

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LD029		
Name of Service:	ABC Childcare Drumlish		
Address of Service:	Kilnashee, Drumlish, Co. Longford		
Eircode:	N39 V210		
Name of Registered Provider:	Collette Brennan		
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	28/07/2025		
No of pre-school children:	AM	46	PM 41
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 and 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.		

Description of service

ABC Childcare, Drumlish is registered as a full day care service with a capacity for 75 pre-school children aged between 0 – 6 years. The service is open from 8:00am – 17:30 hours, Monday to Friday. The service is part of a multiple operated by an independent provider. A registered school age childcare service is also provided at the service.

The premises consists of the main building which is on the lower ground floor of the registered provider's home, with a separate access to the rear of the building, and two portable cabins. There are four playrooms, a sleep room, office, kitchen and sanitary facilities in the main building. One of the portable cabins contains two playrooms and sanitary facilities and the second portable cabin contains the service's staff room.

Staffing

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

On the day of the inspection, fourteen staff members were present. Nine including the adult designated to provide support to the care rooms as needed were working directly with the children, the designated person in charge, the area manager, the cook and the maintenance person were also present.

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

One staff member was working directly with school age care children.

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.

however, on inspection additional non-compliances were identified under:

- Regulation 19(1)(a) – Health, Welfare and Development of Child.

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

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under

- Regulation 19(1)(b) – Health, welfare and development of child.
- Regulation 23 – Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child.
- Regulation 25 (1), (2)(a)(b) – First aid.
- Regulation 27 – Supervision.

As a result, the scope of the inspection included the Baby, Junior Toddler, Senior Toddler and ECCE 1 rooms.

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.

Additional Information

1. A written referral was sent to the Chief Fire Officer in Longford County Council on 1 August 2025.

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

(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)(b) There was a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required, both remained on the premises for the duration of the inspection.
- Following a review of previous inspection information, information available on inspection and discussion with the person in charge it was determined that three new staff members had been employed since the previous inspection. Three of these new staff members work directly with the children.
- (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 three adults employed whose staff files were reviewed.
- (c) Garda Vetting disclosures were available for three 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 available for one adult who had resided outside the state for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months whose records were reviewed.
- (4) One of the adults was employed to work directly with children attending the service and 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 forty-six children attending the service and they were supervised directly by nine adults. This included the adult available to provide relief to the care rooms as needed.
- (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 service met the necessary safety requirements in respect of the indoor environment, toys and equipment and safe storage of cleaning agents.

Staff members in each care room advised the inspector they would remove any beaded necklace if observed that a child may be wearing them.

The staff members were aware of the potential choking risks that grapes posed when asked by the inspectors.

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 and containment of used tissues and paper hand towel. Facilities were available for nappy changing. Cleaning schedules were maintained for the room environments which were observed to be clean and tidy.

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:

Twelve cots and a sufficient number of 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.

Outing:

The service does not conduct outings.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. The main entrance door to the service was observed unsecured at 10:46am, immediate corrective action was taken by the person in charge once it was brought to their attention by the inspector and remained secured for the remainder of the inspection.
2. The entrance door to the Baby room and Portacabin building were observed during the inspection not to be consistently secured to prevent unauthorised entry to the two areas. It is acknowledged that corrective actions were completed when it was brought to the attention of the staff members and both entrance doors were secured.
3. There was no documentary evidence that daily indoor room and outdoor risk assessments were completed and maintained to ensure a safe play and work environment for the children and staff.
4. A cord blind was observed to be unsecured in the Pre-school room. A corrective action was completed by the inspector where the loose cords were secured and placed out of reach; the completed action was brought to the attention of both staff in the room.
5. There were no visibility strips on the full-length glass doors in the Baby room. This created a potential risk of injury to a child if they failed to recognise the glass panels.

Infection Control:

6. 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.

7. The low-level sleep beds were stored with the sheets in situ; this was inadequate for infection control practices as the sheets had the potential to be in contact with each other.
8. Wipes were used to firstly clean the children's faces and then reused to clean the children's hands in the Baby room. This posed an infection control risk as the children's hands were not adequately cleaned.

This was a non-compliance following inspection conducted on 17 October 2024. The corrective action submitted by the registered provider following the inspection failed to prevent recurrence of this non-compliance.

Safe Sleep:

9. Two cot mattresses were observed not to fit the cots they were placed in snugly thus leaving a gap at one end; this had the potential to cause an entrapment injury to a child.
10. The cot mattress in the foldable cot did not have a recognised safety label attached.
11. Two cots were placed adjacent to the full-length blind covering the fire escape door and as a result was accessible to children.
12. A plug in air freshener with liquid contained in its receptacle, was observed plugged in beside a cot and was accessible to a child; it is acknowledged there was no child using the cot at the time of the inspection.
13. Two plastic storage units were observed placed between two sets of cots; this created a potential risk of a child gaining a foot hold and climbing out of the cot and a further potential risk of injury in the process.
14. The available cot room risk assessment, which was displayed on the wall in the cot room, did not prompt the identification the above risks observed by the inspector.
15. An area of mould was observed on the ceiling of the cot room.

Fire Safety:

16. The fire exit door in the sleep room was obstructed by a cot, a plastic storage unit, a cot mattress and a metal clothes horse. This could potentially compromise the evacuation of children and adults from this area in the building in the event of a fire or other emergency occurring.
17. There was no signage for the fire assembly point in outdoor area.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. All doors were locked immediately, and we are ensuring they are locked every day. A MS teams meeting with held with all staff to remind them of the importance of keeping the entrance doors locked.

2. All doors were locked immediately, and we are ensuring they are locked every day. A MS teams meeting with held with all staff to remind them of the importance of keeping the entrance doors locked.
3. The cleaning sheet has been updated to include a risk assessment. The indoor and outdoor maintenance risk assessment is completed by the caretaker weekly. The updated sheet has a space for staff to document any risks/hazards that they identify.
4. The cord blind was replaced on the blind with a new cord and secured.
5. Visibility strips have been added to the window in the form of a window art decoration.

Infection Control:

6. The nappy changing policy has been updated and shared this with all staff. All staff have been re-trained in nappy changing practice.
7. The bed sheets are stored in individual storage boxes with each child's names on them and beds are dressed as they need before children go to sleep.
8. Disposable wipes have been replaced with individual face cloths for each child. Retraining has been completed with the staff on the importance of proper effective handwashing. The practice will be monitored by room leaders and the centre manager.

Safe Sleep:

9. All cots were checked and are fitted with snugly fitting mattresses. A new cleaning/risk assessment was created for the sleep room to prompt staff to check mattresses.
10. The foldable cot has been replaced with a regular cot and a snug fitting mattress with a recognised safety label attached.
11. The sleep room was reviewed, and the cots have been re-arranged in the room.
12. Plug in air fresheners are not used in the centre. A new cleaning/risk assessment was created for the sleep room to prompt staff to check all plugs have safety covers on them and to ensure that there is nothing plugged in within children's reach.
13. The storage units were removed following the sleep room review.
14. The risk assessment has been updated.
15. The mould has been cleaned, and the ceiling was repainted.

Fire Safety:

16. All items were removed to ensure the fire exit is clear. A new cleaning/risk assessment was created for the sleep room to prompt staff to check that the fire exit is kept clear at all times.

17. The fire assembly sign was changed to the opposite side of the garden and is now securely fixed. The sign is larger and more visible.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. Not required.
2. Not required.
3. Copy of the updated cleaning sheet/risk assessment form.
4. Photograph.
5. Photograph.

Infection Control:

6. Nappy change policy / photograph of training being completed.
7. Photograph of revised storage solutions.
8. Photographs of face cloths.

Safe Sleep:

9. Photographs of cots / sleep room risk assessment form.
10. Photographs of cots / sleep room risk assessment form.
11. Photographs of cots / sleep room risk assessment form.
12. Photograph of socket covers.
13. Photographs of cots / sleep room risk assessment form.
14. Risk assessment document.
15. Photograph of the ceiling / sleep room cleaning /risk assessment form.

Fire Safety:

16. Photo of clear fire exit door / sleep room risk assessment.
17. Photograph of fire assembly point and smoke alarms / outdoor maintenance checklist form.

Summary Comment

The written response, documentary and photographic evidence submitted by the manager on behalf of the registered provider has been reviewed 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

- (2)
- (a) The first aid equipment was safely stored, in a conspicuous position in the care rooms inspected. Further supplies were stored in the entrance hallway of the building on the left-hand side.
- (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

(1) While it is acknowledged there are staff trained in first aid response (FAR), there was no person with FAR training on the premises between 8:00am – 9:00am daily and immediately available to the children on the day of inspection as observed by the staff roster.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1) Two staff members are booked to do first aid response (FAR) training. This will ensure that are staff trained in first aid response (FAR) available to the children at all times.

Supporting documentation submitted

(1) Evidence of course booking for September 2025.

Summary Comment

The written response and documentary evidence submitted by the manager on behalf of the registered provider has been reviewed by the Early Years Inspectorate. Regulatory compliance is met for regulation 25(1).

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 22 June 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 12 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 100 children.

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

Non-Compliance Information

Physical and material environment:

1. The physical and material environment in the Baby room requires review to meet the developmental requirements of the age group attending which was 18 months to 2 years.

It is acknowledged that there was an adequate quantity of toys and equipment in the room however they were placed on the window sills, on high shelves or in containers and not freely available to the children to make their own choices about what they would like to play with. A standing multi activity unit and a baby gym were unsuitable for the age group attending on the day. There were minimal areas of interest and what was available was poorly presented. The kitchen play unit required more props for example, tea sets, pots and pans, dolls, cot/buggies, child sized hoover to prompt make believe and symbolic play and learning for the age group in the Baby room.

There were no sensory play opportunities, push pull toys and minimal real-life equipment to encourage children's imaginative play.

Additional equipment such as soft climbing cushions, a crawling tunnel, simple peg board puzzles, stacking toys and shape sorter puzzles, sensory mats, push/pull equipment, treasure baskets with natural and open-ended materials, rattles and musical instruments, will support the children's developing language, social and emotional skills as well as stimulating their imagination and curiosity.

2. There were no sensory play materials such as sand, water, play dough available to the children attending the Senior Toddler room.
3. The children in the Baby and Senior Toddler room were observed not to go outdoors for play during the inspection. It is acknowledged that there was maintenance works in the main outdoor area however there were alternative outdoor areas available in the service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. The baby room has been reviewed. Toys and materials are now stored so the children have free choice of play and more defined areas of play has been created to make it more inviting for the children. Those areas are fully stocked with props and materials for symbolic play. A new sensory busy board has been attached to the wall and 2 hand held ones. We also have a sensory table where the children can enjoy sand and water play. There is new push / pull equipment soft climbing cushions and additional equipment to stimulate the children's imagination and curiosity. The rooms will be reviewed at the end of each term to ensure that they are meeting the children's stages of development as they grow within their environment.
2. A new sensory table was purchased so the children can enjoy sand and water play. Play dough is made weekly and stored in a sealed container so children can enjoy play dough with a variety of tools/cutters and shapes. A new cleaning/risk assessment was created for each room with questions to prompt staff to ensure there is clean fresh water/sand/playdough available for the children.
3. The children were brought out in the afternoon and staff were advised of the importance of daily outdoor time for all children. There is new fencing in place to secure all outdoor areas.

Supporting documentation submitted

1. Photographs of the baby room with the revised physical and material environment.
2. Photographs of the sensory tables / risk assessment form.
3. Photographs of the fencing in the outdoor area.

Summary Comment

The written response and photographic evidence submitted by the manager on behalf of the registered provider has been reviewed by the Early Years Inspectorate. Regulatory compliance is met for regulation 19 (1)(a). This area of practice will be assessed at the next inspection.