

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015MH069
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Happy Days Playschool
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Kildangan, Kinnegad, Co. Meath
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<b>Eircode:</b>	N91 E838
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Catrina Cooney
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<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	26/03/2025
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	13	PM	0
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate, Meath Child & Parent Support Hub, Commons Road, Navan, Co. Meath.
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	D. Murray
<b>Title:</b>	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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not Applicable
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### Description of service

Happy Days Playschool provides a sessional service to children from 2 to 6 years and participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education Programme (ECCE). The service operates from 09:15am to 12:15pm Monday to Friday and caters for 18 pre-school children at any one time.

The service is located in a purpose-built extension attached to the registered providers home and consists of 1 care room with sanitary facilities. A large outdoor space is located to the rear of the premises.

### Staffing

The registered provider employs 1 staff member, both staff were present on the day of inspection. An emergency person is also available if required.

### 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 provider, 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.*

*(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.*

*(6A) Paragraph (4) shall not apply to an employee of a registered provider where - (a) the registered provider receives funding for the employment of the employee pursuant to a scheme funded by the Minister and known as the Access and Inclusion Model, and (b) the employment of the employee is for the purpose of providing support, pursuant to the scheme referred to in subparagraph (a), for a child attending the service to enable the child to participate in the programme known as the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) funding Programme.”*

### Compliance Information

- (1) (a) The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.  
 (b) A designated person in charge was on the premises when the inspectors arrived unannounced to carry out the inspection.
- (2) Three staff files were reviewed.
- (a)&(b) Six validated written references were available either from a past employer or from a reputable source.  
 (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for the 3 staff. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.  
 (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) All 3 childcare staff 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.
- (6) (a) One staff member was employed under the scheme known as the Access and Inclusion Model.

### 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 registered provider ensured that an adequate number of adults were working directly with the children attending the service.

(3) Present on the day of inspection were the registered provider and 1 childcare staff providing care and education to 13 children ranging in age from 2 years 5 months to 4 years 10 months.

### 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 adult's demonstrated knowledge of the individual care needs of the children. Children were comforted when they became upset with the staff adopting behavioural management strategies such as speaking to them softly, promoting turn taking and sharing and having a change of environment outdoors to support transitions.
- The themed areas of interest in the care rooms were well developed with supporting equipment. Children were observed being allowed to self-direct their own play. The theme of the week was "Mothers Day" with the children making cards to bring home.
- The children brought their own healthy lunches which they had at 11am. Staff members were observed chatting with the children which provided a positive atmosphere for encouraging conversation and building relationships.
- The service embraced outdoor play and learning with all children availing of outdoor play on the day of the inspection. The outdoor space had areas of interest which supported children's play and curiosity with adequate space for children to play alone and in small and large groups. The resident rabbit Skippy and 2 hens Robin and Ruby were a great attraction with the children. Children were observed enjoying imaginative, energetic and messy outdoor play with both their peers and staff members.

### 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. The staff members worked closely with parents to provide a child centered approach to learning. The service had a “Class Book” which kept a photographic and written record of all the activities in the pre-school throughout the year. This book goes home to each family when completed. Each child also has “My First Activity Book “which is shown to parents at the parent teacher meeting in January of each year and also goes home at the end of the year. The children appeared comfortable, happy and relaxed in their environment.

### 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-

- 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 to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day, and
- 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

(1)(b) Cosy areas consisting of a mat beside the book stand was available should a child needed to take a break from activities and rest.

(3)(a) The outdoor space consisting of grass and cement and was enclosed by fencing and hedging with secure gates. 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

- The care room was well resourced with play materials and equipment which were laid out in interest areas which were spacious and uncluttered. Equipment and materials facilitated all types of play and learning which incorporated natural/sensorial materials, art and crafts and 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 provided the children with the opportunity to avail of physical, challenging experiences involving gross and fine motor skills. Equipment included climbing frames, activity wooden units, wooden play house, mud kitchen, sand area, ride on toys, swings, children’s table and chairs for outdoor dining and activities and 2 scarecrows Tracey and Josh who resided beside the vegetable patch.

## 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:

- On the day of inspection both the indoor and outdoor environment appeared safe. Risk assessments were conducted on a daily basis. The registered provider and the staff member had a clear understanding of their role and range of responsibilities to ensure the health, safety and welfare of the children.

### 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 was on 17/02/2025.
- (b) A record was maintained of the number, type and maintenance record of the fire fighting equipment on the premises. The fire fighting equipment was last serviced on the 23/08/2024.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was conspicuously displayed on the premises.

#### Non-Compliance Information

- (1)(b) There was no record maintained for the mains powered smoke alarms on the premises.

## Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

### Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)(b) The mains powered smoke alarm has been serviced. The registered provider will ensure that the mains powered smoke alarm is serviced on an annual basis.

### Supporting documentation submitted

Maintenance record for the mains powered smoke alarm.

### Summary Comment

The registered provider has addressed the non-compliances. The response received has been reviewed and accepted.

## 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 22 children at any one time attending the service. The policy showed that the service was insured from 28/03/2024 to the 27/03/2025.