

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015MH041
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Name of Service:	Daisy Chain Montessori & Creche
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Address of Service:	4 Blackbush Lane, Drogheda, Co. Meath
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Name of Registered Provider:	Ursula Regan
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date(s) of Inspection:	08/07/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	36	PM	26
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Meath Child & Parent Support Hub, Commons Road, Navan, Co. Meath
Inspection undertaken by:	D.Murray & AM. Cunningham
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).

Conditions if applicable	Not Applicable.
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Description of service

Daisy Chain Montessori & Crèche is a privately owned service operating since 2006. The service provides sessional, part-time and full day to children from 1 to 6 years A school aged service is also provided. The service operates from 07:30am to 6:15pm Monday to Friday and participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme. The service consists of 5 care rooms, a cot room, kitchen and sanitary facilities all located on the ground floor with an office on the first floor. An outdoor space is located to the rear of the premises.

The rooms in the service were as follows:

The **Sunshine room** provided care for children from 1 to 2 years.

The **Rainbow room** and the **Little Scholars room** facilitated the care of children from 2 to 3 years.

The **Stepping Stones** and the **Little Cherubs rooms** provided education and care to children from 2 years 8 months to 6 years. On the day of the inspection the Little Cherubs room was used for school aged children.

Staffing

The registered provider employed 2 managers, a supervisor, 12 childcare staff, 1 school aged staff, a cook and 2 household staff. Present on the day of inspection were the manager, 9 childcare staff, 1 school aged staff, 1 household staff in the morning and 1 covering the afternoon shift.

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.

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 manager, 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.

(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.

(6A) Paragraph (4) shall not apply to an employee of a registered provider where - (a) the registered provider receives funding for the employment of the employee pursuant to a scheme funded by the Minister and known as the Access and Inclusion Model, and (b) the employment of the employee is for the purpose of providing support, pursuant to the scheme referred to in subparagraph (a), for a child attending the service to enable the child to participate in the programme known as the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) funding Programme."

Compliance Information

(1) (a) The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.

(b) A designated person in charge was on the premises when the inspectors arrived unannounced to carry out the inspection.

(2) Twenty staff files were reviewed.

(a)&(b)Forty validated written references (a) were available either from a past employer or from a reputable source.

(c) Garda vetting disclosure was available for the 20 staff members. 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 available for 3 staff members who had resided outside the jurisdiction for a period of more than 6 consecutive months as an adult.

(4) Sixteen childcare staff members had a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 and above on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

(6) (a) One staff member was employed under the scheme known as the Access and Inclusion Model.

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) On the day of inspection there were 9 adults working directly with the 36 pre-school children attending the service.

(2) The following adult to child ratios were observed when the service was operating at capacity on the day of inspection:

The **Sunshine Room** had 4 children ranging in age from 1 to 2 years being cared for by 2 staff members. Two children were availing of full day care and 2 children who were settling in went home at 12midday.

The **Rainbow Room** had 6 children ranging in age from 2 to 3 years being cared for by 2 staff members. Three children were availing of full day care while 3 children were attending for sessional hours .

The **Little Scholars** room had 6 children ranging in age from 2 to 3 years being cared for by 1 staff member. Five children were availing of full day care while 1 child was attending for sessional hours.

The **Stepping Stones Room** had 20 children ranging in age from 3 to 4.6 years being cared for by 3 staff members (one staff member providing AIM support). Sixteen children were availing of full day care while 4 children were attending for sessional hours.

The **Little Cherubs Room** facilitated school aged children on the day of inspection.

An additional staff member was available to provide support across the rooms as needed.

(8) (a) According to the staff roster 2 adults were present on the premises at all times.

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) The following observations were made on how each child's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the daily life in the service:

Basic needs:

- The staff members sat with the children at snack and dinner time helping the children when required whilst encouraging conversation and extending interactions.
- In the Sunshine room any child who became upset or who were settling in were nurtured and cuddled until they settled. All children went to sleep at the service designated sleep time after dinner at 12:30pm.
- Children's nappies were changed regularly and in a timely manner with warm one-to-one interactions during direct care. Staff members were responsive to the children's cues should they need to use the toilet, with discreet supervision provided and assistance given if required.
- Children were observed being allowed to self-direct their own play. The children were afforded the opportunity to choose activities and to follow through on their choices and change activities if they so wish
- All children were observed enjoying energetic outdoor play with both their peers and staff members throughout the day.

Supporting relationships around children:

- The staff members communicated with parents on a daily basis regarding activities pertaining to their children. Children and parents were greeted at drop off and collection with friendly conversation overheard. The staff encouraged the children to engage positively with each other by adopting simple social rules such as turn taking, sharing in play activities and resolving minor disputes.
- Transitions were handled smoothly as the children were given ample time to complete one activity before starting the next.

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-

(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.

(3) A registered provider of a full day care service, a part-time day care service or a childminding service, other than such a service to which paragraph (2) applies, shall ensure that-

(a) a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the pre-school children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises,

Compliance Information

(1)(b) Cosy areas consisting of mats, cushions and soft furnishings were available in all care rooms should a child needed to take a break from activities and rest. A cot room was available with 6 standard cots for the younger age group who required sleep. The older children requiring sleep were accommodated on stackable beds in the Little Scholars room.

(3)(a) The outdoor space was suitable, safe and secure and was divided by fencing with an artificial grass and cement surface. The smaller area accommodated the Sunshine and Rainbow rooms. The larger area facilitated the Stepping Stones, Little Scholars and Little Cherubs Rooms. A partially sheltered area in the larger space permitted outdoor play and activities in all types of weather. A raised area with steps, slide and a climbing wall provided the opportunity for challenging play.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

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

Compliance Information

- The care rooms were well resourced with play materials and equipment which were laid out in interest areas which were spacious and uncluttered. The play materials and equipment incorporated natural/sensorial materials, art and crafts, a range of suitable toys and books which were easily accessible on open shelving at their height. The areas of interest were richly enhanced with colourful, creative up-cycled furniture which created a home from home environment.
- The outdoor spaces were equipped with age-appropriate play materials and equipment. Equipment included activity unit with a slide, ride on toys, wooden and plastic playhouses, activity units mounted to the walls, rockers, mud kitchen with play utensils, sand table, building blocks, animal boxes and balancing plank.

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 had a 2-week menu plan with a selection of meals ranging from meat, fish and poultry along with a variety of snack. The younger children availed of snacks supplied by the service while the older children brought their morning snack from home. For the children attending the service on a full day care basis, breakfast was available from 7:30am to 9am consisting of a choice of cereals and toast. Morning snack was served at 10am which consisted of chopped banana, apple and crackers. Dinner was served at 12midday which consisted of beef stew with mash potatoes. Pancakes ,yogurt and fruit was served at 3pm with additional snacks available for the children staying until 6:15pm. Water was the drink of choice with individual bottles/cups for the children in the care rooms.

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 following safety measures were in place on the day of inspection:

- The gate entering the side entrance to the service was secured and the main door to the service was secured by a buzzer system. These security measures ensured that a child did not exit unsupervised and restricted unauthorised persons from gaining access to the service and outdoor spaces.
- An indoor and outdoor risk assessment was conducted on a regular basis.
- All cleaning agents were stored out of reach of the children.
- The emergency exit doors were unobstructed.
- All furniture and display units had a stable base with no risk of toppling identified.

Infection Control:

The following infection control measures were observed:

- The hand washing policy and nappy changing policy were implemented in practice with appropriate hand washing for staff and children at all times.
- The service was clean with cleaning schedules maintained on a daily basis.
- Fridges were available in the care rooms for the refrigeration of perishable items.

Safe Sleep:

Safe sleep practices were observed in the service as demonstrated by the following examples:

- Temperature of the cot room was maintained between 16 to 20⁰C and between 18 to 22⁰C in the Little Scholars room while children were sleeping.
- A sleep log recording the position, colour and breathing pattern was recorded at 10 minutes intervals on all sleeping children.
- Block out blinds were available which created an atmosphere conducive to sleep.

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) The service provided evidence that a person had up to date First Aid Responders course and was available at all times to the children attending the pre-school service.
- (2)(a) and (b) A suitably equipped first aid box was available and safely stored in the premises.

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 fire fighting 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 record was available of the fire drills completed in the service. The last recorded fire drill took place on the 24TH June 2025
- (b) A record was maintained of the number, type and maintenance record of the fire fighting equipment and mains powered smoke alarms on the premises. The fighting equipment was last serviced on the 18th February 2025. The mains powered smoke alarms were last serviced on the 13th February 2025.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was conspicuously displayed on the premises.

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 the service was adequately insured for 72 children at any one time attending for full day care. The policy showed that the service was insured from 28/03/2025 to the 27/3/2026.