

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WW107
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Name of Service:	Happy Faces Community Playschool
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Address of Service:	St Mary's Junior School, Blessington, Co. Wicklow
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Eircode:	W91 YNOP
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Name of Registered Provider:	Catriona McCord
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	10/06/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	15	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Child and Family Agency First Floor Trinity Building IDA Business Park Southern Cross Road Bray Co. Wicklow
Inspection undertaken by:	H. Bourke
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 Faces Community Playgroup first opened in 1986. This is a community-based service and is registered to provide care and education for children aged between two and six years of age. The service is open from Monday to Friday from 09.15 am to 12.15 pm and provides a sessional ECCE service for 38 weeks of the year. The service operates out of a self-contained classroom located in the local National School in Blessington Co. Wicklow.

Staffing

There are currently three adults employed on the service and this includes the registered provider. There were two adults present on the day of 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/ 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.

Additional Information

A referral was sent to the registration office. The service has changed rooms, but it remains within the same premises.

Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the person in charge, the second staff member 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*

(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.

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(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

Following a conversation with the manager of the service and reviewing the staff roster it was determined that there are three staff members currently employed in the service. These three staff files were reviewed.

(1)(a)

There was a person in charge of the service and there was a named staff member who was able to deputise as required.

(b)

The person in charge was on the premises at the time of arrival of the inspector and remained on the premises for the duration of the inspection.

(2)(a)(b)

Written references were available in respect of one staff member.

(c)

The required three-year Garda vetting disclosures were available in respect of three adults.

(3)

The procedures specified in paragraph (2) were carried out prior to any staff member being appointed, assigned or allowed access to a child attending the service.

(4)

Three members of staff held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or higher on the National Framework of Qualifications.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a)(b)

Written references were available not available respect of two staff members.

(d)

Police vetting was not available for one adult who had lived outside the State for a period of longer than six consecutive months since turning 18 years of age.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(a)(b)

All staff members now have two validated references on file and regular checks of staff files will take place to make sure they are always up to standard.

(d)

An application for police vetting has been made on behalf on one adult.

Supporting documentation submitted

(2)(a)(b) and (d)

Photographic evidence of references and application for police vetting were submitted with the CAPA response.

Summary Comment

The non-compliances found on the day of inspection in relation to regulation 9 (2)(a)(b) have been addressed.

Regulation 9 (2)(d) remains outstanding and will be reviewed on next inspection.

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.

(8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-

(c) a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that, where the person in charge operates the service single-handedly, a second person familiar with the operation of the service and in a position to provide assistance to the person in charge in operating the service is, at all times, within close distance of the service and available to attend the service to assist the person in charge in the event of an emergency.

Compliance Information

(1)
Throughout the inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.

(3)
The correct adult/child ratio was maintained at all times. There were two adults employed and present with 15 children on the day of inspection.

(8)(c)
Not applicable as there were two adults on the premises at all times and the service is not operated single-handedly.

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.*

(5) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (2) is retained for a period of 2 years from the date on which the child attends the service.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)-(i)

The manager ensured that a record in writing of the above list of particulars, was kept in respect of each child attending the pre-school service.

(3)(c)

The manager ensured that these records were available for inspection to an authorised person.

(5)

The manager demonstrated that the records were kept for two years from the date on which the child first attended the pre-school service.

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:

(h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;

(i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;

(j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;

(k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.

(3) A record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection on the premises, and the documents and records referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall be open to inspection whether on the premises or elsewhere, by an authorised person.

Compliance Information

(1)(h),(i) and (k)

The manager ensured that a record in writing was kept of the above list of documented information in relation to the pre-school service.

(3)

The manager ensured that the above list of documents referred to in paragraph (1)(h),(i) and (k) were open to inspection on the premises to an authorised person.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(j)

Facilities for the correct recording of the administration of medicine to a child were available in the service on the day of inspection but were not being used to document a supplement a child in the service receives on a daily basis.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)(j)

Medication form completed each day that child requires medication. We will review on a weekly basis to ensure standards are kept at all times.

Supporting documentation submitted

(1)(j)

Photographic evidence was submitted of correct documentation of medicine administration recorded on the correct recording sheet.

Summary Comment

The non-compliance found on the day on inspection in relation to regulation 16 (1)(j) has been addressed and will be reviewed again on next inspection.

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

On the day of inspection, the lunches provided by the parents of the children attending the service were in keeping with the Healthy Eating Policy of the pre-school. Fresh drinking water was available for the children throughout the morning.

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 main door to the service was securely locked on arrival of the inspectors to the service.
- All toys were in good condition and equipment was suitable, age appropriate and in good working order.
- All cleaning products were stored safely out of the reach of children.
- The emergency exit route in the pre-school rooms were free from obstruction and clearly marked.

Infection Control:

- The pre-school room contained two sanitary areas and a nappy changing area. There was running water, liquid soap and paper towels available. A foot pedal bin was available in each area for the safe disposal of used paper towels.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

It was noted that while the windows in the pre-school room were not directly within the reach of a child, the blind cords were not secured. This was brought to the attention of the manager on the day of inspection.

Infection Control:

1. There were no cleaning schedules available on the day of inspection to record the cleaning of care room, sanitary areas, or equipment in the care room. The schedule and recording of the cleaning of all areas and equipment within the care room is essential for effective infection control purposes.
2. On the day of inspection, hand cleaning, before snack time, using hand sanitiser was not robust enough for effective infection control purposes. This was brought to the attention of the manager.
3. The two sanitary areas within the care room setting were being used to store a variety of items belonging to the pre-school room. This is inadequate for infection control purposes.
4. Following a review of the Infection control policy, it was noted that a nappy changing procedure or policy was not available on the day of inspection, this was noted on last inspection.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

The cord blinds are now securely hooked up out of reach.

Infection Control:

1. We now have daily cleaning schedule present and signed daily.
2. Children are now washing their hands with running water and soap before snack time.
3. Both sanitary areas have been cleaned out and shall remain clear of equipment.
4. There is a new nappy changing policy on display in the sanitary area.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Photographic evidence was submitted demonstrating that the cord blinds are now hooked up.

Infection Control:

Photographic evidence was submitted with the CAPA form showing the daily cleaning schedule signed up, children washing their hands, both sanitary areas cleaned out and a new robust nappy changing policy.

Summary Comment

The non-compliances found on the day of inspection in relation to regulation 23 General safety and Infection control have been addressed and will be reviewed again on next inspection.

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)
 A staff member trained in FAR first aid for children was available at all times to the children attending the pre-school service.

(2)(a)

A well-equipped first aid box was easily accessible and in a conspicuous position in the care room.

(b)

The first aid box was always available to the children attending the service.

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 firefighting 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)

There was evidence that a fire drill had taken place in the premises.

(b)

There was a record in writing of the maintenance of the firefighting equipment in the premises dated November 2023.

(4)

A notice of the procedures to follow in the event of a fire were clearly displayed in the care room setting.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(a)

There was no evidence of a fire drill having taken place in the premises since December 2023. Regular fire drills are required for the safe evacuation of children and staff members in the event of an emergency.

(b)

There was no record in writing available of the smoke alarms being services in the premises.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)(a)

The fire drill file has been updated and a monthly reminder has been set to complete fire drills.

(b)

A record of the smoke alarm testing was received from the main office.

Supporting documentation submitted

(1)(a) and (b)

Photographic evidence was submitted with the CAPA form demonstrating signed fire drills having taken place and smoke alarms having been tested.

Summary Comment

The non-compliances found on the day of inspection in relation to regulation 26 (1)(a) and (b) have now been addressed and will be reviewed on next inspection.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 30 - Minimum space requirements

(3) A registered provider of a sessional pre-school service or a pre-school service in a drop-in centre shall ensure that a minimum of 1.818 square metres of clear floor space is available for each child attending the service.

(6) Subject to paragraph (7), a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that there are no more than 22 children in a room in the service at any time.

Compliance Information

(3)

The registered provider ensure that the minimum floor space was available for each child attending the service. The clear floor space in the pre-school room was 61.21 square metres.

(6)

The registered provider ensured that no more than 22 children attend the service at any one time.