

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CN001
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Name of Service:	ABC Childcare
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Address of Service:	7 Cherry Grove, Drumgola Wood, Cavan, Co. Cavan
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Name of Registered Provider:	Carmel Sorohan
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date of Inspection:	29/05/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	28	PM	25
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Hampton Court, Cootehill Road, Drumalee, Co Cavan. H12 YY84
Inspection undertaken by:	S Mc Kenna and S Taaffe
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

ABC Childcare is located in a housing development within the town of Cavan. This service was established in 2010. The service is registered to provide full day, part- time, sessional childcare and education for a maximum of 57 children aged from 0 to 6 years and operates from 8.00am-6.00pm each weekday. There are three care rooms operating named Toddler room, Pre School room 1 and Pre School room 2. An additional room on the first floor was available, but not in use on the day of inspection.

Staffing

The registered provider and four staff members are employed in the service, this includes the cook. All staff members were present on the day of inspection.

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 Regulation 9 Management & Recruitment, Regulation 11 Staffing Levels, Regulation 16 Record in relation to Pre-school Service, Regulation 19 Health, Welfare & Development of Child, Regulation 20 Facilities for rest and play, Regulation 21 Equipment and

Materials, Regulation 22 Food and drink, Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child, Regulation 25 First Aid, Regulation 26 Fire Safety Measures and Regulation 29 Premises.

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,
- (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) The service had a designated person in charge, and a named person in charge to deputise in their absence.
(b) Following discussion with the registered provider, and review of the staff roster, it was confirmed that when the preschool service was in operation the designated person in charge or the named person in charge were on the premises.

(2) The staff files for four adults were previously reviewed upon the service's most recent inspection on 17/04/2024 and met regulatory compliance. One new staff member has since been employed, and the staff file has been reviewed as follows;

(a)(b) Two written references from a previous employers were on file for the new staff member.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for the one new staff member. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years for all previously employed and newly staff employed staff.

(d) A review of the employment history for the one new staff member demonstrated that the staff member had not lived outside the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months as an adult, therefore police vetting was not required.

(4) Documentary evidence was available to confirm that the one new staff employed to work with children held an appropriate childcare qualification at Level 5 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

Non-Compliance Information

(4) The registered provider did not ensure that each employee working directly with children attending the service 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.

Between 1.04pm and 1.27pm, two staff members were observed to provide care for 10 preschool children (one of whom was in a cot in the sleep room attached to the Toddler room) ranging in age from 2 years 8 months to 3 years 11 months, all of whom attended on a part time or full day care basis.

One of the two staff members, who also works as the service cook, did not hold the required qualification to work directly with children.

This is a reoccurring non-compliance from the service's last inspection on 17/04/2024, where the registered provider outlined in their corrective and preventative actions "The registered provider will ensure that only adults with a childcare qualification will provide direct care to children."

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

All staff directly working with children have a minimum of level 5 Early Childhood Care & Education. The registered provider will ensure that all adults providing direct care to children will have a childcare qualification.

Supporting documentation submitted

No supporting documentation received.

Summary Comment

The registered provider has given assurances that all staff working with children will have the required qualification. This non-compliance will be reviewed upon the services next inspection.

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) On the inspectors arrival there was an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.
- (2) On the morning of the inspection the following adult to child ratios were observed when the service was operating at capacity:
- One adult cared for 4 children aged 2 years 4 months to 2 years 10 months in the Toddler room, all of whom attended on a part time or full day care basis.
- One adult cared for 8 children aged 3 years 3 months to 3 years 11 months in the Preschool room 1, all of whom attended on a part time or full day care basis.
- Two adults cared for 16 children aged 4 years to 5 years 4 months in Preschool room 2, of whom 1 child attended on a sessional basis, and 15 children who attended on a part time or full day care basis.
- (8) A review of the staff rosters and the staff sign in and out records, demonstrated that there are at least 2 adults on the premises while the full day care service is in operation.

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;*

Compliance Information

- (1) A record in writing was kept of the following information in relation to the service:
- (h) Details of attendance of each individual pre-school child who attends the service.
 - (i) Details of a weekly staff rosters, detailing the staff working hours and lunch break cover.

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*
- (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

The following examples demonstrate how the registered provider ensured that the children's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the daily life of the service:

Basic Needs

The children appeared familiar with all staff who cared for them. Where children became upset or needed reassurance, the staff were observed to provide comforts to the children until they were happy to return to play. Snack and meal times were unrushed with staff observed to sit with the children, providing support to younger children where needed. Time was provided for opportunities of conversation between staff and children at these times, with discussions about the children's home life occurring. The children had access to their drink bottles during their day.

Children nappies were changed in line with the child’s routine, and older children were observed to use the toilet independently with staff nearby for supports if required.

Aprons were provided for and observed in use for sensory play activities such as water play on the day of inspection.

Children under 2 years who required a sleep had their sleep needs met in the cot room located off the Toddler room. Older children were observed to sleep after dinner time.

Care plans for children’s medical needs were available for review, and staff who cared for the children were aware of the procedure to follow in the event of an emergency.

Supporting Relationships

The atmosphere in the care rooms was warm and welcoming. The children were supported during their play by the staff who cared for them. Fun and positive interactions were observed within all the care rooms, with praise and encouragement given to children when they achieved a task or shared with their peers.

Staff demonstrated positive regard for children and their families, through respecting parental wishes and dietary requirements. Family photos were on display in the care rooms providing an important link to the child’s home life. Opportunities for siblings to play together was provided at outdoor play time when all the care rooms joined together.

Communication with parents/carers is predominantly face to face upon arrival and collection times, where parents/carers collect the children at the main entrance door, with staff relaying any information relevant to the child’s day at this time. This procedure was observed in practice on the day of inspection.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

(3) A registered provider of a full day care service, a part-time day care service or a childminding service, other than such a service to which paragraph (2) applies, shall ensure that-

(a) a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the pre-school children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises

Compliance Information

(3)(a) There was an outdoor area available to the rear of the premises. This area was secured by wooden fencing and gates fitted with locking devices. The ground surfacing was a combination of concrete paths, grass and an area with impact surfacing mats. The area was observed to be safe, secure and suitable for the number of children in attendance. The children in all care rooms availed of outdoor play during the inspection.

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 play and work materials and equipment available for the children’s use were suitable for the children’s age and stage of development and adequate for the number of children in attendance.

The three care rooms in operation on the day of inspection were set up with clearly identifiable play areas, which were suitable and age appropriate for the children in attendance in each care room.

Designated areas included jigsaws and table top connecting and sorting toys, well-resourced home corners with role play and dress up materials, dolls and play equipment, rest areas with books, construction areas and sensory play areas to include sand, water and playdough.

A wide range of materials were available and accessible to the children on low level accessible shelving.

Materials available provided opportunities for fun, challenging and enriching play experiences for the children.

The toys were observed to be durable, easy to clean and were presented in a clean and hygienic condition.

Areas observed to be of interest and activities taken part in by the children attending the Toddler room was a sorting and stacking peg activity, water play, outdoor time and floor play time.

The children in Preschool 1 were observed to enjoy story time, play dough, water play and running games in the outdoors.

Child-led play was facilitated in Preschool 2 as evidenced by all the children being involved in a broad range of table top and floor activities, both individually and in small groups, when the inspectors arrived unannounced to the service and also throughout the inspection. The children in this room were supported in their choice of activities with moments of joint laughter and shows of affection frequently observed taking place between the staff members and the children during the inspection, including during role play in the large and well-resourced home area, during storytelling, when engaging in sensory play using kinetic sand, standard play sand and coloured dried rice, and when engaging in art activities.

There was adequate and suitable furniture in all the care rooms in operation. The tables and chairs were suitable for the children’s age and stage of development and were appropriate for the number of children in attendance.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 22 – Food and drink

A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

The service provides all meals to the children in attendance on a part time or full day care basis in the Toddler room. The children in the Preschool rooms take in their own morning snack, and all other meals and snacks are provided by the service cook. A two-week menu is in place.

Cereal is served up to 9am daily, morning snack which on the day was a selection of chopped fruits was served at 10.45am. A hot meal of ham, potatoes, carrots, turnip and gravy was served at 12.30pm and a further snack was scheduled for 2.30pm of potato waffles and spaghetti hoops.

The hot meals listed on the menu, while taking into consideration the age of children provided for suitable, nutritious and a varied choice for the children. Meals were adjusted to suit children's preferences where required. The children's drink bottles were available and accessible in all the care rooms throughout the day.

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 following safety measures were observed on the day of inspection:

- The premises were appropriately secured to prevent a child from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the premises. The main entrance door was secured with a magnetic lock and fitted with a bell that alerted staff of parents/carers presence.
- A visitor log was maintained, and the inspectors were requested to sign in upon their arrival.
- The play equipment and toys available for the children's use were maintained in a good repair.
- Risk assessments were completed up to date and available for review.
- Handrails fitted on stairways were suitable for children's use.
- Floor coverings, except where the non-compliance is listed below, were maintained in good repair.

- Cleaning agents were stored out of the reach of children.
- External waste bins were stored in an area not accessed by the children.
- Fire exits remained free from obstruction during the inspection. Records available for review demonstrated that fire drills were carried out in all care rooms monthly.

Infection Control:

The inspectors observed the following infection control measures in practice within the service:

- Warm running water, hand soap, disposable paper towels and pedal operated bins were provided for handwashing purposes. Hand washing was observed in practice before meal times and after children used the toilet.
- Tables were cleaned before and after snacks and meals.
- The sanitary areas on the ground floor and first floor were ventilated through means of openable windows.
- The children's snacks taken in from home were stored in the fridge in each care room.
- Cleaning schedules were available for review. The entrance areas, sleep room and care rooms throughout the service were presented in a clean and hygienic manner.

Safe Sleep:

- A sleep room with 6 cots was available for children's use. The registered provider advised that only one child currently uses the cot for sleep time, no other children attending the service currently avail of a sleep during their time in the service.
- The cots were positioned at least 50cm apart.
- Individual bed linen was available and laundered at least once a week off site.
- Sleep records were available for review detailing the name, position, colour and breathing pattern of sleeping children at 10-minute intervals.

Stackable beds, and suitable bed linen were available for children aged over 2 years of age.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. A window in Preschool 2 on the first floor was not fitted with a restricting device. This posed a risk of injury from falling, should a child use furniture or fixtures in the room to gain access to the windowsill.

Infection Control:

2. A shower curtain was fitted to each of the two toilet cubicles in the children's sanitary facilities downstairs which poses a cross contamination and infection control risk. This non-compliance remained outstanding following the CAPA process for the last inspection on 17/04/2024.

Administration of Medication:

3. A child attending the service was prescribed an auto-injector adrenaline pen for specific use in the event of an emergency. The auto-injector pen provided by the child's parents, which was stored in the service for use in the event of an emergency, had expired. The expiry date on the auto-injector pen was dated November 2024.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. A restricting device is scheduled to be fitted on window in Preschool 2 on 19/07/25. All windows will now have a restricting device fitted and checked regularly.

Infection Control:

2. Two new toilet cubicles with doors have been fitted. Toilet cubicles will have doors.

Administration of Medication:

3. The auto injector adrenaline pen has been replaced by the parents with an expiry date of 01/2026. Going forward we will check expiry date when it is supplied by parent and document/record this so that it will not get over-looked. Parents will be asked to supply a new one a few weeks prior to its expiry date.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. Photographic evidence of window restrictor fitted, submitted on 21/01/2025.

Infection Control:

2. Photographic evidence of newly fitted toilet cubicle doors, submitted on 15/07/2025.

Administration of Medication:

3. Photographic evidence of new auto injector pen with expiry dated 01/2026, submitted on 15/07/2025.

Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider has adequately addressed the non-compliances in Regulation 23.

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) The registered provider ensured that a person who held in-date First Aid Response (FAR) training was at all times immediately available to the children attending the pre-school service. Two staff members held in-date FAR training certificates.
- (2)(a) & (b) Suitably equipped first aid boxes were available on the premises on both the ground and first floor and were stored in accessible and conspicuous locations out of the reach of children.

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) A record of fire drills that take place was available, with the most recent dated fire drill recorded on 21 May 2025.
- (b) The annual maintenance certificate for the fire extinguishers were dated 13 August 2024, and smoke alarms were dated 03 December 2024.
- (4) The fire evacuation procedures were displayed on walls throughout the service, which contained details in relation to the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-

- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

Non-Compliance Information

- (d)
- In the second children's toilet cubicle upstairs, the floor covering was torn. Tape had been placed over the torn area which posed a risk of a trip hazard to the children. This non-compliance remained outstanding following the CAPA process for the last inspection on 17/04/2024.
- (e)
1. There was inadequate handwashing facilities provided in the downstairs children's sanitary accommodation between the Toddlers and Preschool 1 room.
A total of 9 toilet trained children attended the Preschool 1 room and 4 children in nappies attended the Toddler room. One wash hand basin is required for each individual toilet, and nappy changing mat.
 2. A toilet seat was missing from one of the two toilets in the children's sanitary facilities on the first floor. This would not adequately support a child's comfort or safety when sitting to use the toilet.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (d) New floor covering will be fitted 19/07/2025. Floor covering will be replaced if it becomes torn/damaged.
- (e) 1. A second wash hand basin is scheduled to be fitted 19/07/25. The required number of wash hand basins will be available.
2. New Toilet seat is scheduled to be fitted 19/07/25. Toilet seats will be checked daily & replaced/repared promptly.

Supporting documentation submitted

- (d) No evidence of new floor fitted was submitted.
- (e) 1. Photographic evidence of the newly fitted second sink, submitted 21/07/2025.
2. No evidence of new toilet seat fitted was submitted.

Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider has adequately addressed the non-compliance in Regulation 29 (e) (1). However, no evidence has been submitted to demonstrate that the registered provider has adequately addressed the non-compliances found upon inspection under Regulation 29 (d) and (e) point 2 therefore following the services Corrective And Preventive Action submission, Regulation 29 remains partially outstanding, and regulatory compliance has not been achieved.