

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WH024
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Name of Service:	Cairdeas Childcare
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Address of Service:	Cairdeas Community Childcare Centre, Killucan Road, Kinnegad, Co. Westmeath
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Eircode:	N91 YP60
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Name of Registered Provider:	Dermot Leavy
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Service type:	Full Day, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	03/10/2023
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No of pre-school children:	AM	69	PM	23
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla, Child and Family Agency, SAP Office, St. Loman's Campus, Mullingar, Co Westmeath.
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Inspection undertaken by:	C.O' Connor Hughes, K. Murphy & F. Joyce
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Title:	Early Years Inspectors & Inspection Registration Manager
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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).

Conditions if applicable	Not applicable
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Description of service

The service provides full day care, part time and sessional places to children aged between 0- 6 years. The service currently operates between the hours of 08:30 and 18:00 on a Monday to Friday basis. A school age childcare service is provided.

The Early Years' Service is located in a single storey purpose-built premises. Seven pre-school rooms, two sleep rooms, a dining room, a kitchen, two offices and a reception area are provided. Outdoor play areas are attached to the rear and side of the service. On-site parking and set down facilities are available. The service is situated on the outskirts of the town of Kinnegad, County Westmeath.

Staffing

Seventeen adults including the designated person in charge and supervisor were present and working directly with children. The deputy manager and two support staff including a cook and cleaner were present. The registered provider does not work directly with children and was not present during the inspection.

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 co-operation of the designated person in charge, deputy manager, supervisor, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Part II - Registration and Register

Regulation 8 - Notification of change in circumstances

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a temporary pre-school service shall, subject to paragraph (3), notify the Agency in writing of any proposed change in the details in relation to the pre-school service contained in the register pursuant to section 58C (2) of the Act or Regulation 7(2) at least 60 days before it is proposed that the change would take effect.

Compliance Information

The service submitted a change in circumstance in respect of a change of designated person in charge on the 8 March 2023. This change was accepted by TUSLA registration office.

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.

(6) Paragraph (4) shall not apply before 1 September 2021 to a person who-

- (a) has signed a declaration on or before 30 June 2016 to the effect that he or she intends to retire from employment in a pre-school service before 1 September 2021.*

(6A) is inserted by S.I. No.632 of 2016 CHILD CARE ACT 1991 (EARLY YEARS SERVICES) (AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS 2016 which states; Regulation 9 of the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations (S.I. No. 221 of 2016) is amended - in paragraph (4), by the substitution of “paragraphs (5), (6) and (6A)” for “paragraphs (5) and (6)”, and (b) by the insertion of the following paragraph after paragraph (6): “)

(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 designated person in charge and a named person to deputise were available as required.

(b)

The designated person in charge and a named person to deputise were present for the duration of the inspection.

Thirty staff files were reviewed including the registered provider. The designated person in charge stated the board of management do not have contact with children in the service.

The following was noted:

(2)(a)(b)

The required number of written validated references were available from past employers and from a source other than a past employer in respect of the twenty-eight staff members including the registered provider.

(c)

A Garda Vetting disclosure was available in respect of the staff members and the registered provider.

(d)

Police vetting was available in respect of eight staff members who had lived outside the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

(4)

All staff members working directly with children attending the service and held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Levels 5,6,7 or 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

(6) (a)

No employee had signed a declaration on or before the 30th of June 2016 to the effect that they intended to retire from employment in a pre-school service.

(6A)

Five employees present were working directly with children under the Access and Inclusion Model.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a)(b)

Two written validated references were not available from a previous employer or a source other than a past employer in respect of two staff members.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

References have been secured and validated for the members of staff and are in the Regulation 9 folder. See attached.

An annual inspection of staff files will be carried out by the manager to ensure all documentation is up to date and on file.

Supporting documentation submitted

Written documentation.

Summary Comment

Evidence submitted and reviewed by the Early Years Inspector met the Regulatory requirement.

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 minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained during the inspection.

(2)

There were sixty-nine children attending the service supervised directly by seventeen adults including the designated person in charge and the supervisor.

(8)(a)

The staff roster indicated that two adults are on the premises at all times.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 18 – Copy of Act etc.

A registered provider shall ensure that a copy of Part VIIA (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013)) of the Act and of these Regulations is kept on the premises and the said copies shall be open to inspection on the premises by-

- (a) a parent or guardian of a child attending or proposing to attend the service,*
- (b) an employee, unpaid worker or contractor, and*
- (c) an authorised person.*

Compliance Information

A copy of the of Part V11A (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No.40 of 2013)) of the Act and Regulations was available for inspection by (a)(b)(c).

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)

There was a calm and happy atmosphere in the service. Children were observed to move between the indoor and outdoor environments enjoying physical play and gross motor activities as well as imaginative and sensory play outdoors. Clothing and footwear for children made play outdoors available to the children throughout the year. Indoors activities included mark marking, cutting, gluing, tabletop and sensory play. Siblings had the opportunity to play together outdoors.

Children were encouraged to feed themselves and staff assisted the children as required. Water stations were available to children to self-serve in the pre-school rooms. Nappy changing was carried out regularly and as needed. Good communication was observed between the staff member and child during nappy changing. Spare clothes were available and children's needs were promptly attended to.

The care practices and routines were child led with the staff following the individual verbal and non-verbal cues of the child. Individual care plans are in place for children additional support and supervision. Children were encouraged to be independent as they washed their hands before snacks and mealtimes. Older children went to the toilet independently supervised by staff. Younger children were observed to explore their environment and crawl and play on the soft matting provided. Younger children slept in a in a restful atmosphere in the sleep rooms and were physically checked every ten minutes by staff.

The staff were positive towards children and were familiar with each child, their personalities and their daily routines. Staff were observed to give comfort and reassurance to the children. Staff used individual names, maintained eye contact and conversed with the children during play activities, nappy changing, toileting and mealtimes. Good teamwork was observed amongst staff. Team meetings are held on a regular basis with management and staff.

The seven pre-school rooms were bright and colourful with children's artwork and posters displayed. A range of developmentally appropriate experiences to meet children's learning needs was available in the pre-school rooms. Areas of interest included a home area, dress up, construction area, sensory and nature area. Age and stage appropriate toys and materials were accessible to children on low level shelving. Children were observed to relax in the cosy rest areas established in the pre-school rooms. Large comfortable chairs were available to support the comfort and nurturing of the young children in attendance.

The service works in partnership with parents and guardians. Parents were observed to collect their children from the pre-school room after the ECCE session. A verbal handover was provided to parents at this time.

Newsletters and emails are circulated from the office to each family attending the service. A parent notice board is displayed in the reception area of the service. The website for the service provides general information about the service and the policies and procedures for the service.

For younger children a shared diary is in operation between the service and the child's family to communicate the daily routine including feeding, sleeping and nappy changing.

Each child has their own learning journal depicting their play and work activities. This journal is shared with parents who have the opportunity to share the child's activities at home and save the memory in the learning journal.

Evidence indicated that the curriculum planning that supported the Early Childhood Curriculum framework was being implemented.

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.

(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)(a)

Suitable play equipment was provided indoors and outdoors which included toys and equipment for construction, tabletop activities, arts and crafts, sand play, water play and home corners.

(b)

Separate sleep rooms were available connected to the Dermot's and Florian's room equipped with six cots. Cots had wheels to aid a prompt evacuation in an emergency situation. Low level beds were available for children over two years of age. Cosy rest areas were noted in the pre-school rooms for children to rest and relax.

(3)(a)

A high-level metal fence secured the perimeter of the outdoor area. Each pre-school room had direct access to an outdoor play area. Natural grass and absorbent surface areas were in place. Toys and equipment included covered sand trays, water play trays, a large climb/step/slide unit, a mud kitchen and a dig area, tyres, small plastic slides and a variety of bikes and trikes. A sensory garden was available with some children involved in the growing of tomatoes and mint. All children had the opportunity for outdoor play during the inspection.

The designated person in charge stated the sand house was not in use since August 2023 as it required repair works.

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

Adequate and suitable furniture, play materials and work equipment was available in the pre-school rooms in the service.

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 food was freshly prepared on site by a cook. A three-week menu plan was in place depicting the main meals provided to children each day. Dietary requirements were accommodated. The service provides breakfast, snacks and the main meal to children attending on a full day care basis. Morning snack is provided to children attending the ECCE session. A rolling snack is provided during the morning session and children eat when they are hungry. Snack consisted of wholemeal crackers, cheese and fruit. Milk or water to available to drink.

Children from Florians room and Elizabeths room were observed to eat their dinner in the dining room.

At approximately 11:40 to 12:35 the cook served the main meal which consisted of a vegetable-based tomato sauce, with pancetta and pasta. Mashed potato was alternatively served for the younger children.

A choice of water or milk was offered to the children. Second helpings of dinner were made available to children who required extra portions. Fruit bowls and potable water was available to children to self-serve in the pre-school rooms as required.

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 service met the necessary safety requirements in respect of the indoor environment, toys and equipment and the safe storage of cleaning agents.

Infection Control:

The nappy changing procedure observed was carried out as per the service nappy changing procedure.

Children were observed to wash their hands before snacks and after using the toilet.

Soothers were stored correctly in individual containers.

Fridges were available in each pre-school room for the storage of perishable goods. The temperature of the fridge was recorded on a daily basis.

Administration of Medication:

Temperature reducing medication was available in the service if a child presented with a high temperature and stored safely in the service.

Safe Sleep:

A record of the colour, position and breathing of sleeping children was noted in sleep logs. In the sleep room attached to Dermot's room staff were observed to physically check sleeping children every ten minutes and document their observations. Staff sat and observed sleeping children in the Florian's room. Air conditioning units were in operation in the two sleep rooms. The environmental temperatures recorded were 17.9 degrees Celsius in the Florian sleep room and 19 degrees Celsius in the Dermot sleep room.

Fire Safety:

Fire exit routes were unobstructed, and a fire assembly point was noted to the front of the premises.

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)
Five adults were qualified in First Aid response (FAR) and available on the premises during the hours of operation.

(2)(a)
First aid boxes were available in the pre-school rooms and in the office.

(b)
A first aid box was accessible to children in the pre-school service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of-

(a) any fire drill that takes place in the premises, and

(b) the number, type and maintenance record of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.

(4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire shall be displayed in a conspicuous position in the premises.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

A written record for the completed monthly fire drills was available on the premises. The last fire drill was recorded as taking place on the 17 August 2023.

(b)

A record was available demonstrating the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises. The firefighting equipment and the smoke alarms in the premises were serviced on the 16 November 2022 and the 29 August 2023 respectively.

(4)

A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in a conspicuous position in the pre-school rooms.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.

Compliance Information

Children were supervised in the pre-school rooms, in the outdoor play area, when using the sanitary accommodation and on transition to the dining room at mealtimes. It was noted a bell system is in place to call for relief staff in the Florian’s room and Dermot’s room. Upon discussion with the inspector, staff outlined how they managed the supervision of children in the pre-school room and outdoor play area during the daily routine.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

There was evidence of current insurance cover for the number of children attending the service. The expiry date noted was 27 March 2024.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

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

- (a) of sound and stable structure,*
- (b) safe and secure,*
- (c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated*
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

Compliance Information

- (a)
The premises visually appears to be of sound and stable structure.
- (b)
The entrance to the pre-school service is accessible via a reception area. A fingerprint touch sensor system is in place to allow authorised access to the pre-school rooms. Inspectors signed the visitor book on arrival.

The deputy manager stated in the closing meeting that a storage unit was purchased since the last inspection on the 26 September 2022 to allow for safe storage of equipment.

(c)

Underfloor heating is provided throughout the premises. The environmental temperature of the pre-school rooms was recorded at approximately 19.7 degrees Celsius. Natural lighting is supplemented by artificial lighting in each pre-school room. Windows are openable in each pre-school room and sanitary accommodation to allow for natural ventilation.

(d)

The premises were visually clean. A cleaning schedule was available for the service. All toys and materials were easily cleanable. Cleaning was carried out after the ECCE session finished in the pre-school rooms. A cleaner is employed by the service and was observed cleaning during the inspection.

The necessary repair works had been carried out in Dermot's room, the Hawthorn room and Florian's room since the last inspection on the 26 September 2023.

A pest control maintenance certificate dated 28 March 2023 was available for review.

(e)

Suitable sanitary accommodation was available in the service to accommodate the children attending on a sessional, part time and full day care basis. Staff sanitary accommodation is provided.

The wash hand basins are plumbed with an instantaneous supply of hot and cold water. The sanitary accommodation was stocked with a sufficient supply of liquid soap and paper hand towels. Pedal bins are in place in the sanitary accommodation and in the pre-school rooms for the hygienic disposal of waste materials.