

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:	29/08/2024
----------------------------	------------

No of pre-school children:	AM	71	PM	48
-----------------------------------	----	----	----	----

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	13 Market Square, Mallow, Cork. P51 DD5Y
---	--

Inspection undertaken by:	E. Friel
----------------------------------	----------

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
---------------------------------	-----

Description of service

Danu Childcare is a community facility offering a range of provision including sessional, part-time and full day care services. It has been in operation since 2008 accommodating children aged from 0 to 6 years. Business hours are from 7.30 am until 6.00 pm, Monday to Thursday, closing at 5.30 pm on a Friday, 51 weeks of the year. The Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme operates between the hours of 9.00 am to 12 noon, 38 weeks of the year and a school age care service is in operation, in the afternoon, from 1.50 pm until 6.30 pm.

Danu Childcare is located in South Kerry on the outskirts of the rural village of Rathmore. The service is a single storey purpose built childcare setting. It consists of six care rooms namely Butterfly Babies, Ladybird Toddlers, Crazy Frog Junior Pre-school, Curious Cubs Junior Pre-school, Busy Bunnies Senior Pre-school and Busy Bees Senior Pre-school. There are also 2 dedicated sleep rooms, a reception area, office, staff kitchen along with adult and children's sanitary facilities and a laundry. A number of outdoor play areas are available, for the different age groups of children attending the service, and a large car park is located to the front of the service.

Staffing

There are twenty-four staff employed by the service who work directly with the children, twenty-one of whom were working on the day on inspection, including three adults employed under the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM). In addition, there was an administrator present, and a cleaner employed after business hours. 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 and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

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 (IAN) was issued on 29 August 2024 in relation to Regulation 23 – Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child, when the inspector observed that four of eleven long blind cords, in the Busy Bees care room, were not secured posing a safety risk to the children. When informed, during the inspection, the manager had the blinds removed. In the written response received in the office of the inspectorate, on the 29 August 2024 to the IAN, the deputy stated that maintenance personnel will put up hooks to ensure that the cords are inaccessible by the children.

Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the deputy, 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 registered provider ensured that the service had a designated person in charge (DPIC) and deputy appointed in the service. In the event that the designated person and deputy were unavailable named persons were also listed.
 - (b) The roster indicated either the deputy or named person were available while the early years children were present in the service.
 - (c) A clear management structure was available in the lobby area of the service with photographs and the roles

and responsibilities of the adults identified.

- (2)
- (a)(b) There were fifty-four validated references, thirty-two from past employers and twenty-two from sources other than past employers.
- (c) Garda vetting was available for all staff members. However, the Service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. Please refer to the information outlined under regulation 23 of this report.
- (4) There was evidence that twenty-three of the adults, including the administrator, had attained major awards in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications. In addition, one adult had a letter of Eligibility to Practice and a second had a letter of Temporary Qualification Recognition both issued by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth. Neither the registered provider nor the cleaner required a childcare qualification.

Non-Compliance Information

- (2)
- (d) International police vetting was not on file for two adults for whom it was required.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The following statement was received from the manager;

- (2)
- (d) International Police Vetting has been received for one adult and the second adult is no longer working in the service. A pre-employment check list has been added to each staff file to ensure all documentation is in place before adults commence employment in the service.

Supporting documentation submitted

The following copies of documentation and statements were received in the office of the inspectorate.

- (2)
- (d) A copy of the outstanding international police vetting and the pre-employment checklist. The statement that the second adult has left the service has been accepted.

Summary Comment

The non-compliances under Regulation 9 (2) (d) have been adequately addressed.

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 with the early years children while they were present in the setting.

(2) The minimum ratio of adults to children was met. All six care rooms were open on the day of inspection. In addition to the staff present in the rooms there were additional staff members covering breaks and lunches and the deputy manager and administrator were available to facilitate the inspection process.

Room/ age range	Adults	Children (am)	Children (pm)
Butterfly Baby (9 months – 18 months)	3 (am) 3 (pm)	8	6
Ladybird Toddlers (18 months – 2 years 6 months)	3 (am) 3 (pm)	12	11
Crazy Frogs Junior Pre-school (2 years 8 months – 5 years)	2 + 1 AIM (am) 3 (pm)	15	9
Curious Cubs (2 years 8 months – 5 years)	1 + 1 AIM (am) 2 (pm)	7	3
Busy Bunnies Senior Pre-school	2 (am)	13	11

(3 years – 5 years)	2 (pm)		
Busy Bees Senior Pre-school	2 + 1 AIM (am)	16	8
(3 years – 4 years)	3 (pm)		
Total	16 (am) 16 (pm)	71	48

- (8)
- (a) The staff roster indicated that there were two staff members in the service, at all times, while the early years service was in operation.

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

BASIC NEEDS:

- The service promoted healthy eating. Food and snacks, provided by the parents/guardians, were observed being served at regular intervals throughout the day. Children in the Busy Bunnies care room were observed at 11.25 am enjoying yogurts, crackers, cheese and a variety fruits, with staff in the Ladybird Toddler care room stating that breakfast of wheat and oat-based cereals is served between 7.30 am and 9.00 am.
- Various hot lunches were served from 12 noon in the Butterfly Baby care room including pasta and ham, potatoes, chicken and vegetables. In conversation staff in the Baby room stated that the children in the service also have snacks in the afternoon served at 3.00 pm.
- Water was observed to be available at all times from individually labelled cups and bottles. These were easily accessible and placed within reach of the children.
- Appropriate cutlery and crockery were observed for the age and stage of the children attending the Busy Bunnies care room with children being able to access knives, forks and spoons.

- Nappy changing was observed to be carried out regularly and as required in the Butterfly Baby care room, with staff stating that nappy changing is carried out every two hours.
- Staff in the Butterfly Baby care room were sensitive and responsive to children who were settling in and found the sleep time routine difficult. They were observed providing physical comfort until the children fell asleep.
- Sleep was observed to be child led with children observed sleeping in the two sleep rooms throughout the day.
- Cosy rest/quiet areas were furnished with vinyl seating, rugs and daisy cushions ensuring children could sit away from noisy activities.
- Specialised equipment was available in one of the care rooms ensuring that all children could participate in table top activities.

SUPPORTING CHILDREN'S RELATIONSHIPS:

- During mealtimes in the care rooms staff members engaged in social conversations with the children and the atmosphere was observed to be happy and relaxed.
- Staff in all Butterfly care room were observed to work well as a team, exchanging information and communicating with each other in relation to the children's individual needs.
- Conversations were extended in the Curious Cubs care room with staff listening and using strategies to extend the children's thinking and learning including asking open questions, explaining and modelling.
- Various forms of communicating with parents/guardians was stated by staff as being used including exchanging information at drop off and collection. The inspector observed staff in the Ladybird Toddler writing daily diary entries of each child's eating, sleeping, toileting and activities during the day ensuring parents/guardians are kept informed of their child's day in the service.

PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

- The care rooms were laid out in clearly defined areas which provided opportunities for learning across all developmental areas.
- Toys and equipment in the care rooms were positioned in baskets on easily accessible, open shelving that offered choice, stimulation and exploration.
- The Butterfly Baby care room had a large fenced off area with soft matting, an adult chair was observed in use with staff comforting children throughout the morning. A pop-up tent tunnel was available for the babies to crawl through along with sensory books and equipment which were within reach of the children on the mats.

- Each age group had access to their own individual secure play area in the outdoors, which also included covered areas to facilitate outdoor play in all weathers. A range of developmentally appropriate equipment was provided in the fully enclosed areas. Opportunities were provided for challenge and safe risk with the Busy Bunnies and Busy Bees observed playing on the climbing frames and metal slides and the Butterfly Baby room children had access to a new slide and climbing apparatus. The Butterfly Baby care room outdoor play area was fitted with safety matting to prevent injury from falling, this was also in place under the climbing apparatus in the older children's outdoor play area.

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 door is secured with a buzzer which has each care room name on it. Staff in the care rooms can view adults at the door with the aid of a visual monitor ensuring that no unauthorised adults can enter the building.
- Kitchen and laundry doors were inaccessible to the children.
- Low-level windows were identified with monkey stickers to prevent children banging into them in the Curious Cubs care room.
- Windows openings were secured with keys restricting preventing children from falling or exiting accidentally.
- The six available high chairs in the Butterfly Baby room were fitted with five-point safety harnesses ensuring children are secure and cannot climb out of their seats.
- The indoor and outdoor toys and equipment appeared in good condition and were well maintained.
- Heavy storage units were anchored to prevent them from falling or tipping onto children.
- All flexes and cables in the care rooms and in the sleep rooms were out of reach of the children.
- Cleaning agents were observed to be stored on high shelving, inaccessible by the children.
- The security monitor screens were securely mounted.

- The outdoor areas were secured with high hedging, metal and wooden fencing and a concrete wall minimising the risk of children exiting the outdoor area into the car park and unauthorised adults gaining entry.

Infection Control:

- Perishable food and bottles of milk, in the Butterfly Baby care room, were observed being stored in the fridges in the care rooms, preventing spoilage.
- Wash hand basins, in use by adults and children, were supplied with thermostatically controlled hot water, ranging from 31.1°C to 36.7°C, dispensing soap and paper towels from a dispenser.
- Children were observed washing their hands after toileting, before snack and coming in from playing outdoors in the Busy Bees Senior Pre-school care room.
- Staff changing children from the Butterfly Baby care room were observed wearing single use aprons and disposable gloves during nappy changes.
- After nappy changing staff were observed sanitising the changing mat and area with disinfectant.
- Microwave containers were observed in the Butterfly Baby care room for sterilising children's soothers.
- Tables were disinfected before and after food being served ensuring a sanitised surface for the children.
- Children's personal belongings including coats and bags were stored in the corridors on individual hooks off the floor areas.
- Windows were open in the care rooms, sanitary areas and sleep rooms ensuring the circulation of fresh air while maintaining ambient room temperatures (18-22°C).

Administration of Medication:

- Anti-febrile medication was available labelled with each child's individual name in the Butterfly Baby care room. It was stored in its original container, out of reach in a high cupboard.

Safe Sleep:

- Documentary evidence, furnished to the inspector, indicated that sleep records were available for each child. Recorded details included the child's colour, position, breathing and the temperature of the sleep room.
- The temperature in both sleep rooms one and two, where children sleeping were aged over 12 months of age, were recorded with temperatures between 18°C-22°C, within the recommended limits for this age group.
- An air conditioning unit was available to maintain the recommended temperatures of the sleep rooms, should it be required.

- The inspector observed that the cots in both sleep rooms were placed more than 50 centimetres apart.

Fire Safety:

- Fire assembly signs were visible in the outdoor play areas.
- Firefighting equipment was secured with brackets to the walls.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

- (1) An Immediate Action (IAN) was issued on 29 August 2024 in relation to Regulation 23 – Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child, when the inspector observed that four of eleven long blind cords, in the Busy Bees care room, were not secured posing a safety risk to the children. When informed, during the inspection, the manager had the blinds removed.
- (2) Garda vetting was available for all adults. However, one adult vetting disclosure was not dated within the previous three years in adherence with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI- RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.
- (3) Staff member coats were hung within reach of the children in the Crazy Frogs and the Busy Bees care rooms, posing a safety risk should a child gain access to potentially unsafe items in the pockets.

Infection Control:

- (4) Bins located in the sanitary area of the Curious Cubs and Busy Bunnies care rooms had no lids, posing a risk of cross contamination from children touching the used paper towels already in the open bins when inserting waste.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

The following statement was received from the manager;

General Safety:

- (1) The blinds have now been secured to the wall with hooks, ensuring children cannot access the cords.
- (2) Renewed Garda vetting was received and is now on file for the adult for whom it was required.
- (3) Staff coats in the Crazy Frogs and Busy Bees care rooms are now located out of reach of the children. All staff were sent an email in this regard and alternative, secure, locations were included.

Infection Control:

- (4) New lidded bins which are pedal operated were bought to replace the bins in the Curious Cubs and Busy Bunnies care rooms.

Supporting documentation submitted

The following documentation and photographic evidence were received in the office of the inspectorate;

General Safety:

- (1) Photographs of the blinds secured with hooks. A copy of a checklist was received with the blind hooks included, ensuring the adults are checking these on a regular basis.
- (2) A copy of the renewed Garda Vetting was received in the office of the inspectorate.
- (3) Photographs of the hooks removed in the care rooms where staff previously hung their coats.

Infection Control:

- (4) Photographs of the two new lidded bins.

Summary Comment

The corrective actions taken by the manager have addressed the non-compliances identified under Regulation 23.

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) Certificates on file indicated that staff members had First Aid Responder (FAR) training completed and were available to the children.
- (2)
 - (a) (b) The well stocked first aid boxes were located in cupboards in the care rooms which were easily accessible to the adults and were available throughout the inspection.

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.
- (2)
- (c) an authorised person.
- (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) Written records were available of the monthly fire drills which took place in the service. The dates recorded of the most recent fire drills in each of the care rooms was noted as August 2024.
 - (b) Written records were available detailing number, type and maintenance of firefighting equipment and the smoke alarms in the service. The firefighting equipment certificate was dated November 2023 and the smoke alarm certificate was dated 21 June 2024.
- (2)
- (c) Both the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarm certificates were open to review on the day of inspection.
- (4) The notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were located on the walls of the care rooms.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

A certificate of insurance was available, with an expiry date of 27 March 2025, to evidence that the registered provider had insurance cover for 100 full day care children.