

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015DY081
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Giraffe Childcare NCI
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	National College of Ireland, Mayor Street Lower, Dublin, Dublin 1.
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<b>Eircode:</b>	D01 K6W2
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Dearbhala Cox Giffin
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<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	21/08/2025
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	28	PM	28
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate, Floor 7 Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, St. John's Road West, Kilmainham, Dublin 8
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	L.A Webster
<b>Title:</b>	Early Years Inspector

### Authority to Inspect

The Tusla Early Years Inspectorate carries out inspections of Early Years Services under Section 58(J) of the Child Care Act 1991 (as inserted by Section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013).

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

Giraffe Childcare NCI is a privately owned full day care service located in North Dublin. The service is one of twenty-five services operated by the registered provider and participants in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme. The service caters for 68 children aged from 0-6 years of age and is a purpose-built property that contains six care rooms, two of which were not in use on the day of inspection. There is an additional indoor area, a kitchen, sanitary facilities and an office.

Room name	Age group
Wobbler Acacia	Not in use
Wobbler Botswana	1.5-2 years
Wobbler Cameroon	1-1.5 years
Toddler Kilimanjaro	2-3 years
Toddler Zambia	3 years
Preschool Kenya	Not in use

An enclosed outdoor space is available at the front of the premises.

### Staffing

The registered provider does not work within the service and employs 23 adults that work in the service. This includes an area support manager, person in charge, two deputy persons in charge, 16 childcare staff, and 2 ancillary staff which are the chef and the housekeeper. On the morning of the inspection there were 11 adults present including the two persons in charge, 8 adults working directly with the children and 1 ancillary staff. The registered provider was not present on the day of inspection. Shortly after the inspection commenced, the area manager arrived and remained at the service to help facilitate the inspection process.

### 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.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 9 Management and Recruitment, regulation 16 (h) (i) (k) Record in relation to a pre-school service, regulation 19 (1)(a) Health, welfare and development of child and regulation 23 Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child. As a result, the scope of the inspection included rooms Wobbler Cameroon and Toddler Kilimanjaro.

Inspection findings are documented in the inspection report which is first issued in draft format to the service with an opportunity to respond to any findings. Where statutory requirements are identified as not being met, the registered provider must demonstrate how they have rectified the non-compliance and will prevent any non-compliance from re occurring. The Corrective Action and Preventive Action plan (CAPA) will be used to inform decisions about compliance with regulatory requirements. Where the registered provider fails to meet the statutory requirements an escalation process may be commenced.

The inspectorate reserves the right to edit responses received for reasons including clarity, completeness and compliance with administrative and legal processes.

The contents of the report are compiled by the inspectorate body.

## Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the area manager, two deputy persons 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) The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.
  - (b) A review of the roster evidenced that either the person in charge or the deputy person in charge were rostered to be present during the operational hours of the service.
  - (c) There was a clear management structure in place, and this was further evidenced through discussion with staff.
- (2) A review of paperwork and discussion with the person in charge showed that there are currently 23 staff employed by the registered provider to work within the service. The files and qualifications of 8 new staff who had commenced employment following the previous inspection on the 28 May 2024 were reviewed.

- (a) There were 15 written and validated references available from past employers.
  - (b) There was 1 written and validated reference from a source other than a past employer.
  - (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all 8 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 8 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 all 8 adults who worked directly with the children held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at a minimum of level 5 on the National Framework of Qualifications, or a qualification that is deemed of equivalence by the minister

## 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*

### Compliance Information

- (1) On the day of inspection, there were 28 children being cared for by 8 adults in morning and 28 children being cared for by 8 adults in afternoon. Additionally, the persons in charge and the area manager were available to provide support in the care rooms as needed.
- (2) The adult child ratios were correct when the inspector arrived unannounced to the service and throughout the inspection. Staff were aware of the required ratios for the age range of children within the rooms.

## 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;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

*(3) A record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection on the premises, and the documents and records referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall be open to inspection whether on the premises or elsewhere, by an authorised person.*

### Compliance Information

- (1)
- (h) Details of attendance by each pre-school child were stored in the children’s attendance record in each care room.
  - (i) The registered provider ensured that there was an accurate record of the staff roster containing the details of the staff rostered on the day of inspection.
  - (k) A sample of twelve accident and incident records were reviewed, and all records were complete.
- (3) Records were open to inspection by an authorised person. All records requested by the inspector were available for review.

### 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)

##### Basic needs:

- Individually labelled beakers of water were available to the children at all times.
- Mealtime was observed to be a fun and interactive experience for the children. At 11:30am, children were observed to have chicken curry with basmati rice, which is in line with the services menu. In discussion with staff, additional portions of food were available should a child need and alternative food options were also available for children.
- Staff supported children through mealtime, prompting the children's independence and stepping in when needed asking questions such as "are you enjoying that; would you like some help?".
- Nappy changing was done on a set schedule and as required to ensure the children's comfort. Nappy changing was observed to be a relaxed process with opportunity for chatting and singing.
- Staff were observed to support children throughout their play activities and promoting a sense of curiosity for the children through asking open-ended questions.

##### Physical and Material environment:

- Low level tables and chairs were present in all rooms to allow children to engage in tabletop activities and mealtimes independently and comfortably.
- Toys and equipment were stored on low level shelves which supports independent play and themed for children to identify and choose from.
- The outdoor area provided opportunities for a range of play experiences. Medium sized climbing and slide units were available along with ride on toys, building blocks and music to dance if the children wished.

##### Supporting Relationships:

- Staff were observed to use kind and warm tones when speaking to the children and were positive in their approach. This was evident throughout the day and when children were transitioning from outdoors to indoors.

- Staff were observed to have a strong sense of teamwork through their gentle and interactive approaches with children. This was evident at mealtime, play time and sleep time.

### 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 appropriately secured upon the inspector's arrival. The service entrance operated through a buzzer system that allowed entry into a main hallway and a second door is coded and securely locked to prevent children from leaving the service unsupervised and restrict any unauthorised access to the service. Additionally, the outdoor area was securely fenced and gated.
- The care rooms were in good condition, with no visible hazards or trailing wires observed.
- Blind cords were securely attached to the wall and out of reach of children.
- Cleaning agents were stored safely and locked away out of reach of children
- Shelving units were firmly anchored to the wall to ensure stability and safety.
- The kitchen area was inaccessible to children and the door remained closed throughout the inspection.
- In discussion with staff, the service operates a nut free zone and a popcorn free zone. Additionally, staff reiterated their knowledge and understanding of beaded jewellery and ensured that it would be immediately removed if observed within the service.
- Staff ensured that individual placemats with the children's photo are coloured and themed into allergy or no allergy colours to ensure safe food intake.

##### Infection Control:

- Upon arrival, it was observed that the service was clean and hygienic and up to date cleaning schedules were available and observed within the care rooms and sanitary facilities.
- Thermostatically controlled warm water, liquid hand soap and wall mounted paper towels were available for appropriate hand washing practices. Both staff and children were observed to show familiarity with routine handwashing after nappy changing, dinner time and after free play
- Foot operated pedal bins were in use for the appropriate disposal of waste in the care rooms and sanitary facilities. These were observed to be in good working order.

- An ambient temperature of 16-22°C was maintained in the care rooms, and the windows were open to allow fresh circulation of air.
- Within the sanitary room, children had individually labelled storage areas for their nappies, creams and wipes to avoid any cross contamination.
- Children’s soothers were stored in their own individually labelled containers and in discussion with staff, they ensured that the soothers are frequently sanitised and checked for wear and tear.
- Upon observation, it was evident that children had individual bed linen that was clean and in good condition. This was further reinforced by staff, who reiterated their laundry routines.

### Administration of Medication:

- Medication was not given at the time of inspection. Through discussion, staff were familiar with the practices required for the administration of medication to children attending the service.
- Observation showed that medication was stored safely and out of reach of children.
- In discussion with staff, it was evident that they were aware of medical care plans for children and where the emergency medication is stored. In addition to this, staff were aware of the procedures to take in relation to potential anaphylaxis and the administering of emergency treatment if the event occurred.

### Safe Sleep:

- Staff were noted to be aware of safe sleep practices and children were observed to be monitored while sleeping every 10 minutes. Staff ensured to document this through paper format highlighting the children’s breathing, position, and colour of each child.
- Cots were positioned at 50cms apart, cots and mattresses were observed to be in good condition.
- Appropriate sleep equipment in line with Tusla’s guidance on safe sleep was provided to children who were under two years of age.
- An ambient temperature of 16-20°C was maintained for sleeping children under one years of age.
- An ambient temperature of 18-22°C was maintained for sleeping children over two years of age.

### Fire Safety:

- All fire emergency exit doors were clear from obstruction. This helped ensure the safe effective evacuation of children and staff in the event of an emergency.

### 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 person in charge was trained in First Aid Response (FAR), expiry date of October 2026 and was immediately available to the children attending the service. Additionally, the person in charge ensured that two staff held up to date FAR certification and were immediately available to the children as needed.
- (2) (a) The first aid equipment was safely stored, and unobstructed if needed to access quickly.
- (b) A suitably equipped first aid box was available at all times to the adults caring for children attending the 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 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) The records available demonstrated that fire drills are held monthly within the service and the service conducted a fire drill on the 11 July 2025.
- (b) A record was available detailing the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarm systems in the premises.
- Records demonstrate that the firefighting equipment had been serviced annually, with the last service taking place on the 11 April 2025

- Records demonstrate that the smoke alarms have been serviced on a quarterly bases with the last service taking place on the 15 July 2025.

(4) A visual notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was consistently displayed around the service.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

#### Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured that the pre-school service was adequately insured, with an expiry date of 16 December 2025.