

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015MH064
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Giraffe Childcare Limited
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Athlumney Wood, Navan, Co. Meath
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<b>Eircode:</b>	C15 DP27
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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
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	19/06/2025
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	73	PM	73
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Meath Child & Parent Support Hub, Commons Road, Navan, Co. Meath
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	D. Murray & AM. Cunningham
<b>Title:</b>	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).

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

Giraffe Childcare Limited is privately owned and is 1 of 21 childcare services managed by registered provider. The service provides full day care, part time and sessional care to children from 0 to 6 years and operates from 07:30am to 6pm Monday to Friday. Children who are eligible can participate in the Early Childhood Care and Education. The service is purpose built consisting of 7 care rooms, office, kitchen and sanitary facilities. An outdoor space is located to the rear of the premises.

### Staffing

The service employs a manager, 2 deputy managers, 16 childcare staff, 1 cook and 2 household staffs. Present on the day of inspection were the manager, 1 deputy manager, 16 childcare staff, 1 student on placement, 2 household staff and a cook. An area manager arrived after the inspection had commenced to provide support to the staff 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.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 19,20,21,22 & 23. As a result, the scope of the inspection included the following rooms :Wobbler Acacia, Wobbler Cameroon, Toddler Serengeti and Pre-school Kilimanjaro and did not include: Toddler Safari, 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.

## Additional Information

The inspection was carried out following receipt of a concern received to the Early Years Inspectorate on the 26/05/2025. A response was received on the 19/06/2025 which was accepted by the Inspectorate.

## Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the manager, area manager, deputy manager, 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.

(7) A registered provider shall ensure that all employees, unpaid workers and contractors are appropriately supervised and provided with appropriate information, and where necessary training, including in relation to the following:

- (a) the policies, procedures and statements of the service specified in Schedule 5.

#### Compliance Information

- (1) (a) The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.
- (b) A designated person in charge was on the premises when the inspectors arrived unannounced to carry out the inspection.
- (c) A clear management structure that identified specific roles of each employee was displayed on the door of each care room.

(2) (a)&(b) Three new staff files were reviewed along with the area managers and the student file. All remaining files were reviewed on the last inspection and met compliance at that time.

Ten validated written references were available either from a past employer or from a reputable source.

(c) Garda vetting disclosure was available for all 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 2 staff members and the student who had resided outside the jurisdiction for a period of more than 6 consecutive months as an adult.

(4) Three new childcare staff members and the area manager had a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 and above on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

(7) (a) All new staff completed induction training on the services policies and procedures and receive a “Staff Handbook”. Regular supervision meetings and staff meetings are conducted between management and staff member.

## Part III – Management and Staff

### Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

*A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.*

### Compliance Information

1. The registered provider ensured that the following written policies specified in Schedule 5 were comprehensive to ensure the welfare and safety of the children attending the service.

- Child Safeguarding Statement.
- Child Protection Policy.
- Behaviour Management Policy.
- Staff Training/Supervision Policy.
- Information Handbook for parents.
- Complaints Policy.
- Accident/Incident Policy.

### 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, service and available to attend the service to assist the person in charge in the event of an emergency.*

#### Compliance Information

(1) During the inspection there was an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the service.

(2) The adult to child ratios were correct and observed as follows:

- **Wobbler Acacia Room:** Two staff members provided care for 10 children aged between 1 year to 1.6 years.
- **Wobbler Cameroon Room:** Two staff members provided care for 10 children aged between 1.6 year to 2 years.
- **Toddler Safari Room:** Two staff members provided care for 9 children aged between 2 years 2.8 years.
- **Toddler Serengeti Room:** Two staff members provided care for 11 children aged between 2 to 3 years.
- **Pre School Kenya Room:** Two staff members and a student provided care for 12 preschool children aged between 3 to 4 years.
- **Pre School Kilimanjaro Room:** Two staff provided care for 13 preschool children aged between 4 years to 4.6 years.
- **Madagascar Room:** One staff member cared for 8 preschool children aged between 4 to 5 years.

All children were attending on full day care.

The manager, 2 staff members and the deputy manager were also available to provide support to the care rooms as needed.

(8) Two staff members are present at all times in the service as confirmed by the staff roster.

## 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

(2) A registered provider shall ensure that no corporal punishment is inflicted on a pre-school child whilst attending the service.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that no practices that are disrespectful, degrading, exploitive, intimidating, emotionally or physically harmful or neglectful are carried out in respect of a pre-school child whilst attending the service

### Compliance Information

(1)(a) The following observations were made on how each child's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the daily life in the service:

#### Basic needs:

- The staff members sat with the children at snack and dinner time helping the children when required whilst encouraging conversation and extending interactions.
- In the Wobbler and Toddler rooms any child who became upset were nurtured and cuddled until they settled. Children were placed to sleep at the service designated sleep time after dinner at 12md.
- Children's nappies were changed regularly and in a timely manner with warm one-to-one interactions during direct care. Staff members were responsive to the children's cues should they need to use the toilet, with discreet supervision provided and assistance given if required.
- Children were observed being allowed to self-direct their own play. The children were afforded the opportunity to choose activities and to follow through on their choices and change activities if they so wish.
- All children were observed enjoying outdoor play with both their peers and staff members at their allocated time.

- The theme in the care rooms were based on “Summer” with artwork and indoor/ outdoor activities conducted which supported this theme. Each child had their own Activity Book which they brought home for their parents to see throughout the year.

### Supporting relationships around children:

- The staff members communicated with parents through an electronic device and verbally on a daily basis regarding activities pertaining to their children. Children and parents were greeted at drop off and collection with friendly conversation overheard. The staff encouraged the children to engage positively with each other by adopting simple social rules such as turn taking, sharing in play activities and resolving minor disputes.
- The service showed a positive regard towards the families of the children and family links were nurtured in the service with family photographs displayed on the wall in the care rooms which gave a sense of identity and belonging.
- Parents sign a “Partnership Charter” and receive a “Childcare Parent Handbook” which includes all information pertaining to the service.

(2) No corporal punishment was inflicted on any pre-school child on the day of inspection.

(3) In all care rooms children’s behaviour was managed in a positive way, and it was observed that minor problems were handled promptly and appropriately by the adults who were observed to engage respectfully with the children in their care. The children showed confidence around the staff members and an eagerness to engage with them in conversations and play. The children appeared comfortable, happy and relaxed in their environment.

### 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-

(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)(b) The cot room off Wobbler Acacia had 6 standard cots and the cot room off Wobbler Cameroon had 7 standard cots for the younger children requiring sleep. Additional cots were available which were placed in both care rooms. Sleep mats were available for the older children requiring sleep. Within the care rooms there were mats and cushions for children to take a break from activities and rest if needed.

(3) (a) An outdoor space was available to the rear of the service. The space was divided into 2 areas by a wooden fence with secure gates. The smaller area facilitated the younger age group while the larger area accommodated the older children. The surface area consisted of a low impact surface with a cement pathway. A shed was available for storage of the outdoor equipment.

## 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

- The care rooms had areas of interest with supporting equipment which incorporated natural/sensorial materials, art and crafts and a range of suitable toys.
- The outdoor areas had equipment which supported fine and gross motor development. Play equipment included activity units with slides, water/sand tables, ride on car, rockers, building blocks, balls and a mud kitchen with play utensils.

### 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

The service had a 4-week menu plan for the children attending the full day care service with a variety of dishes ranging from meat, fish and poultry cooked on site. All children attending the sessional service brought their own lunch. On the day of inspection, the children had a choice of cereals for breakfast. Morning snack was served at 10am which consisted of a fruit platter with crackers. The main meal of the day was served between 11:30 and 12am and consisted of chicken with butternut squash and rice. Evening tea was served at 3pm consisting of pancakes with fruit. Additional snacks were available for the children staying until 6pm if required. Water was the drinks of choice with individual cups and water jugs placed in the care rooms.

### 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 following safety measures were in place on the day of inspection:

- The main door to the service was secured and the whole outdoor area was enclosed by walls and fencing with 2 secure side gates. These security measures ensured that a child did not exit unsupervised and restricted unauthorised persons from gaining access to the service and the outdoor spaces.
- Indoor and outdoor risk assessments were carried out on a daily basis and documented on a daily risk assessment sheet.
- All cleaning agents were stored out of reach of the children.
- All furniture and display units had a stable base with no risk of toppling identified.

##### Infection Control:

The following infection control measures were observed in the service as demonstrated by the following examples:

- The service was clean with cleaning schedules maintained on a daily basis.
- All bins for contaminated waste were foot pedal operated.
- Warm water, hand paper towel and liquid soap was available in the children’s sanitary facilities. The hand washing policy was implemented in practice with appropriate hand washing for staff and children at all times.

### Safe Sleep:

The following Safe sleep practices were observed in the service as demonstrated by the following examples:

- Children who were in cots and on sleep beds were supervised by an adequate number of adults at all times.
- A sleep log was maintained on all sleeping children at 10 minutes interval recording their colour, breathing pattern and position.
- The temperature of the cot and sleep rooms were maintained between 18°C to 22°C while children were sleeping.

### Fire Safety:

The following Fire Safety practices were observed in the service as demonstrated by the following examples:

- All emergency exit doors were accessible in the event of an evacuation.
- Fire drills were recorded on a monthly basis.

## 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 service provided evidence that a person had up to date First Aid Responders course and was available at all times to the children attending the pre-school service.

(2)(a) and (b) A suitably equipped first aid box was available and safely stored in the premises.

## 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) A written record was available of the fire drills completed in the service. The last recorded fire drill took place on the 14/05/2025.
- (b) A record was maintained of the mains powered smoke alarms which were last serviced on the 07/04/2025. The firefighting equipment was last serviced in April 2025.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was conspicuously displayed in the premises.

## 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 service was adequately insured for 87 children at any one time attending for full day care. The policy showed that the service was insured from 17/12/2024 to the 16/12/2025.

## 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.*

### Compliance Information

(1)(a)(b)&(c) A Complaints Policy and a Complaints Log were available to record any feedback and concerns.