

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015KK021
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Name of Service:	Danesfort Childcare
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Address of Service:	1 Fr. Campion Place, Danesfort, Kilkenny
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Eircode:	R95 F856
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Name of Registered Provider:	Liam Mullen
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	09/05/2023
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No of pre-school children:	AM	48	PM	36
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Child and Family Agency, Early Years Inspectorate, Ely Hospital, Ferrybank, Wexford
Inspection undertaken by:	E Mc Garry
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

Description of service

Danesfort childcare facility is a purpose-built childcare facility situated in a rural village in Co Kilkenny. It has been in operation since 2008 and provides an early years service to children from the ages of 1 to 6 years of age. The service operates from 8.00am to 6.00pm. The service is registered to provide an Early Years Care and Education (ECCE) program to children. The service is registered to provide part time and full day care to early years children. The service is also registered to provide a school age service.

Staffing

There were 12 staff on the premises on the day of inspection including the manager who also works directly with the children. There was one staff member employed to prepare snacks and meals for the children. All staff working directly with the early years children held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework.

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 inspections may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations:

Regulation 9 Management and Recruitment,

Regulation 11 Staffing levels,

Regulation 19 Health, Welfare, and Development of the Child

Regulation 22 Food and Drink

Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety, and Welfare of the Child

Regulation 25 First Aid

Regulation 26 Fire Safety

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 to the service on 10 May 2023. In relation to Regulation 9 (c) Garda vetting. It is acknowledged that the required Garda vetting certificate was promptly submitted to the office of the early years inspectorate on the same day.

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.

(7) A registered provider shall ensure that all employees, unpaid workers and contractors are appropriately supervised and provided with appropriate information, and where necessary training, including in relation to the following:

- (a) the policies, procedures and statements of the service specified in Schedule 5.
- (b) Part VIIA (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013)) of the Act, and
- (c) these Regulations.

Compliance Information

(1)(a) (b)

The manager was the designated person in charge on the day of the inspection and remained in the service for the duration of the inspection.

(2)

Following a discussion with the manager and on review of documentation, it was established that there were 13 staff employed in the service, including the manager. All 13 staff files were reviewed on the day of inspection.

(a)

There were 24 written and validated references available on file from past employers.

(b)

There were two written and validated references available on file from a reputable source.

(c)

There was Garda vetting available on file in the service for 12 staff members.

(d)

Police vetting was available on file for one staff member who had worked in a state other than Ireland for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

(4)

All staff working directly with the early years children held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework.

(7)(a)

The manager had ensured that all employees were appropriately supervised and provided with appropriate information and training to carry out their duties in the service. There was evidence on file in the service regarding that staff had undertaken in relation to child protection and infection control in the service. Staff who spoke to the inspector said they had regular staff meetings where they were given appropriate information in relation to any issues in the service.

Non-Compliance Information

9 (c)

There was one staff member who was not working directly with the children who did not have Garda vetting in place prior to commencing in the service. It is acknowledged that the required Garda vetting certificate was promptly submitted to the office of the early years inspectorate on the same day.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Garda Vetting for the staff member was sent to the inspector on 10 May 2023. The required vetting is now on file in the service. The manager will ensure all required garda vetting is in place in the service prior to any new staff commencing employment in the service in the future.

Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of the required Garda vetting for the staff member was received by the inspector.

Summary Comment

The response and evidence submitted by the registered provider meets the requirements of the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

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

(1)

There was an adequate number of staff always working directly with the children during the inspection.

Butterfly 2

At 10.00am there were 17 children aged from 2 years 8 months to 5 years of age in the care of 3 staff.

At 3.00pm there were 15 children aged from 2 years 8 months to 5 years of age in the care of 2 staff.

Butterfly 1

At 10.05am there were 10 children aged from 3 to 6 years in the care of 2 staff.

Ladybird

At 10.10am there were 10 children aged from 1 to 2 years of age in the care of 2 staff.

At 3.05pm there were 10 children aged from 1 to 2 years of age in the care of 2 staff.

Caterpillar

At 3.10pm there were 11 children aged from 2 to 3 years of age in the care of 2 staff

At 3.10pm there were 11 children aged from 2 to 3 years of age in the care of 2 staff.

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

(1) A registered provider shall, in providing a pre-school service, ensure that-

(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)

The manager ensured that each child's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the daily life of the service. Children were engaged in a variety of appropriate activities during the inspection including playing together in the various outdoor areas, doing tabletop activities and practicing for their upcoming graduations.

Children were encouraged to be independent appropriate to their age and stage of development, for example, children were observed putting on their own coats, wellies, and hats before they went to the outdoor area. In butterfly one, children's individual photographs were displayed on the leader board. Whichever child was picked to be leader on that day had their photo displayed at the top of the board. This child was given extra responsibilities, for example, leading the children out to the playground.

During activities staff used opportunities to extend children's learning and development. Staff were observed playing with the children in the outdoor area. Staff were observed to be constantly engaged with the children in their care in the outdoor area. The children were observed to be occupied at all times playing on ride on toys, climbing on jungle gyms and digging in muddy puddles in the grassed area to the rear of the service. The service had emerging interest plans displayed in the butterfly one room. For example, a child had brought in a shell another child had just come back from holidays.

Staff had outlined how they proposed to develop these interests based on resources needed, learning experience and possibility for sensory play based on the emerging interest. Each early years room had an observation station. Staff who spoke to the inspector said the service had a system in place where each child's observations were

recorded on post it notes and placed in a pouch on the wall with the child's photo attached. These notes were stored with the children's learning journals and shared with parents at the end of the year.

The materials and equipment available included a large range of developmentally appropriate Montessori equipment, arts and crafts materials and other open-ended materials which were well organised and easily accessible to children. The inspector observed that all four early years rooms were developed with care and attention. For example, the butterfly room had areas of interest such as a home corner and a dolls house which were well resourced with equipment for the children.

There was a range of equipment and materials available in the four outdoor areas for the enjoyment and entertainment of the children. For example, the playground to the rear of the service had a small climbing wall, a wooden wigwam, and a wooden beam for children to walk across to practice balancing on.

1(b)

The manager had ensured that appropriate and suitable care practices were in place. Nutritious and varied food was offered to children at regular intervals throughout the day. Mealtimes were relaxed and observed to be a positive experience for children as staff chatted with them, helping them when required. Children were seated in comfortable and good quality chairs. Young children were encouraged to feed themselves appropriate to their age and stage of development and were helped when needed.

Staff in the caterpillar room had compiled and displayed a page of information on each child in their care. For example, attached to the child's photo was information on their parents, siblings, likes and dislikes. Children who wore nappies had them changed regularly throughout the day and at other times when required. Nappy changing was observed by the inspector. The nappy changing policy in the service was adhered to in all observations by the inspector. For example, staff were consistent in washing their hands before and after the procedure. Older children were supported to use the toilet independently and were encouraged to wash their hands afterwards.

Care was given to children's appearance as bibs were put on younger children before eating and their hands and faces were cleaned afterwards. Sleep routines in the caterpillar room were reflective of children's individual needs which promoted good habits around sleep. The inspector observed that both sleep rooms were dimly lit and well ventilated. Children were observed to settle to sleep quickly when given appropriate support by staff. Safe sleep practices were adhered to. The children's position, colour and breathing were observed and recorded every 10

minutes. Staff in the caterpillar room told the inspector they communicated with parents at collection and drop off times. Staff also communicated with parents using a mobile phone messaging app.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 22 – Food and drink

A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

The service employed a full time cook to prepare all meals and snacks for the children. Parents whose children were attending on a sessional basis provided their snacks. These snacks were stored in a fridge in the service. There was a freshly cooked dinner prepared from the onsite kitchen on the day of the inspection. A meal consisting of freshly cooked lasagne and mixed vegetables was served to the children at midday. Children who asked for extra portions were given extra. Children in the caterpillar room were observed enjoying their mid-afternoon snack of cheese, crackers and fruit. Hydration for the children was encouraged across all the early years rooms. Children were provided with frequent drinks of water. Staff provided water for the children while they were playing outside.

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 manager had taken the following steps to ensure the safety of the children attending the service.

General safety:

Access to the service was gained through the front door which was made of glass. There was a call bell system in place where parents rang the bell to gain access to the service. Staff could see who was seeking to gain access to the service. All radiators were thermostatically controlled and were purpose built to include protective coverings. The fire doors were not obstructed.

Infection control:

The service appeared to be clean on the day of inspection. Cleaning templates were available in the service to document the regular cleaning of the early years rooms and toilet areas. There were fridges available in the service to store the perishable food provided by the parents for the children attending the ECCE scheme. All sinks for hand washing in the service were equipped with warm thermostatically controlled water, liquid soap, and foot operated pedal bins. The temperature of the hot water flowing from the wash hand basin in the nappy changing unit beside the lady bird room was recorded at 35°C on the day of inspection. All bins in the early years room and toilet facilities were either foot pedal operated or open topped to allow for the safe disposal of soiled nappies.

Safe sleep

The service had a safe sleep policy. The policy was displayed in the sleep rooms. The staff who spoke to the inspector were clear about the responsibilities they had in relation to adhering to this policy. The sleeping children's colour, breathing and position were observed and recorded every 10 minutes on the day of inspection. Both sleep rooms were maintained at a temperature of between 16°C and 20°C at all times on the day of inspection.

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)

There was a person trained in first aid for children immediately available to the children attending the early years service.

(2)(a)(b)

There was a suitably equipped first aid box stored in an easily accessible position on the premises and was available to the children attending the early years service.

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 firefighting 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)

There was a record of fire drills that had taken place in the service. The last recorded fire drill took place in the service on 27 April 2023.

(b) There was a record available on file stating the firefighting equipment was last serviced on 17 October 2022, and the smoke alarm 12 January 2023.

(4)

There was a notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire displayed in a conspicuous position in the main entrance of the service.