

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015MO127
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Happy Days Preschool and Afterschool
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Carrowholly National School, Rusheen, Westport, Co. Mayo
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<b>Eircode:</b>	F28 VX94
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Erzsi Whyte, Mary Chambers
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<b>Service type:</b>	Part Time
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	09/10/2025
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	14	PM	5
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Year's Inspectorate, TUSLA, Child and Family Agency 2nd Floor, St Mary's HQ Castlebar Co Mayo
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	B Lavin
<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

This part time service operates from a designated section of a primary school in Rusheen, county Mayo. The service caters for children aged from 2 years and 8 months to 5 years and operates from 09:00 – 14:00hours Monday to Friday. There is one large playroom and sanitary facilities. The service has access to an enclosed outdoor play area to the rear of the primary school.

### Staffing

There are 3 adults, 1 of whom is the registered provider working directly with the children. One staff member was on leave on the day of the inspection.

### 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 and health, welfare and development of child. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 15 Record of a preschool child.

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.*

### Compliance Information

- 1 (a) The registered provider was the designated person in charge and a named person was available to deputise as required.
- (b) The person in charge was present in the service for the duration of the inspection.
- (2) The records of 3 adults employed in the service were reviewed.
- (a) There were 5 written and validated past employer references.
- (b) There was 1 written and validated reference from a reputable source in the absence of a past employer.
- (c) A garda vetting disclosure was available for the 3 adults in the service. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew garda vetting every 3 years for the 3 adults.
- (d) International police vetting was available for 2 of the adults that had lived outside the state for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months as an adult.
- (4) Evidence of the required qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education was available on file for the 3 staff who worked directly with the children.

### 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) During the period of inspection there were adequate numbers of adults working with the pre-school children attending the service.
- (2) The registered provider ensured that the minimum ratio of adults to children specified was maintained.

There were 14 children present in the morning aged between 2 and 4 years old with 2 staff members caring for the children. There were 5 children present in the afternoon aged between 2 and 4 years old with 2 staff members caring for them.

### 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.*

*(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-*  
*(c) an authorised person.*

*(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) is retained for a period of 2 years from the date on which the child to whom it relates ceases to attend the service.*

#### Compliance Information

- (1) (a) to (i) The inspector reviewed a random sample of 10 children's records across the children attending the service. The required information including the authorisation to collect the child, details of illness or special needs of the child, the emergency contact person for the child and record of immunisations were fully completed for each child.
- (3) (c) The required information was made readily available for inspection to the inspector in the service by the person in charge on request.

(4) The person in charge confirmed that the records were retained for the required period of 2 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, and*

#### Compliance Information

##### Basic Needs

- Drinking water was available to all children in individual beakers throughout the preschool session.
- During the inspection, the children ate a morning snack which consisted of fruit, yogurt, crackers, breadsticks, ham, sandwiches and cheese provided by their parents/guardians. The children were seated at low tables and chairs and supervised by the adults who gave assistance where it was needed and encouraged conversation with the children during mealtime. The service provided the afternoon snack which consists of waffles, fruits, toast, rice cakes and yogurts.
- Each child was given enough time to eat and enjoy their snacks without being rushed. The atmosphere during snack time was relaxed, with pleasant social interaction among the children and staff.
- The children had unrestricted access to the toilets and did not have to wait to use the toilet. The staff responded to children's cues quickly and reminded children to use the toilet regularly especially the children who were toilet training.
- The children enjoyed freedom of movement in the preschool room and outdoor area. They were able to explore several different interest areas both indoors and outdoors.
- In the playroom, the children had the opportunity to rest or relax with soft seating in the form of a large comfortable couch in a designated cosy library area.
- Stackable beds were available if a child required sleep during the day.

##### Supporting relationships

- The staff members demonstrated warmth and sensitivity in their interactions with the children.
- Staff supported children to engage positively with one another. The children were encouraged to engage in play activities that required turn taking and sharing. Staff members were heard encouraging children to

be mindful of the feelings of those around them which promoted an ethos of friendship and working together.

- The service provided parents and guardians with daily information, including significant events or activities involving their child, for example, verbal communication at drop off and collection times.
- Staff guided and supported children who needed more help. Staff used positive strategies to support children's inclusion for example using personal greetings, looking at family photographs, visual routines chart, sensory toys and by giving appropriate encouragement.
- The staff used visual aids and probed with questions such as 'who is this?', 'how many are there?', and 'where is that' during story time. The children enjoyed action songs, mealtime songs and children's learning songs. There was a child friendly jobs board in place and the children were familiar with the routine of transitions and assigned individual jobs.

### Physical and material environment

- The children were observed at free play, connecting, stacking, building, linking and doing puzzles and tabletop activities. The children played with transport vehicles, a toy kitchen, soft toys, farm toys, baby dolls, dinosaurs, dress up and art projects.
- Outside play was encouraged and children were observed to play freely. There was an enclosed outdoor play area for the children. The children had the opportunity to develop their gross motor skills on swings, slides and ride on toys. Sensory play and imaginative play were provided for with playhouses, mud kitchen and a sandbox built into a new storage shed.
- Visual aids in the form of picture and word reminders and instructions were displayed and used with the children to support their learning. Displayed on the walls were themes including family, birthdays, colour of the month, number of the month, job leader, communication themes and wellbeing.

## 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 there was one staff member trained in First Aid Response (FAR) and available to the children attending the pre-school service.

(2)(a) There was a first aid box within the playroom which was safely stored, easily accessible and in a conspicuous position.

b) The service demonstrated that the first aid boxes were fully equipped and available to the children attending the pre-school service.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

### Compliance Information

There was evidence of certification of adequate insurance which had an expiry date of 27<sup>th</sup> of March 2026.

The insurance for 22 pre-school children was for a part time service and included the following: -

- public liability insurance,
- insurance against fire and theft,
- buildings insurance,
- insurance for outings undertaken as part of the service provision.