

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2025LK001
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Name of Service:	Happy Faces
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Address of Service:	Askeaton National School Askeaton Co. Limerick
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Eircode:	V94 HD30
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Name of Registered Provider:	Julie London
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	03/11/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	14	PM	No.
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate 2 nd floor Estuary House Henry Street Limerick
Inspection undertaken by:	J Ryan
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
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Description of service

Happy Faces early childhood care and education (ECCE) service is a private sessional service located in a room in the national school in the town of Askeaton county Limerick.

The service provides sessional care Monday-Friday from 09.30hrs to 12.30hrs for 38 weeks of the year.

The space available in the room allows for a maximum of 18 pre-school children attend the service at any one time.

A school aged service is registered to operate in the afternoon from another building on the grounds of the national school.

The registered provider operates a full day care service locally and is contactable by the person in charge if required.

Staffing

A designated person in charge was available who had been appointed by the registered provider to operate the service on a daily basis. A person who could deputise for the person in charge had also been appointed. A third staff member was available on the day of the inspection in the room. All staff members working in the service had childcare qualifications.

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 announced 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.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9,10,11,15,19,24,25,26 and 28.

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, 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 registered provider had appointed a person in charge and a named person to deputise as required was available also.

(b) The designated person in charge and the deputy person in charge was on the premises when the inspector arrived.

(2)(a) Six written validated references from past employers were available for the three staff members. The manager of the service had validated all references that were on file.

(b) Written and validated reference from sources other than a past employer were not required.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were received from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána in accordance with the Act of 2012 in respect of all three staff. All garda vetting documentations were dated within the last three years as per the regulatory notice EYI-RN12.3 renewal of garda vetting published by the inspectorate in September 2023 and effective from 01 January 2024.

(d) Police vetting was not required as no staff member had lived in another state for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months.

(4) The three staff working directly with the children attending the service held awards in early childhood care and education at level 5 to level 8 on the national qualifications framework.

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

The required policies and procedures for the operation of the sessional service were available in the service in printed format and online. They contained the required information to guide staff in relation to the safe care of the children attending the service.

All policies and procedures had been e mailed to the parents of each child before they commenced in the service.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels

(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) At all times during the period of the inspection the person in charge had ensured that an adequate number of staff were working directly with the children. On the day of the inspection there were 3 staff working with and supervising 14 children who attended the session.

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

(1) A sample of 10 records for a preschool child were reviewed on the day.

The required information (a) – (i) was available on each of these records.

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) BASIC NEEDS:

Snacks provided by the parents of the children included fruit, sandwiches, yogurts and water to drink for their break. Children sat at low tables and had their lunch in an environment that promoted social interaction with their peers and the adults and was unhurried. Staff were observed to clean the tables before snacks were eaten. There was a defined, comfortable and inviting rest area in the room where children could have some quiet time. The children were encouraged to wash their hands at the wash hand basin in the room at appropriate times such as after returning from outdoor play and before eating. Hand washing was also facilitated in the sanitary accommodation with a supply of hot and cold running water and liquid antibacterial soap. Children were observed to use the toilet facilities independently and nappy changing facilities were not required. Children were allowed to move freely indoors from one activity to the next. They were supported and encouraged to behave appropriately for their age and stage of development through having simple rules to follow

and a good level of choice of activities. Staff modelled positive behaviour for the children and the children were praised for their good behaviour.

PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

This service was operated from a room in the national school where the curriculum was play based and linked to each child's emergent interests. Children were observed reading books, making jigsaws and playing in the home corner. There was an emphasis on active play and exploration. There was free choice of activities that supported children's language, communication and thought processes. Physical play was evident which supported the development of strength, co-ordination and motor skills. Role play helped children to communicate, question and hold conversations with each other. The service responded to children's preferences and interests. At circle time all the group of children were seen to enjoy singing nursery rhymes with the adults caring for them. Sensory play materials were available in the room such as sand, coloured rice and porridge oats.

The pre-school room was equipped with open shelving units which were child accessible so that the children could access equipment and materials independently. Shelving units were also used effectively as room dividers to create play spaces, such as the library/quiet area, dress up area, farm area, home corner, construction area, small world area and arts and crafts area and tabletop activities area. Children played in the outdoor play area which had a concrete surface and was safe and secure. There was a plentiful supply of ride on bikes and trikes for children and all children were dressed appropriately for the weather. They were encouraged to play at the open sand table and enjoyed this form of messy play. A section of the outdoor play area was roofed which allowed children spend additional time outdoors in the fresh air.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) no person other than-

(i) pre-school child attending the service,

(ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,

(iii) an employee, or

(iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and

(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.

Compliance Information

- (1) Staff ensured that each pre-school child attending the service was checked in and out of the service as evidenced on the roll book.
- (3) Staff ensured that-
- (a) No person other than the following were allowed entry to the premises without approval.
 - (i) A Pre-school child attending the service.
 - (ii) A person dropping or collecting such a child.
 - (iii) An employee.
 - (iv) An unpaid worker.
 - (b) A daily record in writing was kept of all adults who entered the premises.

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) Two staff had up to date training in first aid responder for children (FAR).
- (2) (a) The first aid box was safely stored in an easily accessible position in the playroom.
- (b) The first aid box was available to the children attending the pre-school service at all times.

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 fire fighting 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) The fire drills were practiced on a monthly basis. The last recorded fire drill took place in October 2025.
 (b) The number, type and maintenance record of the firefighting equipment serviced on an annual basis and most recently in September 2025 was available.
 The smoke alarm system was serviced on an annual basis and most recently in September 2025.
 (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in the playroom.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

Adequate insurance was available for the sessional service to operate.