

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LD018				
Name of Service:	ABC Childcare Stonepark				
Address of Service:	Number 9, The Rocks, Stonepark, Longford, Co. Longford				
Eircode:	N39 X579				
Name of Registered Provider:	Collette Brennan				
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional				
Date of Inspection:	15/09/2025				
No of pre-school children:	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>AM</td> <td>25</td> <td>PM</td> <td>22</td> </tr> </table>	AM	25	PM	22
AM	25	PM	22		
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, SAP Office, St Loman's Campus, Springfield, Mullingar, Co Westmeath, N91 N4XC.				
Inspection undertaken by:	T. Duignan, F. Maher				
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 Stonepark is registered as a full day care service with a capacity for 50 pre-school children aged between 0 – 6 years. The service is open from 8:00am – 18:00 hours, Monday to Friday. A registered school age childcare service is also provided. The service is part of a multiple operated by an independent provider.

The service is located in a purpose-built detached premises, in Stonepark, Co. Longford. There are five care rooms, a sleep room, a kitchen, an office and a staff room. A large outdoor play area is located at the rear of the premises. Four of the five care rooms were operational on the day of the inspection.

Staffing

The registered provider does not work in the service. Nine staff are employed by the service.

On the day of the inspection, of the eight staff members were present, six including the designated person in charge were working directly with the children. The cook was present also. The area manager arrived after the inspection had commenced and remained for the duration of the inspection.

All staff working directly with children hold a qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education.

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

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under.

- Regulation 9 (1)(a)(b), (2)(a)(b)(c)(d), (4) - Management and recruitment.
- Regulation 11(1)(2)(8)(a) – Staffing Levels.
- Regulation 23 – Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child.
- Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance.
- Regulation 25 (1) (2)(a)(b) – First aid.
- Regulation 26 – Fire Safety.
- Regulation 27 – Supervision.
- Regulation 28 – Insurance.

These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

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

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

(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

The file of one staff member employed since the last inspection was reviewed.

- (2)
- (a)(b) Two written and verified past employer references or references from a reputable source other than a past employer, were available in respect of one adult recently employed whose staff file was reviewed.
- (c) Garda Vetting disclosures were available for all adults working in the service. 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 not applicable for one recently employed adult who had not resided outside the state for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months whose records were reviewed.
- (4) One adult recently employed and working directly with children attending the service held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or higher or a recognised equivalent qualification 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.

(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) There were twenty-five children attending the service and they were supervised directly by six adults.

(2) The minimum ratio of adults to children was adhered to during the day.

(8)(a) There were at least two adults on the premises at all times for the duration of the Inspection. This was confirmed following review of the staff roster for the service.

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 entry to the service was controlled by staff members only. The staff members advised the inspector that they would cut / chop any foods that could pose a choking risk to a child at snack time. They also stated that they would remove any beaded necklace if they observed a child wearing them to mitigate any potential risk of harm to the child.

Infection Control:

Thermostatically controlled hot water, liquid hand soap and paper towels were readily available for hygienic hand washing and drying. The staff members were familiar with the importance of handwashing practice as a means to control the spread of infection in the service. They supervised children's handwashing and handwashing routines were well established. Foot pedal operated bins were provided for the disposal of used tissues. Facilities were available for nappy changing. Cleaning schedules were maintained for the room environments which were observed to be clean and tidy.

Children's snacks were stored in a fridge on arrival until snack time.

Administration of Medication:

Medicine was not given at the time of the inspection; written parental consent was available should medication be required to be administered to a child. The staff members were familiar with required practices when administering medication in the service. Temperature reducing medication was available in the service if required.

Safe Sleep:

Seven cots and six low level beds were available for children who required sleep. The staff members demonstrated knowledge of the care of sleeping children in response to questions asked by the inspector. It was observed that 10-minute sleep check observations were completed on all sleeping children. This included the colour, position and breathing of sleeping children in their care.

A rest area was available for the children in each care room if they wished to take a break from activities and rest.

Fire Safety:

Monthly fire drills had been carried out and staff members were familiar with fire safety evacuation procedures from the service. The internal fire exits were not obstructed.

Outing:

The service conduct outings and has an outings policy in place.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Full length hanging curtains were observed in the Wobbler and ECCE 1 rooms. These posed a potential risk of injury to a child if they became entangled in them and required to be secured or removed.
2. The door lock mechanism on the door between ECCE 1 and the sanitary area was not working and did not secure the ECCE 1 room. As a result, there was a potential for children to leave ECCE 1 room un-noticed.
3. In the sleep room there were two electrical sockets which had five plugs connected and created a potential electrical overload risk.
4. A can of air freshener was placed in a hanging container on a cot in the cot room and accessible to a preschool child if they were using the cot. It is acknowledged that corrective action was taken when the issue was brought to the attention of the manager.
5. The mattress on cot 4 was not the correct size for the cot as gaps were observed between the mattress and cot frame on two of the four sides. This created a potential risk of injury to a preschool child if they became trapped.
6. The hot water at the hot tap in the senior Toddler room and at the hot tap in the sanitary area on the first floor was recorded at 45.2°C and 45.7°C respectively at 11:19am. It is acknowledged that corrective action was immediately taken by the person in charge when it was brought to their attention and the thermostat was adjusted. The water temperature had reduced to 43.7°C when recorded at 12:20pm.
7. There was no toilet seat on the toilet in the 'Boys' cubicle in the upstairs sanitary area, as a result there was no stability provided for a child to safely sit on this toilet. The toilet seat was observed placed on the floor inside the cubicle which was also a potential infection control risk.
8. Despite daily indoor and outdoor environmental risk assessments completed on the day of the inspection, a review of the risk assessment practice is required to examine how the general safety risks identified during the inspection were not captured.

Infection Control:

9. The paper towel was not placed in a dispenser in the nappy change area and two toilets in the sanitary area on the ground floor for hygienic dispensing for infection control purposes.
10. The toilet paper was not placed in a dispenser in the two toilets in the sanitary area on the ground floor or in the toilet cubicle in the sanitary area on the first floor for hygienic dispensing for infection control purposes.

11. The toilet seat belonging to the toilet in the 'Boys' cubicle in the sanitary area on the first floor was observed placed on the floor inside the cubicle; this was an infection control risk.
12. The nappy change practices required to be reviewed as it was observed that the single use disposable apron and disposable gloves were not removed following the bagging up of the soiled nappy. Soiled nappies, used aprons and used disposable gloves need to be disposed of at the same time following removal of the old nappy for best infection control practices.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. A frosting film has been placed on the door, and the curtains have been removed. The curtains have been removed from the conservatory area. This has been added to the room risk assessment.
2. The door lock has been replaced. Checking door handles and locks is added to the room risk assessment.
3. Some of the electrical devices have been moved to another area. Ensuring sockets are not overloaded with electrical appliances has been added to the risk assessment sheet.
4. The air freshener has been removed from the area. The risk assessment has been updated to ensure there are no items left within a child's reach in the sleep room.
5. A new mattress has been bought for the cot to ensure it fits snugly in the cot. The risk assessment has been updated to ensure cots and mattresses are checked to ensure that mattresses are the correct size for the cots.
6. The thermostat was adjusted to bring down the water temperature to an appropriate level. As part of the daily cleaning, staff will check and document the water temperature and highlight to management if it needs to be adjusted.
7. A new toilet seat has been put on the toilet. The toilet risk assessment has been updated to check that toilet seats are secured.
8. The risk assessments have been updated to ensure the general safety risks identified during inspection does not reoccur in the future. The risk assessments will be updated annually or when any changes have been made to an area if this is sooner.

Infection Control:

9. All paper towels have been placed in dispensers. A staff member has been assigned the responsibility to ensure all toilet rolls and paper towels are placed directly into the dispensers and check daily to see if they need replacing. This is now part of the daily risk assessment check.

10. All toilet rolls have been put into the toilet roll dispensers. A staff member has been assigned the responsibility to ensure all toilet rolls and paper towels are placed directly into the dispensers and check daily to see if they need replacing. This has been added to the daily risk assessment/cleaning sheet.
11. The toilet seat has been removed. The toilet cleaning chart has been updated to ensure any equipment not fit for purpose has been discarded.
12. Staff have received inhouse training on nappy changing and were reviewed carrying out nappy changing to ensure they followed all steps on our nappy policy procedure. Inhouse nappy changing training will form part of our team meetings to ensure all staff are kept very familiar with all steps. Our nappy changing policy is displayed in the nappy changing area to remind staff of the step-by-step procedure that they must follow.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. Two photographs.
2. Photograph.
3. Photograph.
4. Document
5. Photograph and document.
6. Document.
7. Photograph and document.
8. Documents.

Infection Control:

9. Photographs and document.
10. Photograph and document.
11. Photograph.
12. No evidence submitted.

Summary Comment

The written response, documentary and photographic evidence submitted by the registered provider has been assessed by the Early Years Inspectorate. Regulatory compliance is met for regulation 23. This area of practice will be assessed at the next inspection.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

- (1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.
- (2) Where there are more than 15 children attending a pre-school service in a drop-in centre, the registered provider shall ensure that one employee or unpaid worker is assigned responsibility for the checking in and out of children.
- (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.

Compliance Information

- (1)(a) The person in charge ensured that each child was checked in and out of the service. This was confirmed by the written attendance records maintained in each care room.
- (2) Not applicable.
- (3) (a)(b) The person in charge ensured that any person entering the service was approved and a record in writing was maintained. The inspectors visit to the service was documented in the visitor's book on arrival.
- (4) The person in charge confirmed that the records were retained in storage for the required period.

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) Staff members present were trained in in first aid response (FAR) and were immediately available to the children attending the service.
- (2)(b) Suitably equipped first aid boxes for children were available at all times to the adults caring for the children attending the service.

Non-Compliance Information

- (2)(a) The first aid equipment was not stored in a conspicuous position in the service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (2)(a) The staff member in charge of checking the first aid equipment will ensure the signage is in place and visible.

Supporting documentation submitted

Two photographs

Summary Comment

The written response and photographic evidence submitted by the registered provider has been assessed by the Early Years Inspectorate. Regulatory compliance is met for regulation 25(2)(a).

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 firefighting 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 written record was available of fire drills completed in the service. The last recorded fire drill was 10/11 September 2025.
- (b) A record was kept of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises. The firefighting equipment and the smoke alarm was last serviced on 14 May 2025.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in a conspicuous position in the premises.

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

The children were observed being supervised at all times throughout the inspection by the adults caring for them both indoors in their care rooms, while using the sanitary area, on the stairs, during transitions to the outdoors and in the outdoor area.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

There was evidence of current insurance cover valid until 27 March 2026. The insurance provided cover for 69 children.