

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015KY038
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Danú Childcare
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Presbytery View, Rathmore, Killarney, Co. Kerry
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<b>Eircode:</b>	P51 DX52
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Mary Woods
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<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	19/09/2023
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	72	PM	49
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	134 Bank Place, Mallow, Cork. P51 EC59
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<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	E. Friel
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<b>Title:</b>	Early Years Inspector
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### 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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not Applicable
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### Description of service

Danu Childcare Centre is a community early years service in operation since 2008, catering for children aged from 0 to 6 years of age, providing full day care, part-time and sessional services. Opening hours are from 7.30 am until 6.00 pm, Monday to Thursday and the service closes at 5.30 pm on a Friday, 51 weeks of the year. The Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme is facilitated within the sessional hours of 9.00 am until 12.00 noon, Monday to Friday, 38 weeks of the year. A school age care service is in operation from 1.50 pm until 18.30 pm.

Danu Childcare Centre 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 Baby, Ladybird Toddlers, Crazy Frog Junior Pre-school, Curious Cubs Junior Preschool, 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. A number of outdoor play areas are situated at the rear of the service, for the different age groups of children, and a large car park is located adjacent to the main entrance.

### Staffing

There are 24 staff including 3 AIM Support Workers and one cleaner. The registered provider does not work in the service.

### 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 announced and focused on the area of governance/ health, welfare and development of child and safety. The inspections 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.

### Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the manager, 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 there was a designated person in charge, a deputy and named employees available on the day of inspection.
- (b) The designated person, deputy and the named employees were on the premises when the inspector arrived. The staff roster indicated that the designated person, deputy or named employees of the supervisory sub-committee were on the premises at all times.
- (c) There was a clear photographic management structure located on the reception notice board detailing each employee's role and responsibility.

(2)

- (a) (b) There were thirty references and validations from past employers and eighteen references and validations from sources other than previous employers.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures from the National Vetting Bureau were available for all twenty-four employees.
- (d) International police vetting was available for one of two employees who had resided outside of the State for period of six consecutive months or longer as an adult.

- (4) There was evidence that twenty-two of the twenty-four adults, working directly with children, 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 issued by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth and the other adult did not require any childcare qualification.

### Non-Compliance Information

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

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective and Preventive Action

- (2)  
(d) The staff member has initiated the process of International Police Vetting and will not have contact with the children until it has been received. In future, all staff members working directly with the children will not commence employment until all vetting has been received.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

- (2)  
(d) A tracking number for the above application was received in the office of the inspectorate.

### Summary Comment

The non-compliance identified under this regulation has been 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 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 two staff members covering breaks and lunches and the manager was available to facilitate the inspection process.

Room/ age range	Adults	Children (am)	Children (pm)
Baby (9 months – 18 months)	2 (am) 2 (pm)	5	5
Ladybird Toddlers (18 months – 3 years)	3 (am) 4 (pm)	14	11
Crazy Frogs Junior Pre-school (2 years 8 months – 6 years)	2 (am) 2 (pm)	17	12
Curious Cubs (2 years 8 months – 6 years)	1 + 1 AIM (am)	8	
Busy Bunnies Senior Pre-school (3 years – 6 years)	2 + 1 AIM (am) 2 (pm)	15	9
Busy Bees Senior Pre-school (3 years – 6 years)	2 + 1 AIM (am) 2 (pm)	13	12
Total	15 (am) 12 (pm)	72	49

- (8) The staff roster indicated that there were two staff members in the service at all times while the pre-school was in operation.

## 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:*

*(j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent.*

#### Compliance Information

(1)

(j) A sample of fifteen records in relation to medications administered to children attending the service were reviewed, all were found to contain the necessary information, consent and signatures.

## 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

The following information was obtained through:

-direct observation and discussion with staff

-examination of relevant documentation

#### **BASIC NEEDS:**

- Adults were on hand to provide support and assistance appropriate to the age and stage of development of the children. For example, staff at the children's level assisting with spoon feeding children who were in sitting in high chairs.
- Children in the Baby room had access to age and stage appropriate equipment including beakers with handles and staff had access to bottle warmers to heat milk in the children's bottles.
- Nappy changing was observed being carried out on a regular basis in both the Baby and Ladybird care rooms. These interactions were noted to be carried out in a friendly, caring and sensitive manner with each child enjoying one to one time with the adults.

- Children in the Curious Cubs care room were observed accessing the toilet independently, directly from the care room, and washing their hands after toileting.
- In each of the care rooms children had the opportunity to access rest/quiet areas which were furnished with vinyl sofas, cushions and floor mats. Bookcases were located nearby for children to access books while in the rest/quiet areas.
- Sleep was child led in the Baby care room. Children showing signs of tiredness were given the opportunity to rest in the adjoining sleep room.
- Staff in all of the care rooms were observed responding to children’s emotional needs in a caring and sensitive manner. An example included a child in the Crazy Frog care room who was settling in and was visibly upset while awaiting a parent at lunch time, the child was comforted by staff who provided distractions with play materials while offering verbal reassurance and remaining nearby until the parent arrived.

### **SUPPORTING CHILDREN’S RELATIONSHIPS:**

- Staff in the Baby care room stated that a keyperson system was in place which included staff writing daily diary entries of each child’s eating, sleeping, toileting and activities for the day. Staff then share these with parents/guardians at the end of each day, building relationships with them.
- Staff in all care rooms were observed to work well as a team, exchanging information and communicating with each other in relation to the children’s needs and activities particularly around breaks and lunches.
- Children in the Baby room were comforted and offered support and reassurance while sitting with staff on the soft mats on the floor while attempting to stand and physically move.
- A record of staff training was available for each staff member. Staff stated that staff meetings with management take place every month.

### **PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:**

- Each room was laid out in clearly defined areas which provided opportunities for learning across all developmental areas.
- The Baby care room had a large fenced off area with soft mats, vinyl foam pieces and a sofa. The floor area in the main room had sensory tiles that when stood on the inner contents moved, imaginary play equipment and pull-a-long toys.

- Two adult chairs were available in the Baby room facilitating staff working with the children to sit and feed, read and comfort the children.
- New highchairs and waterproof mattresses had been purchased since the last inspection.
- A sense of identity and belonging was evident in the care rooms with cupcakes displaying each child's individual photograph and date of birth, and trees with family photographs of each child's family.
- Each of the care rooms had a range of age and stage appropriate play-based materials that were positioned at an accessible level on open shelving that offered choice, stimulation and exploration.
- Each age group had access to their own individual secure play area in the outdoors, which also included covered areas to facilitate outdoor play all year round. 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 Babies rocking on rockers and riding on ride-ons. The Baby 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 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 19 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) There were adequate and suitable facilities both indoors and outdoors in regard to the number of early years children attending the service in respect of their age and stage of development and the amount of time they spent in the service.
- (b) There were adequate and suitable facilities for the children to rest during the day. The service had two dedicated sleep rooms one of which was adjoined and in use for children needing to rest in the Baby care room. The second sleep room was a dedicated sleep room for the Ladybird children. There were an adequate number of shared cots for children attending the service. Sleep room one had six cots which were fitted with waterproof mattresses and two children were observed sleeping in this room at 11.35 am. Sleep room two had six cots and three children were observed asleep in this room at 12.35 pm. The cots in each sleep room were supplied with cellular blankets and the ambient lighting allowed for restful sleep while still allowing the adults to easily view the sleeping children. Nine stackable beds were available for children over two years who wished to rest.

### 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

- Snacks and meals, provided by the parents/guardians, were observed being served at regular intervals throughout the day. Children in the Curious Cubs room were observed at 10.50 am enjoying a range of filled sandwiches, yogurts, cheese and a variety of fruits and vegetables. Various hot lunches were served in the Crazy frog room at 1.35 pm including spaghetti bolognaise and bacon, potatoes and vegetables. In conversation staff in the Baby room stated that the children in the service also have two snacks in the afternoon served at 3.00 pm and 5.00 pm.
- Water was easily accessible in each room from individually labelled containers placed in baskets which were located at the children’s height.

### 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.*

#### B

#### General Safety:

- The main entrance was secured upon arrival with a key code and buzzer system and the main corridor doors were operated with keycodes ensuring that no unauthorised adult could enter the service and no child could leave unsupervised.
- Low-level windows were identified with stickers to prevent children banging into them.
- Windows openings were secured with keys restricting preventing children from falling or exiting accidentally.
- All blind cords were placed out of reach of children.
- The new highchairs were fitted with five-way safety harnesses to prevent children from slipping out of them.
- All toys and equipment, indoors and outdoors, appeared in good condition.

- Cables and flexed were secured out of reach of the children.
- Medication was stored in its original container inaccessible to the children.
- Cleaning agents were stored up high on shelving or under sinks fitted with child proof locks, out of children's reach.
- The kitchen was inaccessible to the children.
- The outdoor area was secured with high hedging, metal and wooden fencing and a concrete wall minimising the risk of children exiting the outdoor area and unauthorised adults gaining entry.
- Metal support beams and window sills present in the Baby room outdoor play area were covered preventing injury should a young child fall or bang into them.

### Infection Control:

- Perishable food and bottles of milk 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 34°C to 37°C, dispensing soap, paper towels from a dispenser and pedal operated bins for the disposal of waste.
- Cleaning schedules and laundry records were noted to be up to date and completed in each care room.
- Staff changing children in the Ladybird and Crazy Frog sanitary areas were observed wearing single use aprons and disposable gloves during nappy changes.
- After nappy changing staff were observed disinfecting the changing mats and areas.
- Children were observed washing their hands after toileting, before snack and coming in from playing outdoors.
- 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 area.
- Windows were open in the care rooms and in the sanitary area ensuring the circulation of fresh air while maintaining ambient room temperatures (18-22°C).

### Administration of Medication:

- Anti-febrile medication was available and was stored in a high cupboard in its original container.

### Safe Sleep:

- Staff members were observed carrying out physical sleep checks on the children sleeping in both designated sleep rooms throughout the inspection period. These ten-minute sleep checks were written down for each child and were furnished to the inspector. They included each child's colour, position and breathing at the time of the recording while the children were observed sleeping. In addition, CCTV was also in place and each care room could observe the children while sleeping.
- The air temperature in the designated sleep rooms was recorded within the recommended range of 16°C-20°C, as recommended for safe sleep.

### Fire Safety:

- All emergency exits were unobstructed.
- The fire assembly point was easily located in the outdoor play area with a visual sign directing children and adults.

### Non-Compliance Information

#### Infection Control:

- (1) The two nappy bins in use in the Ladybird and Crazy Frog sanitary areas were not pedal operated representing a risk of cross infection from the number of adults coming into contact with the lid.

#### Fire Safety:

- (2) The fire exit door in the Curious Cubs care room was fitted with a key lock representing a safety issue should the key be misplaced or go missing.

### Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective & Preventive Action

#### Infection Control:

- (1) The nappy bins have been replaced in Ladybird and Crazy Frog sanitary areas.

#### Fire Safety:

- (2) A thumb twist cylinder has been fitted on the fire exit door in the Curious Cubs to facilitate the quick evacuation of children and adults in the event of an emergency.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

#### Infection Control:

- (1) A photograph of the new nappy bin in the Ladybird and Crazy Frog sanitary area was received in the office of the inspectorate.

#### Fire Safety:

(2) A photograph of the newly fitted thumb twist cylinder fitted to the Curious Cubs fire exit door was received in the office of the inspectorate.

### Summary Comment

The non-compliances found under this regulation have been adequately addressed.

## 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 at least twenty staff members had First Aid Responder (FAR) training and were available to the children.

(2)  
(a) (b) The well stocked first aid box was stored in the Curious Cubs care room in the cupboard above the sink and was 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.
- (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) A written was kept of fire drills that took place in the service. The last fire drill was recorded as taking place on 10 August 2023.
  - (b) Written records were available detailing the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarm. Both certificates were dated 19 July 2023.
  - (4) The notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were displayed on the notice board in the service.

### Part VI - Safety

#### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

#### Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured that valid insurance was in place with an expiry date of 27 March 2024. The insurance certificate stated that the service is insured to cover one hundred children on a full day care basis.