, this information was also displayed in the entrance foyer of the service.

The records for 2 staff members, employed since the last inspection 27/08/2025, and one workplace student were reviewed.

(2)(a), (b)

Two written and verified references from a past employer or a reputable source were available as required in respect of 2 staff members and one workplace student whose records were reviewed.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all employed staff members and one workplace student. However, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. Please refer to the information outlined under regulation 23 of this report.

(d) Police vetting was available for one employed adult who had not lived in a state other than the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months.

(4)
Not applicable, one adult was a student on work placement and two adults, recently employed, were employed to work directly with school age children only.

(7)(a)

Team meetings had taken place, the most recent had taken place 8 October 2025, the documented agenda/minutes and relevant handouts distributed to staff in relation to revision of the Child Care Act 1991 and two service policies being focussed on, were reviewed on inspection.

Supporting documentation indicated staff support and supervision meetings had commenced.

There was documentary evidence provided to indicate that all staff had signed to confirm they had received, read and understood the service policies and procedures.

A staff training log was also in place to record all training undertaken to date, this included Children First training.

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 21 children attending the service being supervised directly by 3 adults.

(2)

The minimum ratio of adults to children was adhered to during the day.

(8)(a)

There were at least two adults on the premises at all times for the duration of the Inspection.

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:

(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;

Compliance Information

(f)

A health care plan is in place for one child attending the service.

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)

A staff roster was in place with the relevant details outlining, start, break and finish times, rooms allocated to staff and the person on duty trained in first aid response (FAR).

(k)

The service maintained accident and incident books which contained a record of accidents, injuries and incidents involving preschool children attending the service. A sample size of 10 accident and incident reports recorded between 08/10/2025 to 19/11/2025 were assessed and contained all the relevant information and details, including staff and parental signatures.

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) Supporting relationships around children

On the day of the inspection, all staff members were observed being warm, kind and respectful towards the children in their care. The children were spoken to using their first names, appropriate eye contact was made, and soft vocal tones were used during all interactions. The children were observed to be content, happy and relaxed as they moved about their individual pre-school rooms. Staff members in Sunshine and Rainbow rooms were observed to use positive praise and encouraged the children to be independent and be kind to each other. A child who had become upset was immediately held and comforted by one of the staff members in the room.

Physical and material environment

Child sized tables and chairs were in place in the two care rooms and each room was adequately equipped and resourced with age-appropriate toys and learning materials; these were easily accessible to the children on low level open shelving units. Home corners in each room had the relevant props to promote imaginary play. There were small world areas, dress up clothes and mark making areas which contained plenty of paper and crayons; children's individual artwork was displayed on the walls in each room. There was an adequate supply of art and craft materials for cutting, gluing and sticking activities. Water play containers were in use in both rooms and children were observed enjoying water play activities throughout the morning, Sensory material such as lentils were used in the sensory tray in Sunshine room.

The outdoor play area was equipped with tyres, a balance beam, small wooden climbing wall, rockers and a selection of ride on equipment. There was a sheltered area provided for play during inclement weather.

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 gate to the service was electronically secure with keypad access which was controlled by staff to prevent children from exiting the service unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the pre-school service.

No hazards or hazardous items were observed in the indoor environment, cupboards were secured with child proof locks, cleaning items were observed stored on high level shelving and the internal pre-school room doors were secured to prevent children leaving unobserved into other areas of the premises.

Daily indoor room risk assessments had been completed, and a risk management policy was in place for the service. During conversations with staff members, they stated they were aware understood the potential risks of choking, for example, staff stated they immediately cut/halve any fruit/food items and would remove any beaded necklace a child may be wearing.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Garda vetting was available for all staff members including the registered provider and one student on work placement experience, however, one vetting disclosure was not dated within the previous three years in adherence to with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.
2. Daily outdoor risk assessments were not being carried out or documented to ensure the safety of the play area for children and staff.
3. Part of a wooden slat, on the low level wooden seating, located on the right hand side of the play area, had deteriorated and was observed broken with jagged edges and one protruding metal screw, another section on the seating was observed with a further protruding metal screw; these posed potential risks of an entrapment injury and/or a scrape injury to a child if/when sitting on this part of the seat.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. We have sent the Garda vetting for renewal. Management will do monthly checks on folders to make sure vetting's remain up to date.
2. We have now created and implemented outdoor risk assessments that are done by our opening manager daily.
3. The damaged wooden slat and protruding metal screws on the low-level wooden seating have been identified and reported for repair. In the interim, the affected section of the seating has been cordoned off to prevent children from accessing the area. We have added bench checks to our daily outdoor risk assessment which is completed every morning daily.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Documents x 2

Summary Comment

Following review of the written response and supporting documentation assessed and received, the requirement for Regulation 23 has been met for points 2 and 3, however, the requirement for Regulation 23, point 1 remains outstanding until the Garda vetting has been processed.

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)
Two adults were trained in in first aid response (FAR), expiry date, 30 August 2027 one trained adult was present and immediately available to the children attending the service.

(2)(a)

The first aid equipment was safely stored, in conspicuous positions in the pre-school.

(b) A suitably equipped first aid box was available at all times to the children attending 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

The children were observed to be supervised by the staff caring for them at all times in the pre-school room, sanitary area and in the outdoor play area during the inspection.

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

(d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required

Compliance Information

(c)

The pre-school rooms were bright with natural light from windows and glass double doors in each room with electric led ceiling lights to supplement the lighting as necessary. There were working ceiling lights in the foyer and hall area.

The environmental pre-school room temperatures were maintained between 18-20°C and confirmed when the room temperatures were recorded at 10:54 Sunshine room and 12:09 hours in Rainbow room. Openable windows allowed for natural ventilation in each room.

(d)

The outdoor area was swept of leaves by a staff member during the morning and the play area was observed litter free.