

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LK083			
Name of Service:	Happy Times Preschool			
Address of Service:	St. Brigids Church Hall, St Patricks Road, Hilltop, Co. Limerick			
Eircode:	V94 R9H6			
Name of Registered Provider:	Maeve Daly, Patricia Kiely			
Service type:	Sessional			
Date of Inspection:	20/06/2024			
No of pre-school children:	AM	18	PM	16
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Early Year Inspectorate Office, Estuary House 2 nd Floor, Henry Street, Limerick.			
Inspection undertaken by:	M Riordan			
Title:	Early Years Inspector			

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 Times Pre-School is a privately run sessional service operating from St. Brigid's Community Hall, St. Patricks Road, in Limerick city. The service provides a morning and an afternoon sessional programme and is open Monday to Friday, 9.00am to 12.00md and 12.30pm to 03.30pm. The service can cater for a maximum of 22 pre school children at any one time. The service operates from a well-designed and equipped playroom, next door to the large hall in the Community centre. A well-resourced, outdoor play area is located to the rear and side of the premises.

Staffing

There are 2 registered providers who work together at the facility each day. An additional 2 staff members assist them for both the morning and the afternoon session. All four staff were present on the day, when the unannounced inspection was carried out.

All staff working at the service have achieved a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education. Staff engage regularly in ongoing training and professional development.

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.

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 providers, 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*

(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) The registered providers were available on the day of the inspection and there was a named person who could deputise if required.

(b) The registered providers were present in the service for the duration of the inspection.

(2)(a) There were written references, from past employers, available in respect of all staff employed at the service.

(b) Where past employer references were not available, references from an alternative source were provided.

(c) Vetting disclosures from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána were available for all adults on the premises.

(d) Police vetting from another state was not required for any member of staff.

(4) All staff members held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education.

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 service operates a morning session and an afternoon session. On the day of the inspection there were 18 children present with 4 staff for the morning session and 16 children present with 4 staff for the afternoon session. The adult child ratio was correct.
- (3) At all times the service ensured that the minimum ratio of adults to children was adhered to in the service.

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 sample of 12 children's enrolment forms were reviewed. The service had a record in writing containing the following particulars for each of the children.
- (a) The name and date of birth of the child.
 - (b) The date on which the child first attended the service.

- (c) Provision to record 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 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 received by the child.
- (i) Written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.

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:

- (a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;*
- (b) details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services;*
- (c) details of the adult:child ratios in the service;*
- (d) the type of care or programme provided in the service;*
- (e) the facilities available;*
- (f) the opening hours and fees;*
- (g) the policies, procedures and statements the service is required to maintain in accordance with Regulation 10;*
- (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) The registered providers ensured that a record in writing was kept of the following information in relation to the service:

- (a) The name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and each staff working at the facility. This was displayed on the notice board in the entrance hallway.
- (b) Details of the type of service in operation and the age profile of children for which the facility is registered to provide services.
- (c) Details of the adult: child ratios in the service.
- (d) The type of care or programme provided in the service.
- (e) The facilities available.
- (f) The opening hours and fees.
- (g) A record in writing was maintained of policies and procedures required in accordance with Regulation 10.
- (h) Details of attendance by each pre-school child daily.
- (i) Staff rosters were maintained on a daily basis and available for inspection. These correlated with the numbers that were present on the day of inspection.
- (j) The service had a medication administration recording template book available that was completed in the event of a child requiring medication to be administered.
- (k) Details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service was recorded. To date this school year no entries were recorded in the book.

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

BASIC NEEDS:

There was a healthy eating policy in place in the service and nutritious healthy snacks were provided by the parents for the children each day. All perishable foods were stored in a fridge until needed at break times. Children drinks were accessible to them throughout each session, and these were taken outside when children were outdoors in the playground.

Children had unrestricted access to the toilets located next to the preschool room. Staff could supervise the children by sound when they were in the bathrooms. A nappy changing facility was available if required.

A change of clothes was available for all children if needed. Protective clothing was available for the children if playing outdoors in wet weather.

Tissues and wipes were easily accessible to the children and all waste was disposed of properly in foot pedal operated, lidded bins.

Children spend long periods of time outside each day. Much of the indoor play materials were taken outside and the outside area accommodated the continuation of the learning that went on each day in the classroom.

PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

The service operated from 1 large well-resourced preschool room. A large community hall was accessible next door to the room. Lots of active sports could be accommodated here if the weather restricted outside play. A well-resourced outdoor area was available to the rear and the back of the premises.

The preschool room had lots of well organised interest areas. A library corner with soft couches, floor mats, blankets and cushions provided a rest space where children were observed relaxing at story time. Messy play was available with lots of sensory materials available in large trays. Low level open shelving units displayed lots of well labelled toy boxes. Waist high tables and chairs were used for lots of tabletop activities and for dining at lunch time. Materials required for colouring, for cutting and for painting were all accessible within easy reach of the children.

Childrens artwork and educational posters were displayed on all walls of the room at children's eye level.

Outdoors the children had access to a well-planned space with synthetic grass covering the entire area.

Opportunities for planting, gardening, climbing, balancing and all types of imaginative play were available outside.

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 were 3 staff working at the service who had completed first aid responder training and all certificates were in date.

(2)(a) There was a well-stocked first aid box located in the service.

(b) The first aid box was readily available and accessible if required.

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 to show that fire drills were carried out on a monthly basis. The most recent drill took place on the 5th of June 2024.

(b) A record of the number, type and maintenance of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms were available on the premises. All fire extinguishers were serviced in November 2023.

(4) The fire evacuation procedures were clearly displayed in the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The insurance certificate for the service was available and in date on inspection.

The service was insured to accommodate 22 children at any one time. The certificate was due to expire on the 27th of March 2025.