

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CE003
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Name of Service:	ABC Playschool
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Address of Service:	Scoil na Maininstreach, Newline Road, Quin, Co. Clare
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Eircode:	V95 P659
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Name of Registered Provider:	Mary Cronin, Noreen Gallagher
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	01/12/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	7	PM	9
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Quality and Regulation Directorate Tusla Child and Family Agency Ennis Primary Care Centre Station Road Ennis County Clare V95TY4E
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Inspection undertaken by:	J. Hayes
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Title:	Early Years Inspector
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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

ABC Playschool was established in 2001, as a sessional service for children ranging in age from two to six years. A programme of care and education is facilitated in one room to the rear of the National school premises in Quin village in County Clare. The service operates Monday to Friday from 08:45-11:45 and from 12:00-15:00 for 38 weeks of the year. An enclosed outdoor play area and a large playing field are located at the rear of the building and available for use by the pre-school children.

Staffing

Five adults are employed by the service. There are two registered providers for the service and two adults who work with the children and an additional adult available for relief cover.

On the 01 December 2025 three adults worked directly with the children in attendance in the morning and two of these adults worked with the children attending in the afternoon. The adults working directly with the children hold Early Childhood Care and Education qualifications ranging from level 6 to level 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications. The staff files demonstrated the adult's engagement in continuous professional development.

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

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment (1)(a)(b)(2)(a)(b)(c)(d) and (4)

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels (1) (3)

Regulation 19 - Health, welfare and development of child (1)(a)

Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

Regulation 25 - First aid (1)(a)(b)(4)

Regulation 26- Fire safety measures (1)(a)(b)(4)

Regulation 28- Insurance

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 inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, 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,
- (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.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

On the day of the inspection, the registered provider was the designated person in charge and there was a named person available who was able to deputise if required.

(b)

During the period of the inspection, the designated person in charge and the deputy were present on the premises.

(2)

Five files were available in respect of the two registered providers, the two adults working in the service and the adult available to cover in the event of an emergency. The findings included the following:

(a)

Six written references from past employers were available in respect of three adults.

(b)

Four written references from a source other than a past employer was available in respect of two adults.

(c)

Garda Vetting disclosures received from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána in accordance with the Act of 2012 were available for the five adults working in the service. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d)

Not applicable as no adult had lived outside the state for a period greater than six months.

(4)

The adults working directly with the children held Early Childhood Care and Education qualifications from Level 5 to level 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

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.

(3) Subject to paragraph (5), a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 2 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) therefore at that reference number is satisfied.

Compliance Information

(1)

During the inspection, an adequate number of adults worked directly with the children in attendance.

(3)

On the 01 December 2025, the ratio of adults caring for children was maintained. Three adults cared for the seven children attending the morning sessional service and two adults cared for the nine children attending the afternoon sessional service.

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)

Basic Needs of Children:

The children's learning, development, and well-being was supported by the adults working in the service. The programme of care and education was facilitated in one, large open plan room. The adults interacted with the children in a caring, kind and respectful manner. The adults listened attentively and conversed with the children at their level and responded promptly to their cues for assistance. Positive behavioural strategies were used during interactions, and the children were offered praise and encouragement. The adults demonstrated an awareness of the children's personal interests and capabilities.

The children were encouraged to be independent while caring for their belongings, their play materials and equipment. A soft seating area was used by the children to rest and relax. The children were encouraged and supported to manage their own personal care appropriate to their age and level of development. The children and adults sat together and conversed amicably during mealtime. Mealtime was observed to be a relaxed and sociable occasion, and children were provided with additional time if needed to finish eating their food.

Physical and Material Environment:

The indoor and outdoor environments provided an experience that was developmentally challenging, diverse, creative and enriching for the children. The children engaged in open ended play and educational activities in the indoor environment. The care room was bright and spacious and was adequately resourced for the age range and stage of development of the children. The transitions in the changes of activities in the room were facilitated with ease, as the adults notified the children in advance of any change in the programme of care and learning. The children played individually and as part of a group and chose their individual activities throughout the sessions. The adults engaged in open ended discussions and singing exercises, played individual and group games with the children and sat with the children as they engaged in constructive, manipulative, creative and pretend play. Designated areas of interest with appropriate and accessible supporting materials and equipment were available to

the children. The defined areas included a home corner, rest and reading area, construction area and arts and crafts area. Low-level units throughout the room contained a large quantity of imaginative, constructive and manipulative equipment and toys that were readily accessible to the children.

An enclosed outdoor area was accessed directly from the playroom at the rear of the building, and a large grass area was accessed by the children for a range of gross motor, running and ball games and nature activities.

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 to the service was secured to monitor the safe entry and exit of the children to and from the childcare facility.
- The outdoor play area was secured with fencing and a gate to protect the children within.
- The children's arrival and departure were recorded daily. The adults supervised the children at all times during the inspection.
- Cleaning agents were stored in a secured area out of reach of the children.

Infection Control:

- The service was maintained in a clean and hygienic condition.
- The sanitary facility was equipped with running water, liquid soap, hand paper towels and lidded, lined pedal operated bins.
- Handwashing by the children was encouraged and supervised by the adults.
- The children's personal belongings were stored individually in the playroom in a designated storage area.

Fire Safety:

- Fire drills were completed by the adults and children on a monthly basis. The fire drills were carried out with the children attending both the morning and afternoon session.
- A fire assembly point to the side of the premises near the playing field was readily identifiable by signage and identified by the adults working in the service.
- The fire exits and routes were clear from obstruction throughout the service.

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)

Two adults working in the service had a record of up to date First Aid Responder (FAR) training.

(2)(a)

A suitably equipped first aid box was provided in the service.

(b)

The first aid box was available for use by the adults 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.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

Records were available to demonstrate that fire drills were carried out on a monthly basis in the service. The most recent fire drills took place on 05 and 06 November 2025.

(b)

Up-to-date records of the number, type and maintenance service were available for the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarm system. The most recent service of the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarm system took place, respectively on 05 March 2025 and 16 January 2025.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

A registered provider shall ensure that the pre-school service is adequately insured.

Compliance Information

Up to date insurance cover was available for twenty two children attending the sessional service. The policy is valid until the 27 March 2026.