

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC469
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Name of Service:	Cairde go Deo
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Address of Service:	Unit 1, Riversdale, Rathcormac, Co Cork
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Eircode:	P61 CH58
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Name of Registered Provider:	Karen O'Keeffe
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	15/07/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	35	PM	35
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate, 13 Market Square, Mallow, Co Cork, P51 DD5Y
Inspection undertaken by:	N O'Donoghue
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	N/A
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Description of service

Cairde go Deo is a registered privately owned early years service in operation since 2014. The service is registered to cater for children from 0 to 6 years and at time of inspection the service was catering for children from the age of 1 to 6 years. The current opening hours are from 07:30 to 18:00 Monday to Thursday and from 07:30 to 17:00 each Friday. The service is also registered to cater for school aged children.

The service is situated at the edge of the Riversdale estate in the rural village of Rathcormac, Co Cork. It is easily accessed from the main road, and it provides adequate parking to allow parents to drop off and collect the children in a safe manner. The premise consists of four care rooms, Caterpillars, Butterflies, Busy Bees and Explorers. Each room has direct access to the secure outdoor area and there is a designated sleep room available adjacent to the baby room and a second sleep room in close proximity to the toddler room.

Staffing

There was a total of 12 staff identified on day of inspection. Twelve of these adults work directly with the children including the person in charge, childcare practitioners and relief staff. The registered provider is not service based.

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. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 15, 19, 20, 21 and 23; 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.

Additional Information

An Immediate Action Notice was issued on 15 July 2025 for non-compliance with Regulation 23 as the water temperatures in the children's sanitary facilities exceeded 50°C during the inspection.

The registered provider promptly addressed and corrected the issue on the day of inspection which was deemed to satisfactorily address this non-compliance.

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,
- (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 had a designated person in charge and deputy person in charge on the premises on the day of inspection. In the event the person or deputy person in charge were not on the premises a named person able to deputise was available.
 - (b) A person in charge or named deputy person in charge were on the premises at all times during the operation of the service.

(c) There was a clearly identified management structure in the service. This included person in charge, deputy persons in charge, childcare practitioners and relief workers.

(2) There were 12 staff that worked directly with children in the service; all 12 staff files were open to inspection.

(a) Of the 24 references required, 20 validated references were available from past employers.

(b) Of the 24 references required, 4 validated references were available from a source other than a past employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures has been obtained for all 12 staff. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Year Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda Vetting every three years.

(d) Police vetting was not deemed to be required for any adults working in the service.

(4) All 12 staff working directly with children held relevant qualifications in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

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) The registered provider ensured that there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children.

(2) On the day of inspection, the adult to child ratios were in adherence to the requirements of the regulation.

- In the Caterpillars room in the morning, there were 3 staff working with 7 babies aged between 13 months and 24 months, all attending full day care. In the afternoon, there were 2 staff working with 5 babies.
- In the Butterfly room in the morning, there was 1 staff working with 3 children, aged between 23 months and 24 months, all attending full day care. In the afternoon, there was 1 staff working with 4 children.
- In the Busy Bees room in the morning, there were 2 staff working with 9 children, aged between 23 months and 3 and a half years, all attending full day care. In the afternoon, there were 2 staff working with 9 children.
- In the Explorers room in the morning, there were 3 staff working with 16 children, aged between 3 and a half years and 5 years, all attending full day care. In the afternoon, there were 3 staff working with 17 children.

(8)

(a) The registered provider ensured that there were at least two adults on the premises at all times during the service operation hours. This was evident through the staff rota.

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) Children's enrolment forms were assessed for 10 of the children registered as attending the service. The records inspected had the detail required as listed from (a) to (i).

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) On the day of inspection, the following information was obtained through:

- Direct observation and discussion with staff.
- Examination of relevant documentation.

Basic needs:

- There was a supply of tissues available to the children and staff supported children cleaning their noses when required.
- Children's toileting and hygiene needs were attended to regularly and staff assisted children when they needed it.
- Staff in the baby room were observed to regularly change nappies and ensure the children were clean throughout the day.
- During nappy changing, staff engaged in singing nursery rhymes and conversations with the children.
- Children were not rushed when eating their meals throughout the day. Staff allowed children to eat at their own pace and engaged in conversations with the children at snack time.
- Children were encouraged to independently feed themselves and staff provided support when necessary.
- The staff sat on the floor with the children in the baby room playing with and encouraging the children to interact and to engage with a range of materials and toys for example building blocks, reading stories and singing songs.
- Children had access to their individual labelled water bottles throughout the day of inspection.

- Children would verbalise what activities they wished to do, staff would support the children’s interests. This was observed in the Butterfly room with children requesting to read story books.

Supporting relationships:

- Staff supported children with expressing their emotions and would promote positive interactions between children and their peers. This was promoted by allowing children time to communicate their feelings and interests.
- Staff were sitting with children and communicated about their families and home activities.
- Children engaged in peer-on-peer play such as role-playing games and farm play outdoors.
- The service maintained a daily written record to provide information to the parents including toileting and nappy changing, play activities, sleep, food and drink intake.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

(1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day, and

(b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.

Compliance Information

(1) (a)

- The rooms observed on the day of inspection were clean, organised and free of clutter to facilitate the children on that day. Each room had access to a large outdoor play area.
- The outdoor area was accessible by each room, the children had access to bikes, trikes, playhouse, slides, tyres and grass area.
- All rooms inspected on day of inspection had an adequate amount of toys for the numbers of children attending on the day of inspection.
- Each room had child height chairs and low tables suitable for the age range of children attending each room.
- Additional toys and equipment were stored in secured presses or rooms.

- The Explorers room had an open shelving unit where children accessed toys such as tractors, dolls, magnets, puzzles and toy cars. There was also a wooden kitchen unit, a construction table and an area for toy cars.

(1) (b)

- Each room had a rest area that allowed children to rest and opt out of activities if they wished.
- Each rest area consisted of rubber matting, cushions and blankets were available on shelving units within the room.
- There were two dedicated sleep rooms in the service. One adjacent to the Caterpillar room and one in close proximity to the Busy Bees room.
- The cots were suitable for the child's age and stage of development.
- Cots were kept at 50cm apart from each other.
- Staff explained stackable beds were available should a child require rest.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

The service ensured there was adequate equipment and materials available for the number of children attending the service. The service had a store room with additional toys and materials. It was observed on day of inspection that the service provides a number of sensory activities including water play and the use of porridge oats in a tuff tray.

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:

- Blind chords were stored out of reach of children.

- Cleaning materials were stored in presses in the room and had child safety locks on them.
- Visibility strips were observed on low laying windows.
- The outdoor area was secured with locked gates.

Infection control:

- Windows were open for natural air ventilation.
- Regular hand washing was observed throughout the day. This was observed after nappy changing and prior to meal times.
- Pedal operated bins were observed in the care rooms and sanitary facilities.
- All cots were fitted with waterproof mattress covers.

Administration of medication:

- No administration of medication was observed on the day of inspection. Staff were aware of the storage and appropriate practices in relation to medication administration.

Safe sleep:

- Staff were observed conducting 10-minute sleep checks and documenting it on paper for parents.
- Natural air ventilation allowed for safe sleeping temperatures.

Fire safety:

- Fire exits were clear of obstruction.
- Firefighting equipment was available throughout the service.

Non-Compliance Information

General safety:

It was identified that the sink in the children's sanitary facilities water temperature exceeded 50°C. The sink temperature was measured at different intervals over a 15-minute period between 13:24 and 13:39. Temperatures ranged 51.3°C to 56°C. This poses a significant risk of burning to children using the sink. The person in charge was made aware of this non-compliance and organised for the plumber to come the same day to address the issue.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General safety:

The person in charge ensured that the sink was not used by children on day of inspection. The person in charge arranged for the plumber to address the issue which was corrected prior to the inspector leaving the service. The service has added risk assessments to check the sink temperatures.

Supporting documentation submitted

General safety:

Photographic evidence of the thermostat on the water boiler was submitted to the Early Years Inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The non-compliance identified under Regulation 23 has been addressed.

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,*
- (c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated*

Compliance Information

(b) The service was maintained in a safe and secure manner. The entrance door was secured using a buzzer system to gain access. This prevented the entry of an unauthorised person or the exit of a child unsupervised. All visitors had to sign in and sign out of the service.

Non-Compliance Information

(c) The service had one broken light in the hallway of the staff and children's sanitary facilities. This posed a safety risk to children and adults accessing the sanitary facilities.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The person in charge purchased new bulbs and replaced the broken light in the hallway. The service has additional bulbs stored to rectify any lighting issues in future.

Supporting documentation submitted

The person in charge provided photographic evidence of the working light and additional stock of bulbs to the Early Years Inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The non-compliance identified under Regulation 29 has been addressed.