

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2023DY001
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Name of Service:	Giraffe Childcare - Rathgar
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Address of Service:	Giraffe Childcare Rathgar, Unit 1, Marianella, Orwell Grove, Rathgar, Co. Dublin
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Eircode:	D06 R2R0
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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:	23/07/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	63	PM	66
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	The Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla, Child and Family Agency, Loughlinstown Health Centre, Loughlinstown, County Dublin.
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Inspection undertaken by:	O Quill and S Quigley
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Title:	Early Years Inspectors
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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 Rathgar is a private full day care service and is one of a multiple of twenty-five childcare services operated by the registered provider in the Dublin region. Full day care is provided for children aged from 0 to 6 years of age between the hours of 7.30am and 6.30pm.

The service operates from a purpose-built facility located at ground level within a mixed residential development in Dublin south city. Seven care rooms and three separate cot rooms were provided. A large enclosed outdoor space was available for children to play. The area was divided into two separate spaces for children and had a variety of play equipment and materials available.

Staffing

Twenty-six staff are employed in the service including managers, a cook and domestic staff. Seventeen adults worked directly with children on the day of inspection. The management team were not assigned to care rooms but were available to provide assistance when required. The registered provider does not work in the service but was present and attended the feedback meeting when the inspection was completed.

Methodology

Tusla 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

The 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.

Compliance was assessed under the following regulations:

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

11(1), (2), (8)(a) Staffing Levels.

16 (1)(g), (h), (i), (j) and (k) Record in Relation to Pre-school Service.

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

23 Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child.

27 Supervision.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 16 (1)(h), (i), (j) and regulation 19(1)(a) and 23. As a result, the scope of the inspection included the following care rooms Baby Acacia, Wobbler Safari, Wobbler Baringo and Toddler Masi Mara and did not include Toddler Serengeti, 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 registered provider, 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,
- (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 person in charge and a named person to deputise.
 - (b) The person in charge and a named deputy were always on the premises during the inspection.
- (2) The inspection focused a review of twenty-six staff files.
- (a) Two written validated references from past employers were available on file for twenty-six staff.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for twenty-six staff members employed in the service. Garda vetting disclosures had been renewed in accordance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, which requires services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
 - (d) International police vetting had been sourced as required for twenty-five adults who had lived outside the state for a period of longer than 6 months as an adult.

(4) Records were available evidencing that twenty staff members who were employed to work directly with the children held the required qualification or equivalent. Three staff members held a letter of qualification recognition from the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY). A further three staff members who were employed in domestic roles did not require a qualification.

Non-Compliance Information

(2) (d) The service obtained police vetting for a staff member who had lived in the United Kingdom; however, a more comprehensive level of police vetting was required and was not available. Going forward, all newly appointed staff will be required to provide HR with the required comprehensive level of police vetting as required.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(d) The staff member has applied for a more comprehensive level of police vetting from the United Kingdom. The certificate will be available within approximately 20 working days from the date of application, which was submitted on 21st August 2025. Once we are in receipt of this document, it will be forwarded to your office for reference.

Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of the application receipt.

Summary Comment

The corrective actions and supporting evidence submitted by the registered provider was reviewed by the inspector and deemed to meet the Regulatory requirement.

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,

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. Sixty-six children who attended the service were supervised by seventeen adults.

(8)(a) There were at least two staff members on the premises throughout the inspection. The staff roster provided for a minimum of two staff to be on the premises at all times of opening.

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;*
- (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (h) Details of the attendance of each child in Baby Acacia, Wobbler Safari, Wobbler Baringo and Toddler Masi Mara were recorded at the time of entering and leaving the service.
- (i) The staff roster was available and reflected the adults working in the service.
- (j) A sample of ten medication administration records were reviewed. These records were signed by staff and parents and were completed appropriately.
- (k) A sample of ten accident and incident forms were reviewed as part of the inspection. Details of accidents and incidents were recorded as required. The forms were signed by the parent/ guardian, member of staff caring for the child and the manager.

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

Basic Needs

Each child's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the daily life of the service. The adults demonstrated warmth and affection in their interactions with the children. They spoke kindly to them, listened to them and responded appropriately to their cues. Children were comforted when they became upset.

The manager reported all meals and snacks are prepared by the chef and they were provided at regular intervals throughout the day. The children sat in groups when eating. Adults sat with the children, engaging them in conversation and promoting social skills. Bibs were provided to protect the children's clothes from becoming wet or soiled when eating. Children who did not eat the main meal were offered an alternative meal. Younger children were encouraged to feed themselves and additional support was given as required. Drinks were always available within the rooms and were offered with meals and snacks.

Children were supported to use the toilet independently when needed. Children's nappies were changed at scheduled times and in between as required. Staff used these opportunities for warm one-to-one interactions. Transitions between activities were well managed with staff explaining to children what was going to happen next. The children slept in cots and low beds appropriate to their age and stage of development after dinner. They were made comfortable for sleep with staff removing their outer clothing and providing soothers for those who used them.

Supporting Relationships around Children

Staff built positive relationships with children by providing support through attentive interactions, active listening and gentle supportive guidance. Children were given choice in types of activities they wished to engage in. Children were invited to engage in group activities which were designed to support social bonds and help children build friendships. Staff discussed maintaining communication with families to support children's emotional and social

development. They used an app to communicate with parents and share information including meals, sleep and nappy changing. They reported further opportunities were available to speak to parents/ guardian's at drop off and collection with meetings arranged if needed. Each care room had a Family / birthday wall. This included a display of photographs of the children and their families which helped to support children's connection between home and the service.

Physical and Material Environment

The care rooms were suitably laid out and equipped with a variety of age-appropriate toys and materials, to support children to engage in various forms of play and learning. The indoor environments had some interest areas which included imaginary and sensory play. These were resourced with equipment and props to support imaginative and creative play and learning. Equipment was available on low level shelves easily visible and accessible to the children. Designated cosy areas were available and used by children to take a break or rest from activities. The outdoor area was surfaced with impact absorbent surface and had equipment to support various forms of play. The equipment included slides, a climbing frame, bikes and balls. All children were given an opportunity to play outdoors.

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 front door to the service was secured and an intercom system was in place to prevent unauthorised access or children leaving unsupervised. The rear outdoor area was safely secured with had a high perimeter fence and a coded gate.

Appropriate measures had been taken to safeguard the children. Cleaning products and cables were kept out of children's reach. All medicines were stored appropriately out of reach of children. Heavy furniture was secured to prevent injury.

Infection Control:

Appropriate measures had been taken to minimise the risk of infection spreading. The premises and equipment appeared clean and well maintained. A record of cleaning was available and completed. Sanitary facilities were equipped to support handwashing. Staff supported children to wash their hands after toileting, after outdoor play and before meals. Children’s nappies were changed in accordance with infection control procedures. Suitable pedal operated bins were provided for the disposal of waste.

Administration of Medication:

Staff demonstrated an understanding of the procedures to administer medication safely if needed including obtaining written parent/guardian consent. Detailed records were available of medicines given. These had been signed by the person who gave the medicine, a witnessing staff member and the child’s parent / guardian.

Safe Sleep:

Staff were familiar with the safe policy. Children were physically monitored while sleeping and sleep checks were documented. The temperature of the sleep room was maintained at the required temperature for sleep.

Fire Safety:

Emergency exits were marked and kept clear to allow for timely evacuation in the event of a fire.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.

Compliance Information

Staff were observed to supervise children in the indoor and outdoor at all times during the inspection.