

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2024DY004
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Name of Service:	Giraffe Childcare Donnybrook
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Address of Service:	Unit 3/4, Donnybrook House, Donnybrook, Dublin 4.
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Eircode:	D04 A2T7
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Name of Registered Provider:	Dearbhala Cox Giffin
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time
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Date of Inspection:	14/07/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	82	PM	83
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla-Child and Family Agency, Loughlinstown Health Centre, Loughlinstown, County Dublin.
Inspection undertaken by:	Olivia Quill, Margaret Bermingham
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 Donnybrook is registered to provide full and part time day care. The service is one of a multiple of thirty four Early Years Services privately operated by the registered provider. The service caters for children aged from 0 to 6 years and operates 08:00 to 18:00, Monday to Friday.

The premises has been purposefully adapted to accommodate a childcare facility. It is located at ground level in an urban area of Donnybrook Dublin south city. Care of the children is facilitated across nine care rooms. Bambini 1 and 2 caters for children aged 1 year and Bombo 1 and 2 caters for children aged 1 year to 18 months. Bumble 2 and 3 caters for children aged 1-2 years. Bumble 1 caters for children aged 2-3 years and Buzz 1 and 2 caters for children aged 3-4 years. One designated cot room was provided and an enclosed outdoor space is available on the premises. A catering kitchen, office and a large staff room were available.

Staffing

In total 27 staff are employed to work in the service. On the day of inspection 23 staff were present this included 19 childcare staff, the person in charge and deputy person in charge, a cook and domestic staff. The regional 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, information and records and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulation 16 – Record in Relation to Pre-school Service and Regulation 19 Health welfare and development of child. As a result, the scope of the inspection included Bambini 2, Bombo 1, Bombo 2, Bumble 2 and Bumble 3.

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, deputy manager, operations director, 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*
- (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 person in charge and a named person to deputise.
 - (b) The person in charge was always on the premises during the inspection. The staff roster provided for the person in charge or the named deputy to be present at all times of opening.
 - (c) The management structure was clearly documented. The service had a service manager and assistant manager. The service manager reports to the operations director who oversees several of the company's services. The

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operations director in turn reports to the registered provider. Staff demonstrated an awareness of their individual roles and the lines of authority.

(2)

Following a discussion with the person in charge a review of records and the staff roster, it was confirmed that 15 staff members commenced employment in the service since Regulation 9 was last inspected on 22 January 2025. Documentation required under Regulation 9 (2), (3), (4) was reviewed in respect of the 15 staff members as detailed below.

- (a) Twenty six written and verified references were available from past employers.
- (b) Three written and verified reference were available from a source other than a past employer for staff who did not have a second employer.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for 15 staff members. The service did adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years for all staff.
- (d) Documentary evidence showed that 14 staff members had lived in a state other than Ireland for more than six consecutive months as adults. International police vetting from the relevant countries was available for 14 staff members.

(4) Documentation was available to show 12 staff members employed to work 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. A letter of eligibility to practice from the Department of Children, Disability and Equality (DCDE) was available for one staff member and two staff were employed for ancillary duties did not require a qualification.

Non-Compliance Information

- (2)(b) One reference available for one staff member from a reputable source was not verified.
- (3) The required recruitment procedures outlined in paragraph (2) were not completed for one staff member as detailed above under (2)(b) prior to the staff member being appointed.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (2)(b) The reference was verified the day of the inspection.

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(3) A checklist is completed and checked by recruitment team to include checking the verified references, before the person can start.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copy of reference and validation checklist completed.

Summary Comment

Supporting evidence was submitted in keeping with the actions stated. The Regulatory requirement has been met.

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. There were 83 children attending the service being supervised by 19 adults on the day of inspection. Additionally, the person in charge and deputy manager were available to provide support for staff breaks.

(8)(a) The staff roster provided to the inspectors by the person in charge showed that a minimum of two staff members were on the premises at all times during the operational hours of the service.

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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) Evidence available demonstrated staff maintained a record of children's attendance, at the time of entering and leaving the service.
- (i) A staff roster was available on the day of inspection and accurately reflected the staff working in the service.
- (j) Records were available detailing any medication that was given to a pre-school child including signed parental consent.
- (k) Records were available detailing accidents and incidents involving a pre-school child.

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

(1)(a) Each child's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the service as evidenced by:

The care room environments were organised with a wide range of age-appropriate play materials and resources to support children's learning and development. Clearly defined areas of interest were available, including home

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corners, construction areas, dress-up resources, library areas, and cosy spaces where children could take a break from activities. Open, low-level shelving enabled children to independently access play materials and equipment. Suitable child-sized tables and chairs were provided in each room.

Throughout the day, children were observed participating in a variety of meaningful learning experiences. During circle time, staff used flashcards to promote language development, extending children's learning by making connections with their own experiences, including discussions about their dogs. In the younger children's room, staff used sensory books to encourage exploration, inviting children to feel the teddy bear's soft belly and supporting their understanding of the senses through language and interaction. The programme of learning was displayed within the service.

A quiet space had been created in the hallway using a lamp and soft climbing cushions, providing a calm and relaxing environment. Staff were observed reading a story to a small group of children in this area. The children had removed their shoes, appeared relaxed, and were engaged in the story.

At lunchtime, staff sat and ate with the children, promoting social interaction and positive mealtime experiences. Drinking water was freely available in all care rooms throughout the day and during mealtimes.

Children's personal care needs were attended to in a warm and respectful manner. Following lunch, individual face cloths were used to clean children's faces and hands. Nappies were changed as required, with staff using these opportunities for warm, one-to-one interactions that supported children's emotional wellbeing. Older children were encouraged to use the toilet independently, appropriate to their stage of development.

The transition from lunchtime to the rest period was managed smoothly with staff giving children advanced notice and sufficient time to prepare for sleep, this helped to create a calm atmosphere. The environment was made conducive to rest blinds were closed and gentle music was played. Staff supported children's comfort by assisting them to remove their outer clothing where required, and soothers were provided to children who used them. Staff remained with the children as they settled to sleep, offering reassurance through gentle touch and calm, soothing voices.

All children had opportunities for outdoor play during the day. Staff ensured children were appropriately prepared for the weather by applying sunscreen and ensuring hats were worn before going outdoors.

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Staff reported that they communicate with parents daily during drop-off and collection times. In addition, an electronic communication application was used to share information with families, including details of children's daily activities, care routines, photographs, and other relevant 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

General Safety:

- The entrance door to the service was secured to prevent unauthorised access and to prevent children exiting unsupervised. Access to the service is managed via a video intercom entry system.
- Cleaning products and hazardous materials were stored securely out of reach of the children. Medicines were stored safely. Child proof locks were provided on low level cupboards and the fridge in care rooms.
- There were no trailing flexes or cables observed.
- The kitchen was inaccessible to children.

Infection Control:

- The environment was clean and cleaning schedules were maintained by staff.
- Liquid soap, warm water and paper towels were available to facilitate hand washing. Children were supported to wash their hands after outdoor play and before meals.
- Suitable pedal operated bins were provided in the care rooms and sanitary areas for the disposal of waste.

Administration of Medication:

- Staff demonstrated an awareness of the procedures to take to ensure medication is given safely if needed.
- Administration of medication records were available for review and contained details of the medication given, including parental consent, the signatures of the staff member who administered the medication, and the staff member who was present as a witness and the parents signature.
- Staff were familiar with care plans which were available for children with specific medical conditions

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Safe Sleep:

- Staff when spoken to were knowledgeable on safe sleep guidelines. All sleeping children were physically monitored and sleep checks were recorded every ten minutes by staff.
- The temperature of the cot room and other areas where young children were sleeping was maintained within the recommended range. Adequate spacing of 50 cms was maintained between cots and low-level beds.

Fire Safety:

- Fire exits were clearly illuminated and unobstructed.
- Staff when spoken to were familiar with the fire drill procedure.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

1. The nappy changing practices observed were not consistent with the service's nappy changing policy and presented an infection prevention and control risk, as evidenced by the following observations:
 - Bombo 1 Room: A staff member was observed not removing their disposable gloves following completion of a nappy change and prior to redressing a child. In addition, the child's hands were not washed following the nappy change, in line with the service's policy.
 - Bumble 2 Room: Following a nappy change, a staff member did not wash their hands before returning the child to the care room and escorting another child to the sanitary area. The second child's face and hands were cleaned, and the child subsequently used the toilet. The staff member also cleaned a potty during this time. At no point between these tasks did the staff member wash their hands, increasing the risk of cross-contamination.

Safe Sleep:

2. It was noted that the lighting in the cot room adjoining the Bambini room was insufficient to enable staff to adequately observe and assess the colour of three babies who were sleeping at the time.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control:

1. The team member in question was retrained on the nappy changing procedure.
The team member was retrained on the Infectious control Management Policy and procedure.

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A whole team meeting was held and all team retrained on infection control management. Ongoing spot checks of nappy changing and of Infectious control practices are done by the Management team.

Safe Sleep:

2. A light was purchased for the cot room. All cot room have additional night lights to ensure suitable observation at sleep time.

Supporting documentation submitted

Infection Control:

Written evidence and copy of minutes staff meeting.

Safe Sleep:

Photographic evidence of new lighting purchased.

Summary Comment

Supporting evidence was submitted in keeping with the actions submitted. The Regulatory requirement has been met. Practice will be reviewed on next inspection.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) no person other than-

(i) pre-school child attending the service,

(ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,

(iii) an employee, or

(iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and

(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (3)(b) is retained for a period of one year from the date to which it relates.

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Compliance Information

(3)(a), (b) Evidence was available to demonstrate that the registered provider maintained a daily written record of all persons, other than those detailed under Regulation 9(3)(a)(i)–(iv), who were present in the service.

(4) Records reviewed confirmed that these daily records were retained for a period of one year from the date to which they related, in accordance with the regulatory requirements.

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) The monthly record of fire drills was available. The last fire drill was completed on 17 June 2026.

(b) The number type and maintenance record for fire fighting equipment and smoke alarms was available. The fire fighting equipment was serviced on the 22 April 2026 and the smoke alarm was serviced on the 17 of February 2026.

(4) A notice of the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire and the fire escape route was displayed in the main hall and each care room.