

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015KY038			
Name of Service:	Danú Childcare			
Address of Service:	Presbytery View, Rathmore, Killarney, Co. Kerry			
Eircode:	P51 DX52			
Name of Registered Provider:	Mary Woods			
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional			
Date of Inspection:	30/03/2026			
No of pre-school children:	AM	26	PM	20
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	2 nd Floor, Estuary House, Henry Street, Limerick, V94 XT5F			
Inspection undertaken by:	S O'Brien & N O'Donoghue			
Title:	Early Years Inspectors			

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).

Description of service

Danu Childcare is a community operated early years service based in Rathmore Kerry. The service caters for children aged 0 to 6 years and also offers the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme. The service operates from 7.30am to 6pm Monday to Thursday and 7.30am to 5.30pm on Friday 51 weeks of the year. The service is located in a purpose-built building which consists of six care rooms, of which four were in operation on the day of inspection. There are also 2 dedicated sleep rooms, a reception area, office, staff kitchen and sanitary facilities for both children and staff. The service has large interconnecting outdoor areas to the rear and sides of the building. The service is also registered as a school age service which is not currently operating.

Staffing

There were 33 adults attached to the service on the day of inspection. This included the registered provider who is not service based, person in charge, deputy person in charge, 23 early years educators, 1 community employment worker, 1 administrative worker, 3 Access Inclusion Model (AIM) workers, 1 cleaner and 1 student completing their student 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 the following regulations:

- Regulation 9: Management and recruitment
- Regulation 10: Policies procedures etc of a pre-school service
- Regulation 11: Staffing levels
- Regulation 16: Recor in relation to a pre-school service
- Regulation 19: Health, Welfare and development of child
- Regulation 22: Food and drink
- Regulation 23: Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child
- Regulation 24: Checking in and out and record of attendance

However, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 29: Premises. 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 inspectors wish 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 person in charge and early years educators.

(2) Following a review of previous inspection information, information available on inspection and discussion with the person in charge it was determined that eight new staff members had been employed since the previous inspection. Eight of these new staff members work directly with the children. A total of eight files were reviewed. In addition, Garda vetting for 15 staff members whose disclosures were identified as due for renewal were requested for review.

- (a) Of the 16 references required, 13 validated references were available from past employers.
- (b) Of the 16 references required, 3 validated references were available from a source other than a past employer.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures has been obtained for all adults with direct access to children. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d) Police vetting was deemed to be required for two of the eight new adults working in the service and copies of the relevant documents were maintained on file for the adults.

(4) The 28 adults working directly with children held relevant qualifications in Early Childhood Care and Education at least at Level 5 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

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 following policies were reviewed:

- Administration of medication policy
- Managing behaviour policy
- Accident and Incident policy

The policies were observed to contain the relevant information to guide the staff in their care practices.

Non-Compliance Information

The following policy did not meet the regulatory requirements:

- The infection control policy did not outline the safe management of perishable foods.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider stated in their response:

Corrective action

The infection control policy has been updated and outlined the safe management of perishable foods.

Preventive action

All copies of the policy have been updated and amended.

Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of the updated infection control policy was submitted.

Summary Comment

The registered providers response and documented evidence was submitted and reviewed by the inspectorate and has met the regulatory requirements.

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 there was an adequate number of staff caring for the children for the duration of the inspection.

(2) The following adult to child ratios were observed and therefore adhered to the minimum adult to child ratios for the duration of the inspection.

In the morning:

- In Butterfly Babies, there were 4 children aged 0 to 2 years being cared for by 3 staff members.
- In Ladybird Toddlers, there were 8 children aged 2 to 3 years being cared for by 3 staff members.
- In Crazy Frogs Junior Preschool, there were 5 children aged 3 to 4 years being cared for by three staff members.
- In Busy Bees Senior Preschool, there were 9 children aged 4 to 5 years being cared for 4 staff members.

In the afternoon:

- In Butterfly Babies, there were 3 children aged 1 to 2 years being cared for by 2 staff members.
- In Ladybird Toddlers, there were 6 children aged 2 to 3 years being cared for by 3 staff members.
- In Crazy Frogs Junior Preschool, there were 5 children aged 3 to 4 years being cared for by three staff members.
- In Busy Bees Senior Preschool, there were 6 children aged 4 to 5 years being cared for 3 staff members.

The Curious Cubs and Busy Bunnies Senior Preschool care rooms were not in operation on the day of inspection.

(8) There was a minimum of 2 staff members present in the service at all times while the service was in operation.

This was observed on review of the staff roster available.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:

- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

Compliance Information

(1) The following records were reviewed:

- (i) A staff roster was available which outlined the start and finish times of each staff member and student.
- (k) Fifty-four accident and incident reports were reviewed and was observed to be fully complete with the relevant information required.

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

- The children were observed freely moving around the care rooms partaking in activities of choice.
- All children were observed spending time in the outdoor areas which had toys and equipment to support the children learning and development.
- Children were supported with toileting as required and nappy changing was observed to be carried out on a regular basis and as required.
- Rest areas were available with soft seating to allow children to take time away from the larger groups.
- The children were encouraged to clean their noses throughout the day which promoted personal hygiene.
- Staff were observed cleaning children's noses throughout the day. Children's faces were cleaned after mealtimes.

Supporting relationships

- The staff were observed to chat to the children in a kind and respectful manner and the staff were attuned to the needs of each child. This was observed when children were showing signs of tiredness and the child was taken to the designated sleep room.
- The children were observed sitting with the staff at meals times. The staff gave the children time to sit and enjoy their food in a relaxed environment.
- A family picture and birthday wall were on display in the care room which support the children's sense of identity and belonging.
- The staff were observed working as a team and supported each other as needed during the inspection.

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

- All snacks and meals were provided by each child’s parents and guardians. Morning snack consisted of fruit, yoghurt, brioche bread, cheese and pancakes.
- Children attending the service on a full day care basis were observed having a hot meal which consisted of mash potatoes, rice, pasta, sausages, beef mince and vegetables.
- The children had individual water bottles that were observed to be used at mealtimes and throughout the day.
- The staff outlined that the parents and guardians supplied additional and alternative foods if needed.
- The foods available to the children on the day of inspection were observed to be balanced and nutritious.

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 to the service was secured which prevented any child from exiting unsupervised or any unauthorised access to the service.
- The outdoor area was secured with a gates, fences and walls which allowed the children to play in a safe and secure area.
- Cleaning products were observed to be stored out of reach to the children during the inspection.
- Blind cords were observed to be secured on inspection.
- Unsafe areas were observed to be secured to prevent children from gaining access.

Infection Control:

- Perishable food items were observed to be stored in a refrigerator which prevent foods from spoiling.

- Warm water, hand soap and paper towel were available in the sanitary areas. Water temperatures were recorded between 25.4°C and 35.7°C which allowed for effective hand washing.

Administration of Medication:

- No medication was observed to be administered on the day of inspection. On discussion, the staff were aware of the procedure to follow in the event of administration of medication being required.

Safe Sleep:

- Children were observed having sleep facilitated in two designated sleep rooms. Cots were available for children under 2 years, and stackable beds were available for children over 2 years.
- Sleep checks were carried out at 10-minute intervals and staff were observed recording this on a written record in the room.
- Children on stackable beds were appropriately supervised while sleeping.
- Cots were observed to be located 50 cm apart.

Fire Safety:

- Fire exits were observed to be clear and unobstructed during the inspection.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Teething medication was found to be out of date in the fridge in Ladybird Toddlers. Medication in the Crazy Frog room was also found to be out of date. This posed a safety risk to the children. This was at variance to the services administration of medication policy which outlined at out-of-date medication would be disposed of.
2. A moon light in the Crazy Frog room was observed to hanging low and posed a safety risk to the children. The staff in the room corrected the hanging chord and placed it out of reach of the children.
3. A storage press in the Crazy Frog room was not secured effectively which children had access to staff personal belongings. This posed a safety risk to the children.

Infection Control:

4. While observing nappy changing in Butterfly Babies, it was observed that children's hands were not washed after nappy changing. This posed a risk of cross infection to the children. This practice was at variance to the services infection control policy.
5. In the toddler sanitary area, it was observed that potties were stored in a bag on the floor and were easily accessible to the children. This posed a risk of cross infection. This practice was at variance to the services infection control policy.

6. In Butterfly Babies, a staff member was observed cleaning a child's nose and did not wash their hands. This posed a risk of cross infection to the children and staff. This practice was at variance to the services infection control policy.

7. Mops and brushes were observed to be stored in the nappy changing and toddler sanitary area. This posed a risk of cross infection.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

Corrective action

1. The teething medication was removed from the fridge on the day of inspection and disposed of. The medication in Crazy Frogs room was sent home with the child's parents, and a new medication was prescribed for the child.
2. The moon light has been removed from the care room.
3. A lock has been placed on the storage press to prevent children from accessing the area.

Preventive action

1. The room leads were reminded to set dates in their calendars to ask parents for new medication for one month before the expiry date.
2. A walkaround took place around the building to ensure that no other cords were hanging down. No hazards were found on 31 March 2026.
3. Staff have been reminded to place all belongings in assigned lockers.

Infection Control:

Corrective action

4. A visual poster for handwashing has been placed at the sink in the changing area. All staff were asked to read the nappy changing policy to remind them of the correct procedure and the importance of washing the children's hands after nappy changing.
5. The potties have been removed from the area and are now stored in an area that is not accessible to the children. There are currently no children attending the service who requires a potty for training.
6. The staff were reminded to read the infection control policy and the importance of handwashing. New handwashing signs were also erected in handwashing areas as a reminder of the importance of hand hygiene.
7. A holder has been erected to ensure all mops and brushes are mounted to the wall, so children do not have access to them.

Preventive action

4. The nappy changing and infection control policy will be revised regulatory with all staff.
5. All potties will be stored out of reach to the children when not in use.
6. All staff will be reminded of the importance of hand washing and the dangers of cross infection.
7. Extra wall holders have been ordered in case any break.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. Photographic evidence was submitted of new medication and the reminder in the room calendar.
2. Photographic evidence was submitted of the light removed from the care room.
3. Photographic evidence was submitted of the lock on the press.

Infection Control:

4. Photographic evidence was submitted of the visual poster.
5. Photographic evidence was submitted of the potties removed from the area.
6. Photographic evidence was submitted of a hand-washing sign.
7. Photographic evidence of the brush holder was submitted.

Summary Comment

The registered providers response and documented evidence was submitted and reviewed by the inspectorate and has met the regulatory requirements.

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) Each care room had a written record of attendance of each child. It was observed that all children in attendance on the day of inspection were checked in and out.

(3)

(a) On arrival to the service, the inspectors were requested to check in on a visitor book.

(b) A written record was available of the entry of all visitors to the service.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-

(d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and

(e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.

Non-Compliance Information

(d) The following areas were observed to require maintenance or repair:

1. Timber near a mud kitchen in the outdoor area was observed to be broken.
2. Vent covers were observed to be broken in the outdoor area.
3. A downpipe in the outdoor area was observed to be loose and was not secured to the wall.

(e)

4. It was observed that a staff toilet in the toddler and nappy changing area did not have a designated sink for use by staff.

5. It was observed in the toddler sanitary area; there were three toilets and two sinks therefore there was not an adequate number of sinks for each toilet.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider stated in their response:

Corrective action

(d)

1. The timber had been removed from the area.
2. Vent covers have been replaced.
3. The downpipe has been secured to the wall with new screws.

(e)

4. A new sink was installed in the staff bathroom within the toddler and nappy changing area.
5. A new sink was installed to ensure there are 3 sinks in the children's toilet area to match the three toilets.

Preventive action

(d)

1. Management will inspect the building more often to see if anything needs to be removed or fixed.
2. The staff will be more observant in relation to the vents to ensure they do not cause injury to the children.
3. Management will inspect the building more often to see if anything needs to be removed or fixed.

(e)

4. Ensure the service has enough sinks to match the numbers of toilets in the building.
5. Ensure the service has enough sinks to match the numbers of toilets in the building.

Supporting documentation submitted

1. Photographic evidence was submitted of the timber removed from the area.
2. Photographic evidence was submitted of new vent covers.
3. Photographic evidence was submitted of the downpipe secured.
4. Photographic evidence was submitted of the new sink in the staff toilet.
5. Photographic evidence was submitted of the new sink in the children's sanitary area.

Summary Comment

The registered providers response and documented evidence was submitted and reviewed by the inspectorate and has met the regulatory requirements.