

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DY374			
Name of Service:	Giraffe Childcare Elm Park			
Address of Service:	Elm Park, Merrion Road, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4, Co. Dublin			
Eircode:	D04 XP26			
Name of Registered Provider:	Dearbhala Cox Giffin			
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time			
Date(s) of Inspection:	05/03/2025			
No of pre-school children:	AM	62	PM	58
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, Dublin 8.			
Inspection undertaken by:	J. Mayock and S. Quigley			
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			

Description of service

Giraffe Childcare Elm Park is a full day care service provided by Giraffe Childcare Limited which provides 25 childcare services. The service provides full day and part-time care and caters for children from 0 to 6 years. The service is registered to operate from 07:30 to 18:30, Monday to Friday.

The service is located in an urban area and is part of a large development of apartment blocks in Dublin 4. It is a purpose built two storey building with seven care rooms. All seven care rooms were open on the day of inspection. Three rooms are located on the ground floor, Wobbler Safari and Wobbler Cameron which cater for children aged 1 year and Toddler Kenya caters for children aged 2 to 3 years. There are four care rooms located on the first floor, Wobbler Acacia and Wobbler Baringo cater for children aged 1 year. Toddler Serengeti caters for children aged 2 years and Preschool Madagascar caters for children aged 3 to 5 years.

A dedicated cot room is also located on the first floor adjacent to the Wobbler Acacia and Wobbler Baringo rooms. There are two, fully enclosed outdoor play areas, one to the front of the premises and one to the rear of the premises.

Staffing

The service currently employs 24 staff including a manager. There were 20 staff working directly with the children on the day of inspection. The service also employs a chef and 2 housekeeping staff. There was 1 adult present on work experience for the morning of the inspection. 2 area managers arrived on the day of the inspection. The registered provider does not work directly in the service 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 and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations:

9(1)(a)(b), (2), (3), (4)- Management and Recruitment,

11(1), (2) – Staffing Levels,

19(1)(a)(b) – Health, welfare and development of child,

23 – Safeguarding, health, safety and welfare of child,

25 – First Aid,

26 – Fire Safety Measures.

These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation:

19(1)(a)(b) – Health, welfare and development of child,

23 - Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of child.

As a result, the scope of the inspection included rooms name rooms Junior wobbler Acacia, Wobbler Safari, Wobbler Cameroon, Toddler Serengeti, Junior Pre-School Kenya and Pre-School Madagascar.

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 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

(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 2 people who shared the role of designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required who were all on the premises throughout the inspection.

(2)

Following a discussion with the manager it was confirmed that fifteen adults commenced working in the service since the last inspection on 30 April 2024. Documentation was reviewed in respect of these adults and of one adult who was present for work experience and met regulatory requirements as follows:

(a) Of the thirty-two references that were required, twenty-six were available from a past employer and six were available from a reputable source.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures from the National Vetting Bureau of An Garda Síochána were available for the sixteen adults. 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 fifteen adults who had lived outside the State for a period exceeding six months as an adult.

(4) Records were available evidencing that thirteen staff members who were employed to work directly with the children held the required qualification or equivalent. Three of these staff members who did not have a recognised qualification held a letter of qualification recognition from the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY).

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) An adequate number of adults were working directly with the children at all times during the inspection.

(2) The minimum ratio of adults to children for full day care services was adhered to at all times during the inspection. There were sixty-two children attending the service being supervised by twenty adults on the day of inspection.

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-

(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

The service had a healthy eating policy in place and staff reported that all meals are provided by the service. A hot meal of chicken stew and rice was served as dinner at 11:30. All children were given water with their dinner. Younger children were provided with bibs for dinnertime and were encouraged to feed themselves. Staff were observed sitting with children and engaging in conversation during dinner. Additional servings of dinner were available if requested and inspectors observed more food being offered and given to children.

Staff were observed cleaning children's hands and faces after dinner. Children were encouraged and supported to be independent including cleaning up after their play and meals. Children's nappies were changed regularly, and staff were observed engaging warmly with children when providing this care.

There was a designated nap time in the Junior Toddler Serengeti and Toddler Kenya rooms. Children from the Toddler Serengeti room who did not require a nap were brought to the table during nap time and provided with materials and stories. Children from the Preschool Madagascar room who required a nap were facilitated in the toddler Kenya room.

Staff demonstrated a good awareness of the needs of each child in their care and responded to children's cues promptly. Staff interacted warmly with the children throughout the inspection and were observed supporting children in their play. Staff were observed to use encouragement, gentle tones and praise when promoting positive behaviour in line with the service's behaviour management policy. Staff provided an appropriate level of supervision whilst supporting the children's independence during play and mealtimes.

Staff described how they record information about each child's day using an online application detailing information on food, sleep, nappy changes and activities. Parents were observed in the service during drop off and collection times and staff shared information about the children with their parents at these times.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(b)

A number of inappropriate care practices were observed to not meet the needs of the children and may negatively affect the health, welfare and development of the children on the day of inspection as follows:

1. A child attending the Safari room was observed to have a soiled top and trousers after dinner time which was wet and stained with food residue. The child was placed to bed in a wet vest and when they woke, the stained top and trousers were placed back on the child.

2. The inspectors observed unsuitable care practices around sleep time as follows:

- On the day of inspection there were ten floor mattresses available for eleven children requiring sleep. The inspectors observed that the designated sleep time for children from the Madagascar and Safari room were not child led and did not meet the needs of the children present requiring sleep as follows;
 - At 12:27pm in the Kenya room a child was brought down by an adult from the Madagascar room to have a rest, they were told they could not rest today by a staff member in the Kenya room. When the inspector enquired as to why the child was refused sleep the staff member informed them that the child can only rest on days there are beds available. At 12:31pm a child who did not want to sleep was offered to get up, a bed had become available, no call was made to the Madagascar room to offer a rest time to the child requiring it.

- At 11:13am in the Safari room a child was displaying cues of tiredness rubbing their eyes and becoming upset. An adult in the room was observed to inform the other adult in the room that the child was tired. The child was not placed down to sleep until 12:10pm. This non-compliance was present on the last inspection on 4 April 2024. The corrective and preventive actions as stated by the registered provider did not prevent recurrence of this non-compliance.

- In the Safari room at 12:38pm one adult was observed to be assisting a child to sleep in a cot, the inspector observed the adult place the child's head back down 6 times to the mattress when the child tried to sit up, the child placed their foot on the side of the cot and the adult placed it back down on the mattress. Another adult in the room took over to assist the child to sleep at 12:50 and got the child up at 12:55pm.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- 1.** The staff team received comprehensive retraining on the critical importance of prompting good hygiene practices. Ongoing training will be provided on a monthly basis through staff meetings within the centre.
- 2.** Staff have undergone retraining regarding the significance of sleep periods for children. The staff team have also received instructions and direction on effective techniques for assisting children in falling asleep, as well as understanding appropriate and inappropriate behaviours during rest times. In addition, staff have been made aware and advised that there are additional floor beds available for children who do not typically require a nap but may need one on an occasional basis. we will continue with training on a monthly basis and provide the appropriate measures and guidance to all members of the team to ensure the correct practices are in line with company policies.

Supporting documentation submitted

Supporting documentation was submitted and reviewed by the inspector.

Summary Comment

This regulatory requirement has been met and will be reviewed on the next inspection.

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 door to the service was adequately secured to ensure the safety of the children within and to avoid unauthorised persons accessing the service or children exiting unsupervised.
- Hand sanitisers and cleaning agents were stored safely out of reach of children.
- All storage facilities were inaccessible to children.
- The toys and play equipment observed in use by the children on the day of inspection appeared in good working order.
- All blind cords were secured.
- The stairs had suitable handrails for the children to safely climb up and down.

Infection Control:

- Liquid soap, warm water and paper towels were available to facilitate hand washing.
- A system was in place for effective sterilisation of soothers.
- Waste was managed appropriately with the use of pedal bins.
- Individual bed linen was provided for children.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

1. The children in the Wobbler Safari room were of an age where they explored toys with their mouths. On the day of inspection, there was no attempt made to remove toys when mouthed in view of staff members present. The toys remained in use between the different children posing a risk of cross infection. This non-compliance was present on the last inspection on 4 of April 2024 and 19 July 2023. The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider did not prevent recurrence of this non-compliance.
2. Some nappy changing practices observed during the inspection in the service were inadequate for infection control purposes and at variance with the service's nappy changing procedure as follows:
 - One staff member in the Wobbler Acacia room did not wipe down the child after the wet nappy was removed.

- One staff member in the Junior Toddler Serengeti room did not wear an apron for the duration of the nappy change.

This non-compliance was present on the last inspection on 4 April 2024 and 19 July 2023. The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider did not prevent recurrence of this non-compliance.

Safe Sleep:

1. Nine children aged between 12 and 24 months in the Wobbler Cameroon room were observed sleeping on blue stackable beds on the day of inspection where a standard cot or low-lying bed is required as per the Safe Sleep guidance for children under 24 months.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control:

1. Staff have received further training with practical skill demonstrations conducted on the importance of sterilising mouthed toys. Ongoing monthly training during staff meetings is implemented to ensure that all staff members are well-informed about the necessary procedures and protocols to follow when addressing situations in which children mouth toys.
2. All staff have been retrained on the nappy changing policy whilst highlighting both the practical aspects and the reasons behind this essential practice. Ongoing monthly training during staff meetings is implemented to ensure that all staff members are fully informed and competent regarding the necessary procedures involved in nappy changing.

Safe Sleep:

1. The service has placed an order for cocoon floor beds. As per the safe sleep guidance the centre will use the new cocoon floor beds for children from the age profile recommend and or the use of a cot for correct practice use for sleeping children.

Supporting documentation submitted

Supporting documentation was submitted and reviewed by the inspector.

Summary Comment

This regulatory requirement has been met and will be reviewed on the next inspection.

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 person trained in first aid responder was immediately available to the children at all times on the day of the inspection.

(2)

(a) A first aid box was safely stored in an easily accessible location within the service.

(b) A first aid box was available to the adults and children in the service at all times.

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.

Compliance Information

(1)

(a) A written record was available detailing fire drills that had taken place in the service. The last fire drill had been recorded as undertaken on 13 February 2025.

(b) The number, type and maintenance record of fire fighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises was available. The maintenance records for the fire fighting equipment and smoke alarms were dated 15 October 2024.