

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DS137
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Name of Service:	Giraffe Childcare Rathfarnham
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Address of Service:	Loreto Abbey, Grange Road, Rathfarnham, Dublin 16.
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Name of Registered Provider:	Dearbhala Cox Giffin
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date of Inspection:	18/06/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	52	PM	46
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate 2 nd Floor, Unit 4/5 The Nexus Building Blanchardstown Corporate Park Ballycoolin Dublin 15 D15 CF9K
Inspection undertaken by:	C. Harte & E. Finnegan Hayes
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

Giraffe Childcare Rathfarnham is a private childcare service and is one of twenty-three childcare services operated by the registered provider. The service provides full day care and education to pre-school children from 0-6years. The service participates in the Early childhood Care and Education scheme and operates from 7:30am-6:30pm. The service is located in a residential suburb of South Dublin and has six care rooms.

Room name	Age group
Wobbler Namibia	11 months-1.5 years
Wobbler Safari	1.5-2 years
Toddler Madagascar	1.5-2.5 years
Toddler Baringo	2.5-3 years
Preschool Zambezi	3-4 years
Preschool Botswana	4-5 years

The service has two secure outdoors areas. One outdoor area is divided into two sections. There is one designated cot room located beside the Wobbler Namibia room. The premises also includes a kitchen, staff room and managers office.

Staffing

The service employs a total of 24 staff including 3 managers, 17 childcare staff, 2 chefs and 2 cleaners. An operations manager arrived during the inspection and remained in the service for the duration of the inspection. 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 unannounced and focused on the area of governance, health, welfare and development of child and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under:

- Regulation 11(1)(2); Staffing levels
- Regulation 25; First Aid
- Regulation 32; Complaints

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under the following regulations:

- Regulation 9(1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(c)(d); Management and Recruitment,
- Regulation 19(1)(a)(1)(b); Health, Welfare and Development of child
- Regulation 21; Equipment and Materials
- Regulation 23; Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child.

As a result, the scope of the inspection included Wobbler Namibia, Wobbler Safari, Toddler Madagascar, and Toddler Baringo.

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 operations manager, person in charge, 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)(b) The service had a designated person in charge and named persons to deputise as required. The person in charge was present in the service when the inspectors arrived and remained in the service for the duration of the inspection. A review of the roster showed that a designated person in charge is rostered to be on the premises at all times.

(c) There was a clear management structure in place and staff were aware of their role and responsibilities.

(2) A review of paperwork and conversation with the person in charge showed that there are 24 staff currently employed in the service including the person in charge, 2 deputy managers, 17 childcare staff 2 chefs and 2 cleaners. An operations manager was also present at the service on the day of the inspection. The files of 10 staff who had commenced employment since the last inspection were reviewed. Garda vetting disclosures were reviewed for all staff currently employed in the service including the operations manager.

(a) Fourteen written and verified references were available from past employers.

(b) Six written and verified references were available from a source other than a past employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for 25 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 eight adults who had lived in a country other than Ireland for a period of six months or more as an adult.

(4) Evidence was available to show that five adults who worked directly with children attending the service held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed eligible by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs.

Non-Compliance Information

(d) Police vetting was not available for one staff member who had lived in a country other than Ireland for a period of six months or more as an adult. It is acknowledged that paperwork was available which showed that the service have attempted to obtain police vetting however due to circumstances beyond their control this will not be possible.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Attempted to obtain police vetting for one member of staff, however due to circumstances beyond their control this is not possible. As advised by Garda headquarters the staff member has applied for a Police Clearance Certificate.

HR along with the support from the management team in the centre, support and assist staff to secure their police vetting upon employment. HR will ensure that the documents as required are held on file.

Supporting documentation submitted

Staff member and service documents.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions taken and evidence submitted. The registered provider has demonstrated that they have taken reasonable measures to address the outstanding non-compliance identified under Regulation 9(2)(d).

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.

Compliance Information

- (1) The registered provider ensured that an adequate number of adults were working directly with the children in the service.
- (2) The adult child ratios were correct when the inspectors arrived unannounced to the service and throughout the inspection. The following was observed:

Room name	Age group	Number of children	Staff available	Staff required
Wobbler Namibia	11 months-1.5 years	8	3	3
Wobbler Safari	1.5-2 years	8	2	2
Toddler Madagascar	1.5-2.5 years	4	1	1
Toddler Baringo	2.5-3 years	10	2	2
Preschool Zambezi	3-4 years	12	2	2
Preschool Botswana	4-5 years	10	2	2

The person in charge and deputy person in charge were available in supernumerary position to cover in rooms as needed.

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

(1) A registered provider shall, in providing a pre-school service, ensure that-

(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)

Supporting Relationships:

- The service hallways included a number of helpful displays and notices providing information to parents. Displays included suggestions of places to visit in the local community, policy of the month, summer menu, illness and exclusion information and guidance for toilet training.

- Staff advised how they share information with parents about the children’s day through a software application and in the event of an urgent matter the parents will be contacted by phone. It was advised that conversations happen daily with parents during collection times providing an overview of the child’s day.
- Childrens artwork was displayed throughout the service in hallways, care rooms and on doors. This helps foster a sense of achievement for children and demonstrates a sample of recent activities for the parents.
- Staff used gentle tones when speaking with the children. They used conversation to encourage the children to participate in activities and care routines such as story time, nappy changing and preparing for sleep.
- A staff member in the toddler Baringo room was observed supporting a child who was struggling to follow instruction by acknowledging their feelings, offering comfort, and calmly encouraging the child to complete their task with assistance.

(1)(b)

- Drinks and meals at dinner time were served promptly to the children. The mealtime was a relaxed social occasion, and children were given sufficient time to enjoy their food. Additional portions were available for the children.
- Staff were observed to join children at the table as they ate using positive language to praise their efforts to self-feed and assisted as necessary.
- Childrens daily routines were displayed in the wobler Namibia room and additional information regarding their sleep comforts were displayed above their cots. This indicated a child centred approach to care showing consideration for the individual children.
- Staff were observed to be responsive to children’s needs in a timely manner for example when nappy changing, during nasal care practices and when a child’s top required changing.
- Transitions during the day were observed to be well organised and calm. Providing children with a predictable routine supports a sense of security.
- Spaces for sleep were made appropriate by staff closing blinds, using low lightening, and playing soft music supporting children’s need for rest. Staff offered children comfort by rubbing their backs as they settled into sleep.

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

- Care rooms promoted independent access to equipment and materials as children’s toys were displayed on low level shelving. Accessible shelving helps promotes choice and independence for children.
- The wobbler rooms included ball pits and foam blocks for climbing and playing encouraging movement while the children played indoors.
- In the Toddler Baringo room children were observed to have access to range of toys in defined areas including jigsaws, dinosaurs, a construction table and a child sized shop unit.
- Equipment was observed to be well maintained, durable and easy to clean.
- The care rooms included areas with soft matting and pillows for the children to rest in during the day when they choose to take a break from activities.
- There was sufficient furniture provided for the children attending which was suitable to the age and developmental stage for the children in care rooms.
- Outdoor areas had a soft matted flooring and play equipment providing opportunity for free movement this supported the development of gross motor skills. Equipment included ride on toys, wheelbarrows and climbing frames with slides.

Non-Compliance Information

The kitchen area in the wobbler Namibia room did not have any supporting resources available allowing for the kitchen units to be used as intended. Themed resources grouped together encourage exploration and extend play opportunities for children.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Action

The kitchen environment in the Namibia room has been replenished. Additional resources have also been placed in the room to ensure that all children have ample opportunity to engage in meaningful play.

Preventive Action

The management and staff will monitor the placement of equipment and resources in the rooms to ensure they create a rich and stimulating learning environment that supports the children’s development.

Supporting documentation submitted

- Photographic evidence.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions taken and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 21 has been addressed.

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 entrance was securely locked with a keypad coded lock when the inspectors arrived preventing unauthorised persons gaining access or children exiting unsupervised.
- Cleaning agents were safely stored out of reach of children.
- Water sinks used for hand washing was thermostatically controlled.
- Window blinds were enclosed in the window frame. Doors fitted to the frame ensured blind cords and windows were inaccessible to children.
- The garden area was secured with fencing and thumb release locks on the gates.

Infection Control:

- Nappy changing practices were in line with best practice guidance and service procedure.
- Pedal bins available in sanitary areas supporting effective hand hygiene practices.
- Children were supported to wash their hands before meals and after returning indoors from the garden.
- Bed linen was stored in individually labelled boxes in cubbies located in the care rooms.

Safe Sleep:

- Children were observed to be monitored while sleeping at intervals of 10 minutes or less and staff recorded the breathing, position, and colour of each child at each check.
- Cots and mattresses were maintained in a good state of repair.
- An ambient temperature of 18-22°C was maintained where children over 1 year old were sleeping.

Fire Safety:

- Staff were knowledgeable of the fire evacuation procedure and location of assembly point.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Trailing flexes were accessible to children and posed a risk of injury. The following was observed:
 - In the wobblers Namibia room, a trailing flex from a stereo was observed to be held loosely to the wall by tape and in reach of the children.
 - In the wobblers Safari room, trailing flexes from a lamp and stereo were not secured to the wall and in reach of the children.
2. Large cracks in the garden flooring created a trip hazard posing a risk of injury.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. **Corrective action:** Trailing flexes in the Safari and Namibia room have been secured to the walls on the shelving areas and are out of reach of children.
2. **Corrective action:** A quotation has been secured to repair sections of shock absorbent rubber matting in the garden and has been scheduled for repair in the coming weeks.

Preventive action: The Management team will ensure that all practice and safety measures are constantly checked to ensure that it is in line with best practice within the indoor and outdoor environment.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

- Photographic evidence.
- Quotation document.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions taken and evidence submitted. The non-compliance for point 1 has been addressed. The non-compliance for point 2 remains outstanding until the planned repair work is completed.

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) A review of the roster, available certificates and conversation with management showed that a staff member trained in First Aid Response (FAR) is rostered to be on the premises and available to the children at all times during the opening hours of the service.

(2)(a)(b) Suitably equipped first aid boxes were stored safely out of reach of children, readily available and easily accessible if required at any time.

Part VIII - Notifications and Complaints

Regulation 32 – Complaints

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that the complaints policy of the service specifies-

(a) the procedure to be followed by a person for the purposes of making a complaint in relation to the service,

(b) the manner in which such a complaint shall be dealt with, and

(c) the procedures for keeping a person who makes such a complaint informed of the manner in which it is being dealt with.

(2) A registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) a record in writing is kept of a complaint made to the provider in respect of the pre-school service, and

(b) the complaint is duly dealt with in accordance with the provider's complaints policy.

Compliance Information

- (1) (a)(b)(c) The policy reviewed outlined the procedures to be followed by the person making a complaint, the way complaints are dealt with and procedures for keeping the person informed who made the complaint.

- (2) (a)(b) A complaints log was maintained in writing. The log showed the service received three complaints to date this year. Documentation was available detailing the steps taken to address the complaint and the outcome of the complaint.