

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:	29/07/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	70	PM	67
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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.
Inspection undertaken by:	Olivia Quill and Emer Mulhern
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).

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Description of service

Giraffe Childcare Rathgar is a private full day care service and is one of a multiple of thirty four 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. Eighteen staff worked directly with children on the day of inspection. An additional staff member arrived from another service after the inspection commenced to provide support. 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. The operations manager arrived during the inspection and remained present for the feedback meeting.

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

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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 15 Record of a pre-school child, and regulation 19 Health, welfare and development of child. As a result, the scope of the inspection included Baby Acacia, Wobbler Safari, Toddler Masi Mara and Preschool Kenya.

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, operations manager, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

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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.*

(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 required.
 - (b) The designated person in charge was present at all times during the inspection.
- (2) Following a discussion with the person in charge, a review of records and the staff roster it was confirmed that 18 adults commenced employment in the service since Regulation 9 was last inspected on 23 July 2025. Documentation required under Regulation 9 (2), (3), (4) was reviewed in respect of 19 adults including an adult who arrived from another service as detailed below.

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The requirements of Regulation 9(2)(c) relating to Garda vetting were reviewed for 20 adults including the operations manager as detailed below.

- (a) Thirty-five written and verified references were available from past employers.
- (b) Three written and verified references were provided from a source other than a past employer for staff who did not have a second past employer.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for 20 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 in respect of 18 adults who had lived outside Ireland for a period longer than six months as adults.

(3) Documentation reviewed showed that the procedures specified above under Regulation 9(2) had been carried out before the 19 adults commenced employment in the service.

(4) Documentation was available to show 18 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 equivalent by the Department of Children, Disability and Equality (DCDE). One adult was employed as a chef and did not require a qualification.

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,

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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 70 children attending the service being supervised by 17 adults. Additionally, the manager and deputy manager were available at all times to provide support to staff as required.
- (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 15 – Record of pre-school child

- (1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:*
- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;*
 - (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;*
 - (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;*
 - (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;*
 - (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;*
 - (f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;*
 - (g) the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner;*
 - (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;*
 - (i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.*

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Compliance Information

- (1) A sample of 10 records were reviewed for children who were attending the service. The records reviewed contained the following information:
- (a) The name and date of birth of each child.
 - (b) The date on which the child first attended the service.
 - (c) There was an area on the registration form where the date when a child would cease to attend the service will be recorded.
 - (d) The names, addresses and telephone number of parents were recorded and information where parents can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service were also available.
 - (f) The records available supported the recording of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child.
 - (g) The name and telephone number of each child's medical practitioner was recorded.
 - (i) There was written consent for appropriate medical treatment of a child in the event of an emergency.

Non-Compliance Information

- (1) (e) Following a review of the children's records it was identified that five children's files did not contain authorisation for the collection of the child.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

To correct this non-compliance, the manager reviewed all children's files to identify any booking forms without completed collection authorisation details. New booking forms were issued to the relevant parents/guardians for completion, and the updated forms have been placed in each child's file.

A checklist has been introduced for all new enrolments to ensure that every section of the booking form, including collection authorisation, is fully completed before the child starts. Children's files will also be reviewed regularly by management to ensure all required information remains complete and up to date.

Supporting documentation submitted

Written evidence a copy of the updated booking form.

Summary Comment

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

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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) Appropriate and suitable care practices were observed on inspection. During the morning, in Baby Acacia, Wobbler Baringo and Toddler Masai Mara, staff were observed to divide groups to allow some children to access the outdoor environment while others remained indoors this helped contribute to a calm relaxed atmosphere. Children indoors were observed to be content and actively engaged in activities and story time. While children outdoors moved freely and played a variety of games with staff.

Older children were encouraged to develop independence by, using the toilet, washing their hands and participating in daily routines, such as giving out placemats and water bottles at lunchtime. Drinking stations were available in all care rooms, supporting children's independent access to drinking water throughout the day.

Younger children received personal care in a warm, respectful and nurturing manner. Staff assisted children with hand and face washing after meals using individual face cloths. A staff member sought a child's permission before gently wiping their nose with a tissue. Following this the staff member was observed to wash their hands. Nappy changing was carried out as required, with staff using these opportunities to engage in positive one-to-one interactions.

Staff responded appropriately to minor behaviour issues that arose. When two children disagreed over a toy, a staff member knelt to their level, spoke calmly about what had happened and encouraged turn-taking. The situation was resolved promptly, and the children were reassured.

Children's individual rest and sleep needs were well supported. Following lunch, staff calmly assisted children to prepare for rest by helping them remove outer clothing and footwear. Children who used soothers were provided with them at sleep time, and staff remained with children as they settled, offering reassurance through gentle voices and comforting interactions.

Family display walls were visible in the care rooms and, in Baby Acacia, staff used family photographs to engage children in meaningful conversations while waiting for lunch to be served. Children responded with enthusiasm

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and excitement. Staff reported they communicate daily with parents at drop-off and collection times, while children's artwork and learning experiences were shared daily or weekly, depending on the child. Additionally, a computer application was also used by the service to communicate with families and share photographs and updates.

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

The inspectors found by observation of practice, review of documentation, discussion with staff that the registered provider had taken the following steps to safeguard children attending:

General Safety:

The entrances into the service were appropriately secured to prevent unauthorised access or a child exiting the service unsupervised. An intercom system was in place at the main entrance to facilitate controlled access. Cleaning products and hazardous materials were stored securely out of reach of the children. All cables, flexes and blind cords were safely secured. The kitchen and storage areas were not accessible to children.

Infection Control:

The environment was observed to be clean and well maintained. A domestic staff member was observed undertaking routine cleaning duties. Staff were also responsible for cleaning their own care rooms and maintained written records of all cleaning activities completed. Pedal operated bins were in place throughout the service for the disposal of waste.

Administration of Medication:

A sample of medications forms were reviewed and there was evidence of prior written parental consent for the administration of both temperature reducing and prescribed medications. Staff adequately detailed the procedures for administering medication when required during discussions with the inspectors and had appropriate documentation available to record such administration if required. Care plans were in place for children who required emergency medication, and staff were familiar with these plans.

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Safe Sleep:

Standard cots and low-level beds were available for sleep and were used in accordance with children's ages and developmental needs. Air conditioning was in place and used, the temperature of the rooms where children slept were maintained at the required temperature ranges.

Staff demonstrated they were familiar with safe sleep guidance during discussions with the inspector. Sleep records were available and individual children's observations were recorded every 10 minutes including breathing, colour, position and the room temperature.

Fire Safety:

The designated fire escape routes were clearly indicated and free from obstruction on the day of inspection. Staff who were spoken to were able to clearly describe the procedure they follow when carrying out a fire drill and identified the designated fire assembly points to the inspector.

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) There was evidence to show that staff held certification in First Aid Responder (FAR) training, were immediately available to the children for the duration of the inspection.

- (2)
- (a) Suitably equipped first aid boxes were available and stored safely in easily accessible and prominent positions in the care room.
 - (b) The first aid boxes were observed to be readily available to the adults caring for the children attending the service.

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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) The registered provider ensured that a record of the following was maintained:
- (a) A written record was available detailing fire drills that had taken place in the service. The record showed that the last fire drill occurred on 10 July 2026.
 - (b) The number, type and maintenance record of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises were up to date. Fire extinguishers were serviced in April 2026 and smoke alarms were serviced on the June 2026.
- (4) The procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were clearly displayed in the care rooms and in the main reception area.