

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015MH129
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Happy Kids Preschool & Montessori
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Carnuff Little, Deanhill, Navan, Co. Meath
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<b>Eircode:</b>	C15 WY01
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Louise McCabe
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<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	05/09/2024
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	19	PM	N/A
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Family Resource Centre, Common's Road, Navan, Co. Meath
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<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	AM Cunningham
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<b>Title:</b>	Early Years Inspector
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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).	

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

Happy Kids Preschool and Montessori is a privately operated Early Years' Service, located in a rural setting in Co. Meath. The childcare service provides a sessional service to children aged from 2 years to 6 years and operates from 09.00hrs to 12.00hrs Monday to Friday. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme. There are three outdoor shelters one called the Chestnut room and the second the Sunflower room and the third is used as an art room. The Chestnut room and Sunflower room are fully enclosed, and the third shelter is partially enclosed. There is an indoor room available (staff report that the service operates from the outdoors only at present) which was not used.

### Staffing

The registered provider and two staff members (one providing AIM support) are employed in the service.

### 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 inspector arrived unannounced to carry out the inspection.

(2) Three staff files were reviewed, and the following was noted.

- (a) & (b) Six validated written references were available for the staff members.

- (c) Garda vetting disclosure was available for all staff members.
- (d) Police vetting was not required as no staff member had resided outside the state for a period of more than 6 consecutive months as an adult.

(4) The staff members held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 8 and level 6 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

(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) On the day of inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.

(3) The adult/child ratio was correct;

Three adults (one staff providing AIM support) cared for 19 children attending a sessional service (aged between 3 years to 5 years).

### 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,

#### Compliance Information

##### Basic needs of Infants and Children

- A healthy nutritious snack in line with the healthy eating policy of the service was provided for the children attending the service by their parents.
- The children were supported to be self-caring, suitable to the age and stage of development, including hand washing, toileting and caring for their belongings.
- An appropriate daily routine was in place which allocate times for child – initiated play and learning and adult planned and facilitated activities. Children moved about the outdoor area exploring and investigating nature, picking leaves, playing with mud and listening to the birds.
- Children had outdoor gear available such as pull up trousers, coats and boots.
- Transitions were clearly announced and signaled by staff. Children were given time to complete activities at their own pace before starting the next activity. This approach respected the children's learning engagements and resulted in a smooth flow in the routine.
- Snack time was a very social event which took place in the Sunflower and Chestnut room with animated conversations and discussions. Staff encouraged children to be independent and to develop self-care skills at every opportunity.

##### Supporting Relationships Around the Children:

- Relationships between staff and the children were very supportive, warm, and consistently positive. Staff sat at the child's level while assisting them with activities. Staff were overheard praising children for sharing toys and supported children to find positive solutions to minor disputes.
- The staff members engaged in play activities with the children with lots of enthusiasm and laughter observed. The children appeared confident and relaxed in their environment. Language development was facilitated through reading, songs, and conversation.

### 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 service used the outdoor area for all activities. The Chestnut room and Sunflower room were fully enclosed, and the third shelter was partially enclosed. Areas were developed in the outdoors such as mud kitchen, messy table area, wooden tunnel, balance beams, wooden sand table, swing, blackboard, sit on toys plastic house, and a bench. A grass and a hard surface area were available. One of the shelters was designated as an art area with for example paints, brushes, colours, easel and paper. Tabletop activities were available in the Chestnut and Sunflower shelter. Rest areas were available in the enclosed shelters for children who wish to rest.

### 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:

- The main door to the service was secured and the outdoor spaces were enclosed and had secure gates. These security measures ensured that a child did not exit unsupervised and restricted unauthorised persons from gaining access to the service and outdoor space.
- An outdoor risk assessment was conducted on a daily basis.
- 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.

##### Infection Control:

The following infection control measures were observed:

- The hand washing policy and nappy changing policy were implemented in practice with appropriate hand washing for staff and children at all times.
- Cleaning schedules were maintained on a daily basis.

### Fire Safety:

The following fire safety measures were observed:

- The fire assembly point was clearly identified.
- Fire drills were conducted on a monthly basis.
- The emergency exit doors were unobstructed.

### 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.*

#### Compliance Information

(1) A record was kept of each child's time of arrival and departure on a daily basis by the staff members.

### 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 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 22 preschool children with an expiry date of 27<sup>th</sup> March 2025.