

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015WX053
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Higgy's House Creche and Montessori
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Ramsgate Village, Gorey, Co. Wexford
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<b>Eircode:</b>	Y25 X285
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Hilary Lantzoz
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<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	26/01/2026
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	64	PM	64
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate Tusla Child and Family Agency Ely Hospital, Ferrybank, Wexford
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<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	C. Ryan & JA. McKimm
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<b>Title:</b>	Early Years Inspectors
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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

Higgy's House Creche and Montessori is a registered as a full day care service for children aged 1 to 6 years. The service offers Montessori and play based learning programmes. The service is open from Monday to Friday 08:00am to 18:00pm. The service is located in a purpose-built premises for the sole use of the preschool service. The building consists of four playrooms, a kitchen, a sleep room, a sensory room, office and sanitary accommodation. There is an enclosed garden/play area to the rear of the premises.

### Staffing

There are a total of 14 staff working in the service. The service employs a childcare manager who is the designated person in charge daily and works directly with the children. The registered provider does not work in the service. The staff working directly with children in the service held the minimum of level 5, 6 and 8 qualifications in Childcare and Early Childhood Care and Education on the National Qualifications Framework or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

### 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.

Regulation 9(1)(2)(4) – Management and Recruitment,

Regulation 11(1)(2) – Staffing Levels,  
Regulation 19 (1)– Health, Welfare and Development of Child,  
Regulation 23 – Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child,  
Regulation 25 – First Aid,  
Regulation 26 – Fire Safety and  
Regulation 28 – Insurance.

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 inspectors wish 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

(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
- (c) there is a clear management structure in the service that identifies the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and unpaid worker.

(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)(b)(c)

The manager was the designated person in charge of the service on the inspector's arrival. There was a second named staff member available to deputise as needed. Staff were clear around their roles and responsibilities and reporting structures within the service.

The files for all staff working in the service were reviewed on the day.

(2)(a)(b)

There were validated references for each of the employees kept in each staff member's file.

- (c)  
Garda vetting disclosures were available for all staff working in the service. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to re-new Garda vetting every 3 years.
- (d)  
Police vetting disclosures were on file for the staff who had lived outside of the state for a period of longer than six months as an adult.
- (4)  
There were certificates of qualification for the staff members working directly with the preschool children available on file.

## 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)(2)  
During the inspection, there were an adequate number of staff working directly with the children.  
During the morning there were 10 staff caring for 64 children.  
During the afternoon there were 10 staff caring for 64 children.  
The manager was present and available on the premises throughout the day.  
A student was on placement also during the day.

### 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 and discussions with staff reflected the children's experience within the service on the day of inspection:

#### Basic Needs

- Children's needs were met in a warm caring responsive manner, as a result children were observed to be content in their environment. For example, the children enjoyed showing the inspector some of their favourite toys.
- On the day of inspection, a hot meal of Caribbean pork and rice was served along with fruit. Children were observed to eat their food in an unhurried manner in their rooms. During mealtimes, staff sat with children promoting and assisting the children as required and encouraging social interaction.
- Babies were given the opportunity to sleep at a designated sleep time after dinner in the sleep room. The children were made comfortable for sleep. For example, staff were observed to hold children and rub their back to comfort and settle to sleep. Soothers were provided to the children who needed them and relaxing music was played.
- Staff described how they document and share information about the children in relation to diet, sleep and nappy changes on an online platform which parents have immediate access to. Sleep plans for babies were reviewed and in line with guidance for safe sleep.

#### Supporting Relationships

- Songs and music were used to support the transition of children between activities. The interactions were warm and positive between children and staff throughout the day.
- The staff within the service were observed to speak to each other in a professional and warm manner, working as a team to meet the changing needs of the children.

### Physical and Material Environment

- The service consisted of four playrooms located over two floors. The playrooms were equipped with a wide variety of play materials and well-developed interest areas, which were suitable for the age and stage of development of the children using them. For example, in the Willow room the babies had equipment to encourage their mobility such as push toys, play tunnels and soft mats. The staff engaged children in developmental sensory play using cloud props and rainbow wands.
- There were materials and toys such as dolls house, a shop, kitchen/home corner, books, sand pits, sensory trays, art and crafts, blocks, magnetic toys, puzzles and jigsaws. Low open shelves allowed children to access materials independently during free play.
- Children's identity and belonging was fostered through the display of their works of art and their recent learning, birthday walls, local community photographs, a family wall and individual named hooks for their coats and bags.
- The outdoor area consisted of an enclosed area to the rear of the premises. The area had a variety of surfaces such as concreted area for ride on toys, an all-weather matting under the climbing frame and grass area. There was a playhouse, a mud kitchen and a messy area with sand pits and digging areas.

### 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:**

Access to the premises was secured via an electronic system to restrict entry to unauthorised persons. The outdoor play area was fully enclosed, and children were fully supervised while outside.

Attendance records were fully maintained daily by staff in the individual rooms.

A sample of eight accident and incident reports reviewed were completed in line with the services policy.

##### **Infection Control:**

There was warm running water, liquid soap and paper hand towels available for hand drying throughout the service. Children were observed being supervised with washing their hands before eating, after messy play and after toileting. Staff ensured children's hands were washed after nappy changing.

Nappy changing practice was observed, and staff followed the nappy changing policy and all required steps for infection control, including the use of gloves, aprons, and thorough handwashing after changes.

Cot sheets and other linen used for children was laundered frequently and stored appropriately.

Foot pedal bins were in working order and used throughout the premises.

### **Administration of Medication:**

There was an administration of medication policy. The staff discussed with the inspector the procedure to follow when a child required administration of medication. A sample of medication forms were reviewed on the day which were fully completed. The administration of medicine was recorded on an online platform which was co-signed by room leader and which parents have immediate access to.

### **Safe Sleep:**

Staff were familiar with safe sleep guidance, and they placed the younger children on their backs to sleep. Sleep logs were maintained in the sleep rooms and individual children's observations recorded including the room temperature, breathing, colour and position every 10 minutes. These were logged on a digital app and shared with parents. Standard cots were provided for children under two years to sleep.

## Non-Compliance Information

### **Infection Control:**

1. Toilet doors were propped open in the service which poses as a risk of cross contamination.

### **Safe Sleep:**

The following sleep practices observed on the day were at variance with safe sleep guidelines:

2. The pine room felt cold and the temperature was recorded at 15.5°C at 12:15 before the children were placed to sleep. The manager advised that the heating was not correctly operating in this room.

## Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider submitted the following response to address the non-compliances:

### **Corrective & Preventive Action**

1. Doors to the toilets will remain closed/shut at all times. Staff have been notified of this by manager and a meeting with each staff member individually.
2. We hired a heater immediately to heat the Toddler room till the heating was fixed. We also purchased a thermometer for the room to monitor the temperature.

**Supporting documentation submitted**

Receipt for heater, photograph of toilet door, new room thermometer

**Summary Comment**

The requirement of the regulation is met.

**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 was a person trained in a first aid responder course immediately available to the children attending the preschool service. There was evidence on the file that four staff working directly with children were trained in FAR.

(2)(a)(b)

There was a suitably equipped first aid boxes stored in an easily accessible position on the premises which were available to the children attending the preschool 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)

Fire drills were completed monthly. The last fire drill completed was recorded on the 16 December 2025.

(b)

A record was maintained when the firefighting equipment and smoke alarm system were serviced in August and November 2025.

(4)

There was a notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire displayed in a conspicuous position in the service.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

#### Compliance Information

The service had a valid certificate of insurance for full day care for 70 children.