

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

**TUSLA Identifier:** TU2016MO007

**Name of Service:** Happytots Childcare

**Address of Service:** Ballinvilla, Irishtown, Claremorris, Co. Mayo

**Eircode:** F12 YY51

**Name of Registered Provider:** Honorah Ronayne

**Service type:** Full Day, Part Time, Sessional

**Date of Inspection:** 23/04/2025

<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	10	PM	9
-----------------------------------	----	----	----	---

<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).

**Conditions if applicable** Not Applicable

### Description of service

This service is a non-profit community owned and operated childcare facility which has been in operation since 2016. The childcare service provides sessional, part-time and full day care and education to children aged from 2 years and 6 months to 6 years of age. The hours of operation are from 08:00 to 18:00 Monday to Friday for 47 weeks per year. A school age service is also in operation. The service is located in the rural village of Irishtown in Co. Mayo close to the borders with Co. Galway and Co. Roscommon. The premises is a single-storey building which was purpose built for the provision of childcare. There are two open plan playrooms, a dining area, a kitchen, an office, a storage room and a laundry room. The service has an outdoor play area located to the rear and side of the premises. Both playrooms have direct access to the outdoor play area.

### Staffing

There are nine adults employed in the service which includes the manager, deputy manager and kitchen staff. The registered provider is not actively involved in the day-to-day operation of the service.

### 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 and safety. 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.

### 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

*(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.*

### Compliance Information

- (1)(a) The service manager was assigned as the designated persons in charge and there was a named person who was able to deputise as required.
- (b) During the period of inspection, the service manager was the person in charge and was on the premises and facilitated the inspection.
- Following a review of the service files and discussion with the service manager it was confirmed that there were nine staff members working in the service, which included the manager, deputy manager and a kitchen staff member.
- (2)(a) Of the 18 references required, 15 references were sourced from past employers and were validated.
- (b) There were two references from sources other than a past employer available.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for the nine staff. The service did adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d) Police Vetting disclosures was available for one adult working in the service that had lived outside the jurisdiction for a period of over six months.
- (4) All adults working directly with children have obtained an award in Early Childhood Care and Education from Level 5 to a Level 8 on the National Qualifications Framework.

### Non-Compliance Information

One written validated reference was not available for one staff member working in the service.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### **Corrective and Preventive Action**

A written validated reference was provided for one staff member. The registered provider will ensure there are two written validated references for staff members on file.

### Supporting documentation submitted

Photo documentation was provided.

### Summary Comment

The regulatory non-compliance found on inspection has been addressed by the actions taken and evidence submitted to the Inspectorate by the service.

### 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) There were four adults working directly with children on the day of inspection.

(2) The minimum adult to child ratios were provided on the morning of inspection in accordance with the required ratios considering the ages of the children and the length of time each child spent in the service as outlined below:

- Busy Butterflies room: 2 adults cared for 10 children aged 2 -4 years of age.

Two additional staff members provided relief cover for breaks and nappy changing during the inspection. The Curious Caterpillar room was closed to preschool children during the inspection as the service had reduced numbers due to the Easter holiday.

(8) (a)

The registered provider demonstrated that a minimum of two adults were on the premises during the operation of 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

#### Compliance Information

##### Basic Needs

- Drinking water was available to all children in individual beakers throughout the day.
- Children were observed eating their snack which consisted of fruit, yogurt, cheese and sandwiches.
- Children were supported during mealtimes with opening food items when needed. Independence was encouraged with self-help skills.
- Children sat at tables and chairs which were appropriate for their height and/or stage of development.
- The staff were observed sitting at the child's level and chatted in a respectful manner.
- Nappy changing was carried out regularly and promptly when required. This was handled in a positive and sensitive manner.
- The privacy and dignity of each child was respected during toileting.
- Appropriate rest facilities were available in the care room and children were observed spending time in this area for short periods of rest throughout the day.
- Appropriate rest facilities were available within the care room should a child require a sleep during the day. On the day of inspection, no child required a nap.
- Children had easy access to the outside areas throughout the day and children moved freely between both indoors and outdoors.
- The adults working with the children were sensitive and responsive in promoting positive behaviours and supported children to find positive solutions to sharing toys and equipment and turn taking.
- Children had plenty of opportunities to move themselves, to practice and improve their emerging skills, such as co-ordination and balance.

##### Supporting relationships

- The staff members demonstrated warmth and sensitivity in their interactions with the children. The inspector observed children getting praise for their efforts in play and learning.

- The staff supported children to engage positively with one another and the children were encouraged to engage in play activities that required turn taking and sharing such as the ride on bikes and scooters. 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.
- Staff and parents work in partnership within the service. The use of a child's profile form gave staff members valuable information about the child's likes, dislikes, daily routine, interests and family.
- Each care room had a learning journal for the parents to view photos and descriptions of the children's, activities and learning.

### Physical and material environment

The environment supported each child's learning, development, and wellbeing as -

- The playroom was equipped with open shelving units where children could access play equipment and materials independently. There was a variety of play equipment and materials appropriate to the children's age and stage of development.
- The playroom had various interest areas, farm, house, art, train, shop, reading, sensory, Montessori, puppets and dress up. The various interest areas supported learning across all areas of development, fine motor skills, language development, cognitive development, sensory and imaginative development.
- There was plenty of clear floor space to enable the children to move around unhindered and appropriate furnishings of low-level tables and chairs were available to facilitate mealtimes and table-top activities.
- The walls of the playroom were decorated with posters, family photos, children's artwork, learning materials in picture style and the daily routine for the children while in the service.
- There were large enclosed outdoor play areas which catered for different interests at the same time. One of the areas had all weather surface and a covered roof area to allow all weather play. Outdoor play equipment included an outdoor kitchen and digging area for sensory and imaginative play, a playhouse for imaginative play, net swing and seesaw for gross motor play, a slide and a new climbing frame with a playhouse for gross motor play and ride on toys for interactive and gross motor play.

## 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) On the day of inspection, the four staff members on duty were trained in first aider response (FAR) training and were available to children attending the preschool service.

(2) (a) (b)

Fully stocked first aid boxes were available in each of the care rooms and were available to children at all times.

Extra equipment was stored in the office if required.