

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2022DR002
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Name of Service:	Safari Childcare
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Address of Service:	White Pines, Stocking Lane, Rathfarnham, Dublin 16
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Name of Registered Provider:	Cian Powell, Kevin McGuinness
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	15/07/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	66	PM	64
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate 2nd Floor, Unit 4/5 The Nexus Building Blanchardstown Corporate Park Ballycoolin Dublin 15 D15 CF9K
Inspection undertaken by:	L Jameson and E Griffin
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

Safari Childcare is one of nine services operated by the registered providers. Safari Childcare provides full day, part time and sessional care to a maximum of 95 children aged 1 – 6 years, Monday to Friday from 08:00am to 06:00pm. The service operates from a purpose-built premises in South Dublin and consists of six care rooms over three floors. The care rooms include the Flamingo room, located on the ground floor and caters for children aged 1 – 2 years, the Jungle Crew 1 room, which caters for children aged 2 – 2.5 years, the Jungle Crew 2 room which caters for children aged 2 – 3 years, both of which are located on the first floor, the Honey Bee room which caters for children aged 3 – 4 years, the Caterpillar room which caters for children aged 3 – 4 years and the Butterfly room which caters for children aged 3 – 5 years, all three care rooms are located on the second floor. There is also sanitary accommodation, a cot room, an office, a staff room, a kitchen and a fully enclosed outdoor area to the side of the premises.

Staffing

The registered providers do not work in the service and were not present on the day of inspection. The registered providers employ twenty-one staff members to work in the service including the person in charge, the deputy person in charge, eighteen early years practitioners to work directly with the children, including three cover staff from other services operated by the registered provider, and a chef. On the day of the inspection, the person in charge, the deputy person in charge, thirteen early years practitioners and the chef were present when the inspectors arrived unannounced in the service. The three cover staff arrived at approximately 11:30am to provide support in the care rooms.

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

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under Regulations 9(1)(2)(3)(4) Management and Recruitment, Regulation 11(1)(2) Staffing Levels, Regulation 19(1)(b) Health, Welfare and Development of Child, Regulation 21 Equipment and Materials, Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child, Regulation 25 First Aid, Regulation 26 Fire Safety Measures and Regulation 28 Insurance; However, on inspection an additional non-compliance was identified under Regulation 8(1) Notification of Change in Circumstances. The findings are outlined within the relevant regulation within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulations 9(1)(2)(3)(4) Management and Recruitment, Regulation 11(1)(2) Staffing Levels, Regulation 19(1)(b) Health, Welfare and Development of Child, Regulation 21 Equipment and Materials, Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child, Regulation 25 First Aid, Regulation 26 Fire Safety Measures. As a result, the scope of the inspection included the Flamingo room and Jungle Crew 2 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 person in charge, the deputy person in charge, the 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.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) The registered providers failed to notify the Early Years Inspectorate of a change in circumstances in relation to the following as per the schedule 4 Form for Notification of Change in Circumstances:

The registered provider did not notify the agency in writing of a change in operational hours of the service.

The service is currently registered to operate between the hours of 8:00am to 06:00pm, Monday to Friday. On the day of the inspection, the person in charge confirmed that the service has been operating from 07:30am to 06:30pm.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

A Change in Circumstances was submitted to the Inspectorate on the 22 July 2025 and approved on 1 August 2025 to reflect the revised operational hours of 7:30am to 6:30pm. The registered providers confirm that this oversight will not occur again. All future changes in circumstances will be notified in advance of implementation.

Supporting documentation submitted

Documentation in relation to the above has been reviewed.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions taken by the registered provider are sufficient to address the non-compliance under Regulation 8.

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.

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(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 needed.
 - (b) The designated person in charge was rostered to be present on the morning of the inspection, the deputy person in charge was rostered to be present at all times during the period when the pre-school service is being carried on. Both the designated person in charge and the deputy person in charge were present when the inspectors arrived unannounced to the service.
 - (c) The service had a clear management structure and staff were aware of their own role and responsibilities.

- (2) The full staff files of twenty-one adults employed to work in the service were reviewed, including the person in charge, the deputy person in charge, eighteen early years practitioners – three of whom work in different branches, and the chef. The file of an external contractor was also reviewed.
- (a) Twenty-three written and verified references were available from past employers.
 - (b) Twenty-one written and verified references were available from a source other than a past employer.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for the twenty-one adults employed in the service and an external contractor. 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 eighteen adults who had lived in a country other than Ireland for a period of six months or more as an adult.
- (3) Evidence was available to demonstrate that the procedures specified in paragraph (2) were carried out in relation to eighteen adults before employment commenced.
- (4) Evidence was available to show that the eighteen adults who worked directly with the children held 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.

Non-Compliance Information

- (3) The registered provider did not ensure that information required under section (2) was available prior to commencement of four adults.
- (4) Documentation was not available to demonstrate that two 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.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (3) All CVs have now been updated to include full employment histories with dates and months of work clearly recorded. These updated CVs are maintained on file. All required documentation, including detailed CVs showing full employment history with dates and months of work, will be obtained, verified, and available prior to commencement of any staff member. This will be monitored by the manager and area manager with monthly checklists.

- (4) Qualification recognition has been obtained for two adults working directly with children and added to the staff files. Qualification documentation for all staff will be verified, recorded, and available prior to commencement of employment. Compliance will be monitored by the Manager and Area Manager through regular spot checks to ensure all documentation remains up to date and available.

Supporting documentation submitted

- (3) Documentation in relation to the above has been reviewed.
(4) Documentation in relation to the above has been reviewed.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions taken by the registered provider are sufficient to address the non-compliance under Regulation 9.

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 there was an adequate number of adults working with the children throughout the inspection. In the morning, there were fourteen adults caring for sixty-six children and during the afternoon there were fifteen adults caring for sixty-four children. In addition, the person in charge was available to provide support in a supernumerary capacity where required in the morning and the deputy person in charge was available in the afternoon.
- (2) The adult child ratios were correct when the inspectors arrived unannounced to the service and throughout the inspection. Staff members were aware of the required ratios for the age range of children in the rooms.

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

(1)(b) The following practices were observed on the day of inspection which supported the health, welfare and development of the children attending:

- Staff members were observed to interact warmly and kindly, using gentle and reassuring tones of voice to support the children. On the day of inspection, a child was settling into the service. Staff members were knowledgeable of the child's likes, dislikes and individual needs and discussed the settling in period with the inspectors, demonstrating familiarity with the process and an understanding of the transition from home to the service.
- A daily routine was evident on the day of inspection, staff members offered the children support with transitions between activities, mealtimes and nappy changing. Visual prompts were displayed in the care rooms to support this.
- Staff members were observed to tend to children's individual personal needs promptly, assisting with hand washing and blowing noses. Appropriate and respectful nappy changing procedures were observed on the day of inspection. The children who were toilet trained used the toilet independently with discreet supervision provided by staff. Nappies were changed at scheduled times and more frequently when required.
- Mealtimes were observed to be sociable and pleasant, with staff members sitting alongside the children, engaging in meaningful conversations and offering support and encouragement to the children. Water stations were set up in the care rooms, allowing the children to access a drink when they wanted. Additional portions of food and alternative food options were also available to the children.
- During sleep time, the blinds were drawn and soft music played in the background, creating a relaxing environment for sleeping children.

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 registered providers ensured that an adequate supply of suitable materials and equipment were available to the children in the service. The following was observed;

- The care rooms were designed to support the age and developmental stages of the children attending the service, equipment and materials were stored at a low level to encourage the children’s independence and decision making skills.
- Toys and materials were grouped into defined interest areas with adequate props and supporting equipment to support engaging spontaneous play experiences, for example, home corners with kitchens, dolls and tea sets and cosy corners with couches, cushions and soft plush toys.
- Low level tables and chairs were available for use by the children which allowed them to engage in tabletop activities and meals comfortably.
- Equipment and materials in the care rooms were in good working order. Materials including jigsaws and puzzles, construction toys, dolls, cars, animals, art and craft materials, a selection of books and opportunities for sensory play were available to the children, facilitating a range of play and learning experiences and promoting imaginative play.
- The outdoor area provided opportunities for a variety of play experiences including gross motor and imaginative play. Equipment included slides, goalposts and a basketball hoop with balls, ride on toys and opportunities for sensory play.

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 leading into the service was appropriately secured to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the premises. A buzzer system was in place which was managed and monitored by staff members.
- Cleaning products were stored safely out of the reach of children.
- Flexes and cords were secured safely out of reach of the children.
- The kitchen area was inaccessible to the children throughout the inspection.

Infection Control:

- The sanitary areas were equipped with warm water, liquid soap and hand paper towels. Staff members were observed to support children with handwashing at regular intervals throughout the day, before eating and after activities and toileting.
- Pedal bins were available in the care rooms and sanitary area to ensure the hygienic disposal of contaminated materials.
- Children's soothers were observed to be stored individually.
- Staff members were observed to wear gloves and aprons during nappy changes and when handling and serving food to the children.
- Cots and stackable beds were placed 50cm apart.
- The windows were observed to be open to allow for circulation of fresh air in the care rooms.
- The service was observed to be clean and well maintained.

Administration of Medication:

- Emergency and antifebrile medication was observed to be in date, stored in the correct packaging and out of the children's reach.

Safe Sleep:

- Staff members were observed to physically check and record the colour, breathing and position of sleeping children every 10 minutes.

- An ambient temperature of 18-22°C was maintained for sleeping children over one years old in the cot room and care rooms.
- Cellular blankets were used.

Fire Safety:

- Fire exits were clear and unobstructed on the day of 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 who held in-date First Aid Response (FAR) training was at all times immediately available to the children attending the service. This was evidenced in the FAR training records maintained for three staff members and their scheduled attendance in the service's staff roster.

- (2)
- (a) The first aid boxes available in the service was suitably equipped and stored in a conspicuous location on the premises.
 - (b) First aid boxes were available for the children in attendance in the event of an emergency.

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.
- (2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-
- (c) an authorised person.
- (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 record was maintained of all fire drills which had been completed in the service. The records indicated and staff members reported that fire drills were carried out monthly. The last recorded fire drill took place on 17 June 2025.
 - (b) Documentary evidence was available to demonstrate a maintenance check was carried out on the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarms on 24 June 2025.
- (2) Records were open to inspection by an authorised person. All fire records requested by the inspection team were available for review.
- (4) The evacuation procedure was conspicuously displayed on the premises which contained details in relation to the procedure to be conducted in the event of a fire or emergency in 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 service was adequately insured to reflect the type of care provided. The insurance certificate had an expiry date of 27 March 2026.