

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WX046
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Name of Service:	FAB Huggie Bears
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Address of Service:	FAB Community & Family Resource Centre, Coolcotts, Wexford, Co. Wexford
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Eircode:	Y35 W319
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Name of Registered Provider:	Catherine Walsh
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	15/05/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	24	PM	18
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tulsa Child and Family Agency, Ely Hospital, Ferrybank, Wexford.
Inspection undertaken by:	E. Cullen
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).

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Description of service

FAB Huggie Bears is a community based early years service which is managed by a voluntary board of management. The service operates from 9am to 5pm and offers a sessional, part-time, and full day care early years service to children aged 1 to 6 years of age and currently takes enrolments for children from 18 months of age. The service is located within the community centre with designated rooms for the sole purpose of the early years service. The service consists of three rooms over two floors, sanitary accommodation, a sensory room, lobby area, offices and outdoor play area.

Staffing

The service employs twenty-four staff members which includes an early years coordinator, early years staff members, cleaner, community employment scheme participants working directly with children or in administration or maintenance roles. The registered provider does not work in the service. All relevant staff working directly with children in the service held the minimum of level 5 and above qualifications in Childcare and Early Childhood Care and Education or were in the process of completing their qualifications under the community employee scheme.

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. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

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A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 16. As a result, the scope of the inspection included the toddler, preschool and upstairs preschool rooms.

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.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

(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

(2) Documentation was reviewed for the twenty-four staff members employed by the service.

(a)(b) Two validated references were available for each staff member from either a past employer, or from a source other than a past employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all relevant staff members. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Police vetting was available for one staff member who had lived outside the state for a period over 6 months.

(4) Certificates of qualification were available on file demonstrating that relevant staff members held a qualification at the minimum level 5 and above on the National Framework of Qualifications.

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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.

Compliance Information

(1) On the day of inspection there were adequate numbers of staff were working directly with the children at all times. There were 24 children with 7 staff members directly supervising them during the morning of the inspection and 18 children with 5 staff members during the afternoon.

(2) On the morning of the inspection, the staff to child ratios were maintained as follows throughout the service:

- In the toddler room, there were 9 children aged 2 to 4 years old being cared for by 3 staff.
- In the preschool room, there were 11 children aged 4 to 5 years old being cared for by 3 staff.
- In the upstairs preschool room, there were 4 children aged 3 to 5 years old being cared for by 2 staff.

During the afternoon:

- In the toddler room, there were 6 children aged 2 to 3 years old being cared for by 2 staff.
- In the preschool room, there were 12 children aged 4 to 5 years old being cared for by 3 staff.
- The upstairs preschool was closed.

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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:

- (a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;*
- (b) details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services;*
- (c) details of the adult:child ratios in the service;*
- (d) the type of care or programme provided in the service;*
- (e) the facilities available;*
- (f) the opening hours and fees;*
- (g) the policies, procedures and statements the service is required to maintain in accordance with Regulation 10;*
- (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.*

Compliance Information

(1)(a) – (k)

The registered provider ensured that all relevant information was accessible and available for inspection by authorised persons. Information notice boards in the lobby displayed relevant staff information, the Tusla registration certificate was on display providing confirmation of the class of service registered. Staff rosters were available.

Each early years room was responsible for maintaining records of attendance, administration of medication and any accident or incident records. Policies and procedures were available for staff in the office and a parent's handbook was also available.

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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

(b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

The indoor areas were bright, warm, and homely, this was achieved using natural materials and neutral colours. Children's identity and belonging was fostered through the display of works of art and their recent learning. Low-level open shelving units were used to create areas of interest. Children could freely access materials and resources from the labelled shelves, promoting independence and choice making. A range of play-based materials were offered in the designated interest areas of each room. Children's literacy development was promoted with a well laid out library areas. Books, and dress up materials were available for use by the children. Children's belongings had a designated space in the classrooms and lobby areas. In the preschool room children had wall mounted cubbies for their artwork and small personal items from home. A well-resourced sensory room was available for use where children's sensory needs could be met.

(b)

Mealtimes observed were unhurried social experiences in all rooms, staff sat with children and engaged in conversation. Children were provided with autonomy to select foods from the snacks provided, with extra portions and alternatives available as needed. Drinks were freely accessible to the children in each classroom throughout the day, drinks stations were on low level shelves.

Children who were toilet trained, used the toilet as needed and handwashing was promoted after toileting. Attention was given to children's appearance with staff observed to clean children's faces and hands. Children had free movement and choice of activities in all rooms observed on the day. An outdoor rota was displayed in each room, and children were observed in the outdoor area throughout the day.

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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 recently changed how food is provided in the service with the introduction of the Bia Blásta programme. The service now provides morning and afternoon snacks which are prepared onsite by staff members. Snacks provided on the day of inspection varied from room to room, staff members described how they were devising the menu based on the food preferences of each individual group. Food provided on the day included toast, breakfast cereals, fresh fruit, rice cakes, crackers, yogurt, cheese, cold and hot meats. The menus available detailed a range of both hot and cold snacks which are rotated.

Parents and guardians send in a hot meal daily with the children which is refrigerated and reheated onsite for children attending on a full day care basis. Drinks were also sent in from home each day.

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:

There was a keypad entry system in place on each classroom door of the building to prevent unauthorised persons gaining entry or children exiting unsupervised. A staff member was present at reception monitoring entry and exit from the building. The kitchenettes and staff areas were inaccessible to children. All cleaning agents were stored safely and out of reach of children.

Accident and incident books maintained a record of any incidents, these were completed in detail and signatures confirmed that relevant parents, staff and a manager were informed. All blind cords were securely mounted out of reach of children.

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All tables and chairs used by children were in good condition and suitable for use by the age range of children using them. Equipment and materials used in each of the rooms were appropriate for use by the age range of children using them. The outdoor play area was maintained to a good standard and free from hazards.

Infection Control:

The service was clean and well maintained with cleaning schedules maintained daily by staff. Children were observed washing their hands before eating, and after toileting. There was warm running water, liquid soap and paper hand towels available for hand washing throughout the service. Each room had designated children's toilets or a nappy changing area. Tables and equipment were cleaned prior to food being served to children and appropriate safe food storage and preparation was observed.

Administration of Medication:

Signed medication record books documented the details of any medications which had been administered in the service in line with the service policy on administration of medication. Medications supplied by parents were stored securely and inaccessible to children. Health care plans were put in place where required.

Safe Sleep:

No children required sleep on the day of inspection, staff members described the appropriate procedures for when children do sleep while in attendance.

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) There are eleven staff members trained in first aid response available to the children attending the early years service.

(2)(a)(b) There was a suitably equipped first aid box stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position on the premises available for the use of the children attending the early years service.