

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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| TUSLA Identifier: | TU2016GY004 | | | |
| Name of Service: | Happy Feet Pre-School & Afterschool Care | | | |
| Address of Service: | Community Building, Meadow Brook Court, Loughrea, Co. Galway | | | |
| Eircode: | H62 N263 | | | |
| Name of Registered Provider: | Mary Dunne Blake | | | |
| Service type: | Part Time, Sessional | | | |
| Date of Inspection: | 17/10/2023 | | | |
| No of pre-school children: | AM | 15 | PM | 8 |
| Address of the Early Years Inspectorate: | Early Years Inspectorate, Quality and Regulation Directorate, Child and Family Agency, Clinical & Administration Building, Block A (1st Floor- Green Corridor), Merlin Park, Galway. | | | |
| Inspection undertaken by: | F Kelly | | | |
| 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

Description of service

This private pre-school service was established in 2016. It offers a sessional and part-time day-care service; Monday to Friday from 9 am to 12pm. It can cater for a maximum of 27 children. It also offers a service for school aged children.

Staffing

There were 3 childcare staff and 1 student on work placement working in the service on the day 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 .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

This inspection was triggered by information received to the early year's inspectorate.

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, 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.*

(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.

(7) A registered provider shall ensure that all employees, unpaid workers and contractors are appropriately supervised and provided with appropriate information, and where necessary training, including in relation to the following:

(a) the policies, procedures and statements of the service specified in Schedule 5;

Compliance Information

(1)(a) The registered provider was the designated person in charge and there was a named person who was able to deputise as required.

(b) During the period of inspection, the registered provider was on the premises and facilitated the inspection.

It was confirmed that there were 3 members of staff employed in the service and 1 student on work placement on the day of the inspection.

These files were reviewed on the day of inspection.

(2)(a) There were 7 written and appropriately validated references available from their most recent employer for adults working in the service.

(b) There was 1 written and appropriately validated references available from a source other than recent employer for the adults working in the service.

(c) Garda Vetting disclosures were available for the staff working in the service.

(d) A police vetting disclosure was available for 1 adult working in the service that had lived outside the jurisdiction for a period of over 6 months.

(4) There were 3 adults working directly with children who had obtained at least an award in Early Childhood

Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework.

(7)(a) The registered provider confirmed on the day of inspection, that all staff were given a copy of updated policies and procedures for the service. The staff had signed a document stated they have read and accepted the service's policies and procedures.

Evidence of additional training that the staff attended (staff induction and 1 to 1 supervision training) was also available for inspection.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.

Compliance Information

A process in place to develop and approve the service's policies and procedures. A sample of policies were reviewed on the day , which included the following.

- Outing Policy,
- Use of internet and photographs,
- Complaints Policy.
- Supervision of children.
- Induction, training and supervision of staff
- Accident and Incident policy.

Policy and procedures and statements are communicated to the staff and they confirmed they have read and understood the policies and procedures of the service and their will endeavour to carry out their duties in accordance with the policies of the service. Copies of same were reviewed by the early year's inspection.

Copies of the policies and statements of the services are available for inspection on a shelving unit in the lobby of the service.

- Permission for the use of photographic and recording devices was available for inspection. Signed parental permission was recorded in all the 19 children's records, stating that children's photographs could appear in the service' social media page.

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.

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

(a) a registered provider of a pre-school service other than a child-minding service or a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that there are at least 2 adults on the premises at all times,

Compliance Information

(1) During the period of inspection there were adequate numbers of adults working with the pre-school children attending the service.

(2) In the morning of the day of the inspection there were 3 adults working directly with 15 pre-school children and in the afternoon day of the inspection there were 3 adults working directly with 8 pre-school children. At all times during the period of Inspection, the minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained. There was also a student currently studying Early Childhood Care and Education on the premises at the time of the inspection.

(8)(a) Documentary evidence in the form of staff roster indicated that the registered provider ensured that 2 adults were on the premises at all times during the daily operation hours of the service.

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.*

Compliance Information

The registered provider developed, maintained and retained records about each child attending the service.

- (1) The records contained all the appropriate information required to support the care provided by the service to each child.

A sample of the children's records were reviewed by the inspector, of the 19 children attending the service, a total of 11 records were reviewed, all 11 records contained the necessary elements (a-i) as outlined above.

- (4) All records were retained for the required period of 2 years from the date on which the child attends the service.

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

BASIS NEEDS

- Healthy eating was promoted within the service and the children ate their lunches and snacks in their playrooms.
- Children could access the toilets on their own or they asked the staff member for assistance.
- Children were observed washing their hands prior to their lunch and after playing in the outdoor play area.
- The children spent time in the well-planned outdoor plan area after the snack time. The outdoor play areas provided activities and opportunity for fresh air, physical play exercise and fun.

Supporting relationships :

- The atmosphere between the children and the adults was calm and unhurried throughout the inspection.
- Adults sat at the tables or on the floor with the children when helping with jigsaws and various other play activities. The level of interaction and positive engagement of the children was positive.
- Staff responded to staff in a timely manner when they became upset or needed extra support with a task or activity.
- The service encourages the children to take the lead in various tasks, one child was appointed the room leader each day and is responsible for various tasks throughout the session.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.

Compliance Information

- There was documentary evidence in the form of a staff roster indicating that each child attending the service was adequately supervised by a qualified staff member at all times.
- The minimum /adult child ratios were adhered to in the playroom at all times during the inspection.
- Each child attending the service was under the supervision of a qualified staff member at all times during the inspection.

Part VIII - Notifications and Complaints

Regulation 32 – Complaints

- (1) A registered provider shall ensure that the complaints policy of the service specifies-
- (a) the procedure to be followed by a person for the purposes of making a complaint in relation to the service,
 - (b) the manner in which such a complaint shall be dealt with, and
 - (c) the procedures for keeping a person who makes such a complaint informed of the manner in which it is being dealt with.
- (2) A registered provider shall ensure that-
- (a) a record in writing is kept of a complaint made to the provider in respect of the pre-school service, and
 - (b) the complaint is duly dealt with in accordance with the provider's complaints policy.
- (4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (2)(a) is retained for a period of 2 years from the date on which the complaint has been dealt with.

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) The registered provider indicated in the complaints policy, that the service welcomes any suggestions, recommendations or comments made by children or parent/guardians in relation to the childcare service. It gives details on the procedures to follow should someone wants to make a complaint.
- (b)(c) The policy indicated that complaints will be dealt with in an open, impartial and in a confidential manner. If the person making the complaint is not satisfied with the outcome of the formal investigation, they are informed to make a written request to go to an independent mediator or panel.
- (2)
- (a) The registered provider had documentary evidence of how a complaint in the past had been dealt with, this included an accurate and detailed record of the complaint and steps the registered provider took to investigate the complaint.
- (b) This record was open to inspection on the premises by an authorised person.
- (4)
- The registered provider had documentary evidence that the record as outlined in (2)(a) was retained for 2 years.