

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2018GY507		
<b>Name of Service:</b>	Happy Feet Creche		
<b>Address of Service:</b>	Unit 6, Creagán, Barna, Co. Galway.		
<b>Eircode:</b>	H91 EW28		
<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Aoife O'Brien		
<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day, Sessional		
<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	11/03/2024		
<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	44	PM 28
<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Tusla – Child and Family Agency, Early Years Inspectorate, Quality Assurance Directorate, Clinical & Administration Building, Block A - (1st Floor- Green Corridor), Merlin Park, Galway,		
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	F. Nic Dhonnacha		
<b>Title:</b>	Early Years Inspector		
<b>Authority to Inspect</b>			
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		

### Description of service

This privately operated service offers a full day care and part time care provision from 7.30hrs to 18.00hrs. An Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) pre-school care programme and sessional care programme between 9.00hrs and 12.00hrs are also offered. The service is registered for pre-school children aged 0 months to 6 years of age. The service also caters for school age children with a breakfast club and afterschool programme. A child centred play-based pre-school curriculum focusing on emerging interests is provided. The service is currently operating four playrooms. The Big playroom, The Toddler playroom, The Playgroup playroom and the Blue playroom are all on the ground floor of the main building. The service has its own kitchen, where children's dinners are prepared, cooked, and stored on site. There is a designated sleep room adjacent to the Toddler playroom, with six cots for children under 2 years of age, sleep provision. Eight stackable beds are available for children over 2 years of age. In each playroom, quiet rest areas with child size seating and soft matting are available for children to rest or opt out of an activity, if they wish to do so. To the rear and side of the main building, there are secure outdoor play areas for children's play, exploration, and fresh air.

### Staffing

The registered provider works in the premises on a daily basis. There was a total of thirteen adults including the registered provider working in the premises on the day of inspection. Nine staff hold a Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) at a min Level 5, in Early Childhood Care and Education. The service has an adult who works as the designated chef. Two adults work solely with the school aged children. Additionally, there is an adult who provides administrative duties two days a week and a student on a college placement.

### 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.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11,19,23 and 25; however, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 29. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulation within this report.

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 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.

#### Compliance Information

- (1) (a) There was a designated person in charge and there was a named person available to deputise in the service.
- (b) The person in charge was on the premises when the early years inspector arrived and remained on site for the duration of the inspection.

On the day of inspection, fourteen files were reviewed which included the registered provider, kitchen chef, administrator, a student over the age of eighteen years on a college placement, eight staff who provide care for the children and two school aged staff files.

(2)(a)&(b) Twenty eight written validated references on file, in respect of the thirteen adults were from a past employer or a source other than a past employer.

- (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available in respect of the fourteen adults.
  - (d) Documentary evidence indicated that five adults, who had lived outside the jurisdiction, for longer than 6 consecutive months, while over the age of 18 years, had the required police vetting.
- (4) Nine staff working directly with the children had evidence of Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) Level 5 to Level 8, in Early Childhood Care and Education.

### 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

- (2) On the morning of the inspection, there were 44 preschool children present.
- 1 child was aged 9 months to 1 year,
  - 7 children were aged between 1 to 2 years,
  - 9 children were aged between 2 to 3 years,
  - 27 children were aged between 3 to 6 years.

There were 9 staff directly caring for these children.

The registered provider assisted with the administrative side of the inspection and also provided childcare relief, there was a service chef and a student on a college placement who was supervised at all times.

In the afternoon, of the inspection, there were 28 preschool children present.

- 1 child was aged between 9 months to 1 year,
- 7 children were aged between 1 to 2 years,
- 8 children were aged between 2 to 3 years,
- 12 children were aged between 3 to 6 years.

There were seven staff, directly caring for and supervising these children.

In the afternoon, there was a school aged programme with 2 staff members designated to their care.

## 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.*

### Compliance Information

#### Basic Needs

- The service had a healthy eating policy available on request.
- From 7.30hrs, children had the opportunity for breakfast if they wished.
- In the morning and afternoon, the children had their snacks provided by the service which included cheese, bread rolls, brown bread, fruit pieces and yogurt.
- In the morning, the children attending on a sessional basis had their snacks provided by parents and guardians which included cheese, ham, crackers, croissants, fruit, and yogurts.
- For children attending full day care, the dinner was prepared, cooked, and stored on site by a designated chef in the service kitchen.
- Between 12.00 and 12.30hrs, the children attending on a full day care basis had chicken curry, vegetables and rice, which was cooked on site. Children had the opportunity for seconds if desired. Water or milk was served with the main meal.
- Drinking water was available and accessible for all children in each playroom. The infants were encouraged to feed themselves and promoted to be independent. Appropriate crockery and feeding utensils were provided in each room.
- There were designated fridges for the safe storage of perishable foodstuffs.
- The children had unrestricted access to the toilet and did not have to wait to use the toilet.
- Children were encouraged and supported to develop self-help and personal hygiene skills.

- The tables and chairs were suitable for the children’s ages and stages of development. Children have plenty of opportunities to move themselves, to practice and improve their emerging skills, such as co-ordination and balance both indoors and outdoors. All the children had opportunities to explore their environment. The children ate together for their snacks and main meals and had the freedom of movement within their respective playroom.
- All the children had the opportunity to play outside for physical exercise and movement.
- There was a cosy area within each of the playrooms with child sized couches provided which could be adapted as a rest area for the children to rest or opt out of activities if they so wished.

### Supporting Relationships

- A key person approach was observed in each care room, the staff demonstrated an appropriate level of knowledge of the children’s preferences, interests, and individual capabilities.
- The service supported children in forming and sustaining positive relationships with siblings, peers, and other children, by providing opportunities for small and large group activities and play, leading to increased social awareness, co-operation, collaboration, teamwork, and a sense of belonging.
- Staff responded to infants in a timely and appropriate way when they cried or became upset.
- The children in the Blue playroom were observed at circle time listening to stories, singing action songs, free play and at tabletop activities. The children were observed running, chasing, playing ball, and pedalling in foot-controlled cars in the outdoor play area.
- The children from the Big playroom were observed at art and crafts making frogs and learning about tadpoles, at free play and at circle story time. The children were observed playing outside, running, jumping, and exploring. The children played catch and climbed on a climbing unit in the outdoor play area.
- The children from the Playgroup playroom were observed at free play, imaginary play in the child size kitchen, acting as kitchen chefs in a restaurant, looking at books and chatting to each other. The children were observed running, chasing playing ball, and pedalling tricycles in the outdoor play areas.
- The younger children in the Toddler playroom were observed making puzzles, building blocks, playing with action figures, soft toys and with musical toys. The children rolled on the soft matting climbed on the soft obstacle course and played with farm animals and looked at books. The children went outside later in the afternoon.
- The children were notified in advance of any transitions and consulted in the delivery of the programme of care and learning. The children’s daily observations, interests, play activities and art work were shared with parents on the service’s electronic system. The staff in each room worked effectively to facilitate the

programme of care and learning. The staff communicated informally with parents/guardians during drop off and collection periods from the service. The inspector observed that staff interacted in a positive manner with parents/guardians.

- The children’s art and craft materials were collated into folders and given to parents and guardians on a seasonal basis. The outdoor play areas to the rear of the premises were sufficiently spacious to accommodate the numbers of children attending the service.

### 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 entrance door into the pre-school was secure to prevent unauthorised access by a person or the unsupervised exiting by a pre-school child.
- The external outdoor play areas were secured by boundary walls and gates so that unauthorised persons could not access or enter the area or children could not exit unsupervised.
- All cleaning agents and equipment were stored inaccessible and out of children’s reach.
- Fire doors throughout the building were unobstructed.
- Daily risk assessments for the indoor and outdoor environment were maintained.
- The doors into the kitchen, staff room, office, and adult only sanitary rooms had a system of security and were inaccessible to the preschool children,
- Cables and Leads were secured to the wall in each playroom and corridor.
- The outdoor storage shed was secured and inaccessible to the preschool children.

##### Infection Control:

- Hand washing facilities were provided with a supply of warm water, liquid hand soap and disposable paper hand towels. Thermostatically controlled warm water was available for use by the children to facilitate hygienic hand washing.
- An airtight sealable bin was available for the disposal of used nappies in the nappy changing area.

- Staff involved in the serving of food and nappy changing used disposal aprons and gloves when nappy changing.
- The children's unused soothers were stored in individual labelled storage containers. The service had a system for sterilising the soothers and records were maintained.
- Clean linen was stored appropriately for the cots and stackable beds in pull out drawers.

### Administration of Medication:

- Temperature lowering medication was administered to a child on the day of inspection.
- The staff were aware of the service policy and procedures for administration of medication.
- Parents were contacted by phone and parental consent was given and the parent signed the electronic childcare application system.

### Safe Sleep:

- The temperature of the sleep room was maintained within normal limits 16-20° C.
- Six cots and eight stackable beds were available for sleep provision.
- Older children had designated relaxation, chill out time.
- The service had safe and comfortable spaces for the younger toddlers to lie, roll, creep, crawl, pull themselves up, explore and to be protected from children who were more mobile.
- There was evidence of 10 min sleep check records being carried out by staff on sleeping children. It was noted on the childcare application the time the child was checked, the colour, breathing pattern, position and any remedial actions taken.

### Fire Safety:

- Records were maintained of the monthly fire drills carried out in the service.
- All fire doors and escape routes were clear from obstruction in the event of a fire.
- The fire assembly point was clearly identifiable.

### Outing:

- No outings were carried out on the day of inspection.
- The service policy on Outings was available on request.

### 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 person trained in first aid was available on the premises at all times for the children attending the preschool service. Three staff had up to date First Aid Responder first aid training and seven staff had first aid training with a paediatric module included.
- (2)(a) There were first aid boxes with content items within date, safely stored, easily accessible and stored in conspicuous position in the playrooms and office.
- (b) The service demonstrated that the first aid boxes were fully equipped and available to the children attending the pre-school service.

### Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

#### Regulation 29 - Premises

- A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-*
- (b) *safe and secure,*
  - (d) *cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*
  - (e) *equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

#### Non-Compliance Information

- (b)
1. The steps up to the tree house were blocked with two green plastic balance beams and were unsafe causing a potential safety risk to the children.
  2. Inside the tree house had inappropriate storage items e.g old carpets and a large blue plastic covering, additionally an old carpet, play equipment and materials, a black tricycle, blue and grey bicycle, yellow cones, foot pedalled cars, purple blocks and push toys were left insecurely under and around the tree house causing a potential safety risk to the preschool children.

- (d)
3. There was an area in the grass outdoor play area under and adjacent to the wooden tree house slide and steps where the surface was bare, mucky, worn and in need of re surfacing, grass seed and maintenance.
  4. There were unpainted wall surfaces around the new installed windows in the Big playroom, Sleep room, Playgroup playroom, nappy changing room and Blue playroom that required painting, maintenance and repair.
- (e)
5. There were insufficient nappy changing areas available for the children who required their nappy changed. Nineteen children wore a nappy on the day of inspection. The service has one nappy changing unit, including one wash hand basin and changing mat. It is recommended that one nappy changing unit, a wash hand basin and changing mat is available for every 11 children in nappies.

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

On the 5/4/2024 the registered provider advised of the following.

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

- (b) 1. The steps of the tree house are unblocked and accessible to the preschool children now. A daily risk assessment will be carried out going forward.
2. The items inappropriately stored in the tree house have been removed and are now stored in the shed. The bicycles and play equipment are now stored safely against the boundary wall.
- (d) 3. Grass seed has been purchased and spread outside in the grass area. The creche plans to resurface the bare areas with bark or mulch where soil drainage is not so good.
4. The wall surfaces around the newly installed windows have been painted. Regular maintenance will be kept going forward.
- (e) 5. The nappy changing area has been divided into two spaces with a divider between the two changing mats for privacy. Contact has been made with a plumber to install another wash hand basin in the area. The plumber is due to complete the works before the end of April.

#### **Supporting documentation submitted**

- (b) 1. A photograph of the tree house and the daily risk assessment was submitted.
2. A photograph of the treehouse which is now accessible to the preschool children was submitted.
- (d) 3. A picture of the box of grass seed was submitted.
4. Photographs of the painted wall surfaces in each room were submitted.

- (e) 5. A photograph of the nappy changing area divided into two spaces and an email from the plumber stating he will call to complete the installation of a 2<sup>nd</sup> wash hand basin before the end of the month.

## Summary Comment

The inspectorate has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliances identified under Regulation 29 point 1-4 have been adequately addressed. The findings at point 5 remain outstanding and will be reviewed on the next inspection.