

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015MH068
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Name of Service:	Happy Days Creche & Pre School
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Address of Service:	Cherry Valley, Rathmoylon, Co. Meath
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Eircode:	A83 RY90
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Name of Registered Provider:	Mary Scanlon
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Service type:	Full Day, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	26/02/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	11	PM	3
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Meath Child & Parent Support Hub, Commons Road, Navan, Co. Meath
Inspection undertaken by:	AM Cunningham
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 Crèche and Pre-school was established in 2008. It is a privately run full day care, part time and sessional pre-school service for children aged 2 - 6 years and school aged. It is in the village of Rathmolyon and operates from 07.30hrs to 18.30hrs each weekday. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme. The pre-school is in a purpose built two storey building consisting of four care rooms, a manager's office, a kitchen/ dining area, sanitary accommodation, and a nappy changing area. On the ground floor, there are 2 care rooms namely Playschool room 3 which was used on the day of inspection for full day care children until 9.30 am and in the afternoon from 12.30pm to 18.00pm and the Toddler Room (not in use on the day of inspection). The first floor included Playschool room 1 which were used for the ECCE service in the morning and Preschool Room 2 was not in use on the day of inspection. Playschool room 1 was used for school aged children in the afternoon. An outdoor play space consisting of an artificial grass surface area was available. Car parking is available to the front of the pre-school.

Staffing

In total six staff members are employed in the service including the registered provider, three staff members who provide direct care to preschool children and two staff members who care for school aged children only and one of whom also works in the kitchen.

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

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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 person in charge, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

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

(2) (a)&(b) Two new staff members files were reviewed. All remaining files were reviewed on the last inspection and met compliance at that time.

Four validated written references were available either from a past employer or from a reputable source.

(c) Garda vetting disclosure was available for both staff members. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(4) The two new staff members did not work directly with preschool children and therefore do not require a child care qualification.

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Non-Compliance Information

(1)(b) The designated person in charge was not on the premises when the inspector arrived unannounced to carry out the inspection.

(2)(d) Police vetting was available for one staff member who required vetting however a translation was not available and therefore the inspector was unable to determine its outcome.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)(b) To address this, the staff rostering system has been reviewed and updated. All staff present on the premises, regardless of their role, are now clearly recorded on the daily roster to ensure full compliance with regulatory requirements and to provide an accurate record for inspection purposes. This includes the designated person in charge will be present and reflected on the roster.

(2)(d) The police vetting document has been professionally translated into English, and a copy of the translated document has been added to the staff member's file alongside the original documentation. The service will ensure going forward that all vetting documentation in a language other than English is accompanied by an appropriate translation to allow for clear verification of outcomes and to maintain full compliance with regulatory requirements

Supporting documentation submitted

Staff roster submitted with all staff present daily and their roles.

Translated police vetting outcome submitted for the staff member.

Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider has addressed the noncompliances in Regulation 9.

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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) Present on the morning of the inspection when the inspector arrived were two staff members with 11 preschool children. An additional staff member arrived at 10.30 am to work in the kitchen, the manager arrived in the service at 10.50am.
- (2) The following adult to child ratios were observed
- The **Playschool room 1**: there were 2 adults with 11 children ranging in age from 3 years 6 months to 4 years 6 months. Three children were attending on a full day care basis, 1 child was attending part time service, and 7 children were attending a sessional service. This room is used for school aged children in the afternoon.
 - The **Preschool room 2**: closed on the day of inspection.
 - The **Playschool room 3**: in the pm 3 children from playschool room 1 attending full day care were present with two staff members.

The manager arrived in the service at 10.50am following commencement of the inspection and was available to provide assistance and relief to the room as needed.

Non-Compliance Information

- (8) According to the staff roster two adults were not present on the premises at all times during the hours of operation. Only one staff member was rostered and confirmed present by staff between 9am and 9.30am, until the second childcare staff commenced work.

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Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The service acknowledges that the roster did not accurately reflect the full staffing presence at that time. To address this, the staff rostering system has been reviewed and updated. All staff present on the premises, regardless of their role, are now clearly recorded on the daily roster to ensure full compliance with regulatory requirements and to provide an accurate record for inspection purposes. This includes the designated person in charge will be present and reflected on the roster.

The service will keep using the new roster reflecting all staff member present and their role in the premises during the day

Supporting documentation submitted

A staff roster has been submitted to the Inspectorate to reflect two staff members present at all times.

Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider has addressed the noncompliance in Regulation 11.

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;

Non-Compliance Information

- (i) The staff roster available did not reflect the staff present on the day of inspection. A staff member was rostered to be present and was on statutory leave for a number of weeks previous, confirmed by the manager. The roster did not reflect the month or the days of the week, it had names and times beside staff but no confirmation of dates, therefore it was not transparent which staff were present each day.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

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Corrective and Preventive Action

The service acknowledges that the staff roster available at the time of inspection did not accurately reflect the staff present. It also did not clearly indicate the relevant month or days of the week, and included a staff member who was on statutory leave.

The staff roster has been fully reviewed and updated. A new rostering format has been implemented which clearly outlines the full date, including month and day, as well as the names, roles, and working hours of all staff scheduled to be on the premises. Staff who are on leave are no longer included on the active roster for the relevant period. An accurate, up-to-date roster is now maintained on site at all times.

Supporting documentation submitted

A new staff roster was submitted to the Inspectorate to reflect the staff members present each day.

Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider has addressed the non-compliances in Regulation 16.

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:

- Mealtimes in the service were observed to be a social and pleasant experience for the children. Staff sat at the table whilst the children ate engaging them in conversation and provided assistance to the children as required. Children had easy access to their drinking bottles which were accessible in their care rooms.

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- Children were observed being facilitated to self-direct their own play. The children were afforded the opportunity to choose activities and to follow through on their choices and change activities if they so wish. The theme in the care room was “Mothers Day” with artwork around the theme on display.

Supporting relationships around children:

- Staff communicate with parents verbally at pick up time regarding activities pertaining to their children during the day.
- The staff encouraged the children to engage positively with each other by adopting simple social rules such as turn taking, sharing in play activities and resolving minor disputes. Challenging behaviour when presented was dealt with in a calm and caring manner and the children responded well to distraction and re-direction.

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-

- (a) having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child 19 to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day, and*
- (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)(a) In each room there was adequate facilities for the children to play which accommodated the children’s play and facilitated the equipment and materials to be laid out in designated areas to facilitate easy access.

(b) Within the care rooms there were soft furnishings, mats, and cushions for children to take a break from activities and rest if needed.

(3)(a) There was a suitable, safe, and secure outdoor spaces to the side of the premises. The surface of the outdoor area was artificial grass.

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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 had a weekly menu plan with a variety of dishes freshly prepared in the service. All food is provided by the service except for the morning snack, children brought in their own. Morning snack commences at 10.30am, lunch was served at 12.35pm to 13.00hrs which was pasta bake. Water was the drink offered. Afternoon snack was at 15.00hrs which consisted of ham sandwiches.

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 as demonstrated by the following examples:

- The main door to the service was secured by a buzzer system and the outdoor space was enclosed by walls with a secure side gate. These security measures ensured that a child did not exit unsupervised and restricted unauthorised persons from gaining access to the service and the outdoor spaces.
- All cleaning agents were stored out of reach of the children.
- All furniture and display units had a stable base with no risk of toppling identified. All play equipment seen on the day of inspection was suitable for the age, stage and development of the children in each care room.

Infection Control:

The following infection control measures were observed in the service as demonstrated by the following examples:

- The service was clean with cleaning schedules maintained on a daily basis.
- All bins for contaminated waste were foot pedal operated.
- Warm water, hand paper towel and liquid soap was available in the children's sanitary facilities.

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Non-Compliance Information

Fire Safety:

1. Documentation was not available of monthly fire drills carried out in the service. The last recorded fire drill was the 20th November 2025.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Fire Safety:

A clear and comprehensive fire drill record template is now in use, capturing all required details. A system has been implemented to ensure that all fire drills are recorded immediately after completion. Responsibility for completing and maintaining the fire drill records has been assigned to a designated staff member.

In addition, management will carry out regular checks of the fire drill log to ensure that records are accurate, up to date, and available for inspection at all times.

These measures will ensure ongoing compliance with Regulation 23.

Supporting documentation submitted

Fire Safety:

The service submitted evidence of fire drills carried out and documentation available to record fire drills.

Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider has addressed the noncompliance in Regulation 23.

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.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-

(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.

Compliance Information

(3)(b) All persons are approved by an employee prior to entry to the pre-school. Visitors are announced and approved by an authorised staff member on arrival, the visitors' details are entered into the visitors' book.

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Non-Compliance Information

- (1) It was noted that the arrival times of the children were not accurately recorded when the inspector commenced the inspection.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The service acknowledges that, at the time the inspection commenced, the arrival times of children were not accurately recorded. This was addressed immediately on the day of inspection, and the attendance records were updated to accurately reflect the children's arrival times. Staff were reminded of the requirement to record attendance in real time.

All staff have been informed of their responsibilities in relation to maintaining accurate attendance records. Management will carry out regular checks of the attendance records during the day to ensure they are completed in real time and remain accurate.

These measures will ensure that records are accurate, up to date, and available for inspection at all times in line with Regulation 24

Supporting documentation submitted

Documentation to support the recording of children's daily attendance.

Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider has addressed the non-compliances in Regulation 24.

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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 persons had up to date First Aid Responders training and were 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) Records are available to show that fire drills were carried out.
- (b) A record of the number, type and maintenance of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms were available on the premises. The firefighting equipment were serviced on the day of inspection 11/11/2025. The smoke alarms were last serviced on the 20/05/2025.
- (4) The fire evacuation procedures were displayed in conspicuous positions on the premises.

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Part VI – Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider had a valid insurance certificate for 40 preschool children with an expiry date of 27th March 2026.