

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(s) of Inspection:	06/10/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	76	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, Springfield, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath.
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Inspection undertaken by:	C.O' Connor Hughes & K. Murphy
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Title:	Early Years Inspectors
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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

This community-based 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. The indoor courtyard has been further developed for children's use since the last inspection on the 3 October 2023. On-site parking and set down facilities are available. The service is situated on the outskirts of the town of Kinnegad, County Westmeath.

Staffing

Thirty-four adults are employed in the service. Twenty-one childcare practitioners including two supervisors were present and working directly with children on the 6 October 2025. Two cooks were present in the service. The registered provider does not work with children.

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/ safety/ premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

- Regulation 8 – Change in Circumstance
- Regulation 9 - Management and Recruitment (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(c)(d) (4)
- Regulation 11– Staffing Levels (1)(2) (8)(a)
- Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service (1)(h)(i)(j)
- Regulation 17 – Information for parents
- Regulation 18 – Copy of the Act etc
- Regulation 19 - Health, Welfare and Development of Child (1)(a)(b)
- Regulation 20 – Rest and Play facilities
- Regulation 23 - Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child
- Regulation 24 – Checking in and Out and Record of Attendance
- Regulation 25 - First Aid
- Regulation 26 – Fire Safety Measures
- Regulation 28 – Insurance
- Regulation 33- Furnishing information to the Agency.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulation 19 Health, Welfare and Development of Child (1)(a)(b), Regulation 20 Rest and Play facilities and Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child. As a result, the scope of the inspection included Florian’s room, Hawthorn room, Elizabeth’s room and Dermot’s room.

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 persons in charge, 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

A change in circumstance was submitted in respect of a change of circumstance in respect of the person in charge of the service. This change was accepted by the TUSLA registration office on the 1 October 2024.

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*

(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)

Two supervisors held the position of the person in charge and deputy person in charge and were available in the service.

(b)

The supervisors were present for the duration of the inspection.

Thirty-four staff files including the file of the registered provider were reviewed and the following was noted:

(2)(a)(b)

The corrective and preventive action stated from the last inspection on the 3 October 2023 was implemented in the service as the required number of written validated references were available in respect of the thirty-four files reviewed from past employers or from a source other than a past employer.

(c)

A Garda Vetting disclosure was available in respect of the thirty-four staff files reviewed. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(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)

Staff members working directly with children attending the service held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at levels 5 to 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

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 seventy-six children attending the service supervised directly by twenty-one adults in the morning.

There were twenty-three children were present in the afternoon supervised by ten adults.

(8)(a)

The staff roster indicated that two adults are on the premises during the hours of 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:

(h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;

(i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;

Compliance Information

(1)(h)

The service held information in respect of the children attending the service on a daily basis.

(i)

A daily staff roster was available for review by the inspectors.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 17 – Information for parents

A registered provider shall ensure that a parent or guardian of a child proposing to attend the service is provided with the information referred to in subparagraphs (a) to (g) of Regulation 16(1).

Compliance Information

Parent information was available with the required information in a handbook format for parents of children attending the service.

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 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 was available and open to inspection by (a) (b) and (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*
 - (b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.*

Compliance Information

(1)(a)(b)

Florian's room, Hawthorn room, Elizabeth's room and Dermot's room.

Older children enjoyed the freedom of movement from the indoor and outdoor play environments and were happily engaged in various activities supported by staff. Small group work was observed as the staff sat with and supported a small number of children at their various play activities. Children had the opportunity to choose what activity they wished to participate in, in the pre-school rooms. Children were encouraged to be independent as they washed their hands and went to the toilet supported by staff. Younger children enjoyed moving freely, crawling, exploring their environment and enjoyed free play and tabletop activities.

The care practices implemented to support the children's daily routine met the needs of the children attending the service. Children were encouraged to be independent and to feed themselves. Children ate their meals in the dining area of the service. Younger children were prepared for sleep time by staff and they slept in a quiet restful atmosphere in the sleep rooms. Children were physically checked by staff every ten minutes while sleeping. Children in the Florian's and Dermot's room had their nappies changed on a regular basis and as required. Staff

sought consent from children to change their nappy. Personal care needs were attended to in a caring manner. Spare clothes were available for each child if needed.

A key person system was in operation in the service which helped to promote the emotional security of children attending the service. The staff were observed to offer reassurance to children having difficulty settling into the service. The children were comforted by staff in a calm and caring manner. The supervisors were observed making and taking telephone calls to parents to provide them with updates on children's settling or general wellbeing. Good communication was observed between staff and children as the staff used individual names, maintained eye contact and conversed with the children during play activities, nappy changing, toileting and mealtimes. Children requiring extra support and supervision were assisted by staff members. Access and Inclusion plans were in place for children.

The four pre-school rooms were bright and colourful with photographic evidence of children's birthdays displayed. A range of developmentally appropriate experiences to meet children's learning needs were available in the pre-school rooms. Areas of interest included a home area, dress up, a dolls house, construction area and sensory trays. 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 staff to support the comfort and nurturing of the young children in attendance.

Partnership in parents was noted as the child's daily routine including feeding, nappy changing and sleep patterns in Dermot's room is shared with parents via a daily communication diary depicting their daily activities in the service. Staff stated a verbal handover is given to parents at collection time. A monthly newsletter is sent to the parents. A notice board with information for parents is displayed in the reception area of the service. Staff stated an open-door policy is in place for parents to attend the service as needed. The child's learning journal depicting the child's play and work activities are shared with parents at the end of the pre-school term.

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 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)

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

(b)

Two sleep rooms were attached to Florian’s and Dermot’s room providing six cots. Low level beds are available for children to sleep and rest. Cosy rest areas were provided in the pre-school rooms.

(3)(a)

Segregated outdoor play areas were available for children and accessible from the pre-school rooms. The perimeter was secured by high-level wire fencing. A variety of surfaces are available including absorbent tiles, natural grass, cement and mulch areas.

Toys and equipment included slides, toy kitchens, tunnels, plant areas, playhouses, sand play areas as well as a variety of trikes, bikes, benches, tables and chairs.

A Perspex roof has recently been added to the interior courtyard to provide an additional sheltered space for children’s use.

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 entrance to the service was secure to ensure the safety of the children within. Access to the service is via a reception area and a fingerprint controlled mechanism to the pre-school rooms. The inspectors signed the visitor book on arrival. 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 premises were visually clean. A cleaning schedule was available for the service. All toys and materials were easily cleanable. Children were observed to wash their hands before snacks and after using the toilet.

A refrigerator was available in Dermot's room for the storage of bottles of prepared infant formula.

An air to water heating system was put in place since the last inspection on the 30 October 2023. The water temperature recorded at wash hand basins was approximately 30 degrees Celsius.

The sanitary accommodation and nappy changing areas were ventilated by mechanical ventilation. Supplies of paper hand towel and liquid soap were available in all sanitary accommodation.

Administration of Medication:

Temperature reducing medication was available in the service if a child presented with a high temperature and was stored safely in the service. Correct procedures were in place for the administration of medication.

Emergency care plans were in place for children with a defined medical condition.

Safe Sleep:

Sleep logs were in place to record the colour, position and breathing of sleeping children. The sleep room temperature was maintained at 17 degrees Celsius.

Fire Safety:

Fire exit routes were unobstructed and fire assembly points were located to the front of the premises.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

The nappy changing practices observed were inadequate for infection control purposes due to the following;

- The adults did not wash their hands before nappy changing.
- The nappy changing procedure displayed in the service was incorrect as it did not state staff are to wash their hands before nappy changing.
- The child was redressed with the same gloves used for nappy changing.
- The child's nose was wiped with the same gloves worn for nappy changing.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control:

The service's nappy changing policy has been updated. This outlines the process to be followed and includes handwashing and the changing of gloves.

All staff involved in nappy changes have been retrained on the new policy.

Supporting documentation submitted

Updated nappy changing procedure and policy signed by staff members.

Summary Comment

The non-compliance has been addressed. This practice will be reviewed on the next TUSLA inspection.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) no person other than-

- (i) pre-school child attending the service,*
- (ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,*
- (iii) an employee, or*

*(iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and
(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.*

Compliance Information

- (1)
The records of arrival and departure reviewed verified that each child attending the service was checked in and out of the service by a nominated staff member.
- (3)(a)
All entry to the service with the exception of (i), (ii), (iii) and (iv) has to be approved by a staff member.
- (b)
A visitor log was in place to record the details and purpose of all visitors to the service.

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)
Six adults were qualified in First Aid response (FAR) and were available on the premises during the hours of operation on a rostered basis.
- (2)(a)
A fully equipped first aid box was readily available in the service.
- (b)
A first aid box was accessible to the adults caring for the 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 16 September 2025.

(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 in December 2024 and August 2025 respectively.

(4)

A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in a conspicuous position in the service.

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 2026.

Part IX - Inspection and Enforcement

Regulation 33 – Furnishing of information to agency

A registered provider shall furnish the Agency with such information as the Agency may reasonably require for the purpose of enforcing and executing these Regulations and the information shall be in such form, if any, as may be specified by the Agency.

Compliance Information

The designated persons in charge furnished the required information for the inspection.