

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015MH067
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Name of Service:	Happy Days Childcare
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Address of Service:	St Olivers Community Centre, Main Street, Ratoath, Co. Meath
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Eircode:	A85 VF77
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Name of Registered Provider:	Ursula Ryan
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Service type:	Part Time, Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	25/05/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	34	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate 180-189 Lakeshore Drive, Airside Business Park, Swords, Co Dublin.
Inspection undertaken by:	N McEndoo
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).

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Description of service

Happy Days is a community based childcare facility based in St Olivers Community Centre. The service provides a sessional and part- time service to children from 2 to 6 years and participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education Programme (ECCE). The service consists of 2 care rooms; Room 1 is on the ground floor with Room 2 on the first floor. There are also an office, storage room and sanitary facilities on the premise. The preschool service also has access to a large community theatre room for activities.

Staffing

The registered provider employs five adults to work directly with the children; they include a designated person in charge and four adults. On the day of the inspection the designated person in charge was present with three childcare staff members. The registered provider was not onsite for the 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 and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 15, 19 and 23. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

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A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child.

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*
- (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,*

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(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

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(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)

The registered provider ensured that.

- (a) There was a designated person in charge and a named adult to deputise in their absence.
- (b) The designated person in charge was available on the premises throughout the period of inspection.
- (c) There was 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.

(2)

On the day of inspection eight adult files were reviewed, five adults were employed to work directly with the children and three adults who worked on a contracted basis.

The following vetting information was available:

- (a) Nine written validated references from past employers for five of the adults.
- (b) One written validated reference from reputable source for one of the adults.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(3)

The procedures specified above in paragraph (2) were carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(4)

Five of the adult files reviewed, evidenced they held a major award at level 5 or above in early childhood care and education on the national qualification framework, or qualifications deemed by the Department of Children, Disability and Equality (DCDE) to meet the regulatory requirement.

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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)

An adequate number of adults were working directly with the pre-school children attending the service during the inspection.

(2)

The registered provider ensured that the minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained in the service on the day of inspection. There were 34 children present in the service being supervised by four adults during the inspection

(8)

(a) The registered provider ensured that there were always at least two adults on the premises when children were present in the service.

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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.*

(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-

- (a) a parent or guardian of a pre-school child but only in respect of the record relating to that child,*
- (b) an employee who is authorised in that behalf by the registered provider, and*
- (c) an authorised person.*

Compliance Information

(1) A sample of eight children's files reviewed demonstrated that records were maintained appropriately, including:

- Name and date of birth of the child.
- Date the child first attended the service.
- Parent or guardian contact information.
- Authorisation for collection.
- Relevant medical and allergy information.
- Registered medical practitioner details.
- Immunisation information where available.
- Written parental consent for emergency medical treatment.

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- (3) On the day of inspection, a record in writing in respect of each pre-school child was available and open to inspection on the premises by-
- (c) an authorised person.

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

(1)(a)(b) The following observations are examples of how each child's learning, development and well-being with appropriate and suitable care practices were facilitated within the service.

Basic needs:

- The service promoted healthy eating and food. Food that was supplied by parents were provided at regular intervals during the day.
- Drinking water was available to the children throughout the day, indoors and outdoors, should they feel thirsty at any point.
- Appropriate arrangements were in place for nappy changing and toileting. Practice observed on inspection demonstrated respectful interactions, adequate supervision and hygienic procedures that supported the welfare of the children.
- Staff ensured the children were appropriately dressed for outdoor play.

Supporting relationships

- The interactions between the staff and children were kind and caring.
- Staff were observed playing games with the children and interacting with their imaginative play.
- Staff were aware of supporting children's play through exploration of materials and communicating this with parents. For example, after a child had built a large tower to reach the ceiling using connecting straws. The child asked if they could send a photograph home. A staff member took the time to check with the child that they were happy with the photograph before they sent it to the parent.

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Physical and material environment

- The learning environment was well-resourced, child-centred, and supported children's physical, emotional, social, and cognitive development.
- A range of accessible play materials, books, sensory activities, and outdoor play opportunities promoted independence, curiosity, and active learning.

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 main entrance was found to be secured on arrival preventing unauthorised access or exit from the premises.
- Materials were observed to be in a good state of repair.
- Cleaning products and equipment were stored out of the reach of children.
- The outdoor area was secured with tall wooden fencing and a bolted gate.

Infection Control:

- The materials and resources throughout the service were visually clean.
- Tables were observed to be cleaned prior to and after mealtimes in both care rooms.
- There was adequate handwashing facilities provided throughout the service with liquid soap and paper towels. Children were observed to wash their hands with support when required both before meals and after toileting.
- The sanitary facilities were observed to be kept maintained and clean, and were ventilated by openable windows.

Fire Safety:

- Fire doors were observed to be unobstructed throughout the service.
- Fire evacuation procedures were clearly displayed in the care rooms.
- Fire extinguishers were on the premises and easily accessible.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. A fire extinguisher located high on the wall in Room 2 appeared to be loose and at risk of falling.

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Infection Control:

2. The hand-washing water in the sinks of the sanitary facilities was cold to touch and not adequate to support effective hand washing. This was reported as a noncompliance on the previous inspection report 09/01/2024.
3. Children's items were observed to be stored in the sanitary facilities located in Room 2, posing a risk of cross contamination.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The registered provider confirmed that the loose bracket was removed and remounted in another area of the room. The fire safety equipment will be checked daily and included in monthly health and safety inspections.

Infection Control:

2. The registered provider confirmed that the hot water switch had been turned off on the day of inspection; The staff have been shown where the switch is and have agreed that it will not be switched off. It is confirmed that temperatures will continue to be checked and recorded daily.
3. The registered provider confirmed that the storage box was immediately removed from the area. The area is now clear and was cleaned effectively. The staff have been reminded that the area is to always remain clear.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Photographic evidence submitted.

Infection Control:

Photographic evidence submitted.

Summary Comment

The actions and evidence submitted have been reviewed. The non-compliances identified under Regulation 23 have been adequately addressed.