

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015MH067
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Name of Service:	Happy Days
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Address of Service:	St Olivers Community Centre, Main Street, Ratoath, Co. Meath
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Eircode:	A85 VF77
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Name of Registered Provider:	Laura Murphy
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Service type:	Part Time, Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	09/01/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	34	PM	16
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Family Resource Centre, Commons Road, Navan, Co. Meath
Inspection undertaken by:	D. Murray
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 Days is a community based childcare facility based in St Olivers Community Centre. The service provides a sessional/part- time service to children from 2 to 6 years and participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education Programme (ECCE).A breakfast club is provided for school aged children from 08:30 to 09:30 am with the pre-school service operating from 09:30am to 14:30pm each weekday. The service consists of 2 care rooms, Room 1 is on the ground floor with Room 2 on the first floor, office, storage room and sanitary facilities. The pre-school service also has access to a theatre room for activities.

Staffing

The registered provider employs a designated person in charge and 5 childcare staff members. On the day of the inspection the designated person in charge was present with 4 childcare staff members. The registered provider was available onsite but not present in the childcare service on a daily basis.

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 regulations 9,11,19,20,21,22,23,25,26 &28. 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.

Acknowledgments

The inspector wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the 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.

(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 service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.

(b) The designated person in charge was on the premises when the inspector arrived unannounced to carry out the inspection.

(c) There was a clear management structure displayed in the entrance hall of the service.

(2) (a)&(b) Fourteen validated written references were available either from a past employer or from a reputable source.

(c) Garda vetting disclosure was available for the 7 staff members.

(d) Not applicable as no staff member had resided outside the jurisdictions for a period of more than 6 consecutive months as an adult.

(4) Six childcare staff members had a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 and above on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be 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.

(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) The registered provider ensured that an adequate number of adults were working directly with the children attending the service.
- (2) On the day of inspection, the correct adult/child ratio was maintained.
- In Room 1, there were 3 staff members providing care and education to 16 children ranging in age from 2 years 6 months to 5 years. All 16 children were availing of the sessional service with 8 staying on to avail of the part-time service.
 - In Room 2 there were 2 staff members providing care and education to 18 children ranging in age from 2 years 6 months to 5 years. All 18 children were availing of the sessional service with 8 staying on to avail of the part-time service.
- (8) (a) The registered provider ensured that 2 adults were present on the premises at all times.

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) The following observations were made on how each child's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the daily life in the service:

Basic needs:

- The staff spoke to all children in a positive way and listened attentively to each child. The adults were observed supported children to find positive solutions when they experienced challenge in sharing play equipment and materials.
- The staff members sat and chatted with the children at snack time , helping the children when required whilst encouraging conversation and extending interactions.
- Throughout the session children had the opportunity to move about freely and explore their environment. Children were given choices as to the area and equipment they wanted to play with.

Children were observed independently selecting play materials, enjoying meaningful sustained play and replacing them back on the shelves when finished.

- Transitions were handled smoothly in both care rooms with staff giving the children ample time to complete one activity before starting the next.

Supporting relationships around children:

- The service showed a positive regard towards the families of the children and family links were nurtured in the service with family photographs displayed on “The Family Wall” in the care rooms which gave a sense of identity and belonging.
- During activities many children demonstrated a sense of pride in their success and were observed calling on staff members to share their achievements which was reciprocated. The children appeared comfortable, happy and relaxed in their environment and sought out staff members for comfort and reassurance.

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.

(3) A registered provider of a full day care service, a part-time day care service or a childminding service, other than such a service to which paragraph (2) applies, shall ensure that-

(a) a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the pre-school children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises, or

Compliance Information

(1)(b) Cosy areas consisting of mats and cushions were available in both care rooms should a child needed to take a break from activities and rest. There were no children requiring a sleep attending the service.

(3)(a) The outdoor space consisting of artificial low impact surface enclosed by fencing with a secure gate. A partially sheltered area permitted outdoor play in all types of weather.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

- Both care rooms were well resourced with play materials and equipment which were laid out in interest areas which were spacious and uncluttered. The play materials and equipment incorporated natural/sensorial materials, art and crafts, a range of suitable toys and books. All play materials and equipment were easily accessible on open shelving at the children’s height which encouraged active engagement and involvement.
- The equipment in the outdoor area included a mud kitchen, a panel with gutters for pouring, slide, climbing unit made of tyres, play cars, scooters and ride on bicycles. Additional play equipment was stored in boxes.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 22 – Food and drink

A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

The service provided a food snack at 10am which on the day of inspection consisted of chopped up grapes and apples. The children brought their own healthy lunches from home which the children had between 11 and 11:30am. The children availing of the part-time hours bring an additional snack which they have after 12:30pm.

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 following safety measures were in place on the day of inspection:

- All cleaning agents were stored out of reach of the children.
- The main door to the service was secured and the outdoor space was enclosed and secured. These security measures ensured that a child did not exit unsupervised and restricted unauthorised persons from gaining access to the service and outdoor spaces.
- All play materials were placed on stable based shelving units. Play materials and equipment were observed to be safe and suitable for the developmental age of the pre-school children present in the service.
- The emergency exit doors were unobstructed.
- An indoor and outdoor risk assessment was conducted on a daily basis.

Infection Control:

The following infection control measures were observed.

- The hand washing policy was implemented in practice with appropriate hand washing for staff and children at all times. liquid soap and hand paper towel was available in the children's sanitary area.
- The service was clean with cleaning schedules maintained on a daily basis. Tables were cleaned after activities before meals.
- A Fridge was available in the office off Room 1 for the perishable items in the children's lunch boxes.
- Pedal bins were available for contaminated waste.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

The water from the taps at the sinks in the sanitary facilities off Room 2 was cold to touch and not adequate for effective hand washing.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control:

The water system has been serviced and the water temperature is now thermostatically controlled and warm to touch. The designated person in charge will ensure as part of the daily risk assessment that the water at the sinks in the sanitary facilities remains warm to touch on a daily basis to ensure adequate hand washing.

Supporting documentation submitted

Infection Control:

Photograph evidence of an adequate temperature reading of the water from the taps in the sanitary facilities.

Summary Comment

The registered provider in the Corrective Action and Preventive Action plan has addressed the non-compliance for Regulation 23 Infection control. The response received has been reviewed and accepted.

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) The service provided evidence that a person had up to date First Aid Responders course and was available at all times to the children attending the pre-school service.

(2)(a) and (b) A suitably equipped first aid box was available and safely stored in the premises.

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 the fire drills completed in the service. The last recorded fire drill took place on the 20/12/2023.
- (b) A record was maintained of the number, type and maintenance record of the fire fighting equipment and mains powered smoke alarms on the premises. The fighting equipment was last serviced on 18/08/2023. The mains powered smoke alarms were last serviced on the 14/03/2023.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was conspicuously displayed in the care rooms.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured that the service was adequately insured for 46 children at any one time attending the service on a sessional/part-time basis. The policy showed that the service was insured from 28/03/2023 to 27/03/2024.