

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

School Age Services

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2022WH002SA
Name of School Age Service:	Child's Play ABA
Name of Registered Provider(s):	Carole McGuinness
Address of School Age Service:	Unit 6 Riverview Kilbeggan Westmeath
Eircode:	N91H5X9

Date of Inspection:	8 December 2025			
Number of school age children present during inspection:	AM	Not applicable	PM	2
Registration status:	Registered			
Conditions (if applicable):	Not applicable			

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Primary Care Centre Church Avenue Tullamore Co Offaly
Inspection undertaken by:	A Spain
Title:	Early Years Inspector

Authority to Inspect
Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate carries out inspections of Early Years Services under Section 58(J) of the Child Care Act 1991 (as inserted by Section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013).

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Description of Service:

Child,s Play ABA is a combined school age service and preschool service located in Kilbeggan town in Westmeath. The school age service cares for children in the age range 4 to 15 years between the hours of 1.00 and 5.30pm. The service also operates from 9.00am to 5.30pm during school holidays and is open for 50 weeks annually. The children cared for in the school age service have access to open plan play areas which are located at ground floor level. A large open plan room is divided into four areas incorporating sensory and soft play. An additional indoor play room used for gross motor activities leads directly to the outdoor play area at the back of the service.

Additional rooms at ground floor level include an office, a reception area, a sleep room, sanitary accommodation for children and staff, a kitchen, a pantry, a laundry room and a separate staff kitchen

Staffing:

The school age service is staffed by seven adults. The registered provider also works directly in the service.

Additional Information:

The inspection was conducted as a result of information received by the inspectorate.

Legislation

Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate is the independent statutory regulator of School Age Services in Ireland, and its role is to promote and monitor the safety and quality of school age care provision in accordance with the following legislation:

- The Child and Family Agency Act 2013, Part 12.
- Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) (Registration of School Age Services)

(Amendment) Regulations 2022.

- The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Registration of School Age Services Regulations 2018 (S.I. 575 of 2018).

A school age service means any early years service, play group, day nursery, crèche, day-care or other similar service which:

- caters for children under the age of 15 years enrolled in a school providing primary or post-primary education,
- provides a range of activities that are developmental, educational and recreational in manner, which take place outside of school hours, the primary purpose of which is to care for children where their parents are unavailable, and
- the basis for access to which is made publicly known to the parents and guardians of the children referred to in point (a) above.

It is the responsibility of a registered provider to ensure the safety and well-being of school age children and the above legislation authorises Tusla to assess compliance with the Regulations.

Inspection Methodology:

The inspection is unannounced to assess compliance with the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Registration of School Age Services Regulations 2018 (S.I. 575 of 2018), Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) (Registration of School Age Services) (Amendment) Regulations 2022, and the Child Care Act 1991, Section 58 as amended by Part 12 of the Child and Family Agency Act, 2013.

The findings on inspection are gathered through a triangulation method, including:

- Information obtained through examination of documentation.
- Direct observation.
- Discussion with relevant staff.

This inspection aims to determine the extent to which service is appropriate for the care, safety, and wellbeing of children in accordance with the regulations cited above.

Inspection findings are documented in the School Age Services 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 corrected the non-compliance and how they will prevent them 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 CAPA 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.

Acknowledgements:

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the co-operation of the children, registered provider and staff who were present on the day of inspection.

Summary of Findings:

On the day of inspection, the registered provider was found to be compliant in relation to:

- Regulation 8(1)(a)(b)(c)(d), (2) Vetting disclosures;
- Regulation 9(1)(2)(4): Staffing levels;
- Regulation 10: policies of a school age service;
- Regulation 12: Insurance;
- Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(c)(2)(a): Complaints;

Child Care Act 1991, Section 58(G) as amended by Part 12 of the Child and Family Act, 2013

Conclusion and follow up actions:

The service was compliant on inspection. No follow up required.

Regulation 8: Vetting disclosures

(1) A registered provider of a school age service other than a childminding service 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.

(2) The procedures specified in paragraph 1 shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the school age service.

Regulatory Requirement Met

The inspector reviewed files for seven staff members working in the school age service.

(1)(a)(b)

Two validated references were available from a combination of past employers and reputable sources in respect of all staff members.

(c)

A Garda vetting disclosure from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána was held on file in respect of all staff members and the registered provider. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years for all staff members.

(d)

Police clearance was available in respect of two staff members who had lived outside of the state for over six consecutive months as adults.

(2)

Records confirmed that the necessary vetting procedures were conducted prior to the appointment of staff to work in the service.

Regulation 9: Staffing levels

(1) Subject to this Regulation, a registered provider of a school age service other than a childminding service shall ensure that there is at all times an adequate number of competent and suitable adults on the premises while the service is operating.

(2) Without prejudice to paragraph (1), a registered provider of a school age service other than a childminding service shall ensure that there is a minimum ratio of 1 adult to 12 children at all times while the service is operating.

(4) A registered provider of a school age service shall ensure that the school age children attending the service are appropriately supervised at all times.

Regulatory Requirement Met

(1)

An adequate number of adults were available to care for the two school age children present in the service. At 2.45, two staff members cared for 2 school age children and 2 preschool children in the service. At 4.43pm, two school age children and 7 preschool children, aged 3 to 5 years remained in the service with 5 staff members present. The inspector reviewed the attendance records for school age children and the staff roster for the week of 1 December 2025. Records advised at follows:

- 1 December 2025 -3 staff members cared for 1 school age child and 2 preschool children aged 3 to 5 years.
- 2 December- 2 staff members cared for 1 school age child and 2 preschool children aged from 3 – 4 years. A 1:1 adult to child ratio was maintained when the school age child played in the outdoor garden.

- 3 December- 2 staff members cared for 1 school age child and 4 preschool children aged from 3 – 5 years.
- 4 December – 2 staff members cared for 2 school age children and 4 preschool children aged 3 – 5 years
- 5 December – 1 staff member cared for 1 school age child and 4 preschool children aged from 3 – 5 years.

(2)

The registered provider ensured that the minimum ratio of 1 adult to 12 children was maintained at all times while the service was operational.

(4)

The registered provider ensured that the school age children present on the day of inspection were supervised at all times by both sight and sound as the children moved and had access to their base rooms and the open play additional play areas in the service.

Regulation 10: Policies of a school age service

A registered provider of a school age service shall ensure that the policies and statements specified in Schedule 6 are in place for the service.

Regulatory Requirement Met

The inspector reviewed the following policies and procedures for the service.

The staff training policy.

The policy included the following; detail of the induction process for new staff which included training on all policies and procedures for the service, detail on the practical training conducted on site with staff, a path for both review of training needs and for continuous professional development in the service. The registered provider also provided the inspector with a self-evaluation and reflection tool completed every six months with staff in the service. The tool was

used to assist management to support staff in their work with children in the service and in their interactions with parents of children in the service.

The child supervision policy.

The policy included detail and advised of appropriate supervision of children by both sight and sound when indoors and outdoors in the service

The outdoor supervision policy.

The following points were included in the policy:

- Staff should ensure that their presence and position in the outdoor play area ensures that all areas of the outdoor area are under constant supervision and that all children are in the sight of at least one member of staff, at all times.
- The outdoor play area must be checked by a staff for safety before any children use the outdoor play area.
- A regular headcount should be done with the children outside and this should be matched against the register, which should be brought outside.
- Children should be made aware of any rules for playing outside, for example use of equipment.

Policy on use of mobile phones.

The policy on use of mobile phones advised that only designated staff were permitted to use the class phone during hours of operation of the service. The designated staff listed were the registered provider, manager and deputy manager. The policy advised that staff were at liberty to offer the class mobile numbers to anyone outside of the service who may need to reach them in an emergency.

Regulation 11: Premises

A registered provider of a school age service shall ensure that-

(a) an outdoor space to which the school age children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises, or

Regulatory Requirement Met

(a)

The outdoor play area at the back of the service was enclosed by a high level timber fence. Double glass doors lead from the indoor “garden area” to the outdoor play space. Toys and play equipment available outdoors included a mud kitchen area, a planting area, a timber school bus and a tree house with steps leading to the play area.

Regulation 12: Insurance

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

Regulatory Requirement Met

The service had insurance cover for 35 preschool children and up to 15 children in a school age service. Insurance cover was valid from 28 March 2025 to 27 March 2026.

Regulation 13: Complaints

- (1) A registered provider of a school age service other than a childminding service shall ensure that the complaints policy of the service specifies—*
- (a) the procedure to be followed by a person for the purposes of making a complaint in relation to the service,*
 - (b) the manner in which such a complaint shall be dealt with, and*
 - (c) the procedures for keeping a person who makes such a complaint informed of the manner in which it is being dealt with.*
- (2) A registered provider of a school age service other than a childminding service shall ensure that—*
- (a) a record in writing is kept of a complaint made to the provider in respect of the school age service.*

Regulatory Requirement Met

(1)(a)(b)(c)

The service had a complaints policy which outlined the procedure for making a complaint in relation to the service, the manner in which complaints were dealt with, which included a timeframe for following up complaints and a procedure for keeping the complainant versed on the outcome of the complaint investigation. The policy also included an appeals provision should the complainant be dissatisfied with the outcome of the complaint investigation. A child friendly version of the complaints policy was available which outlined a procedure for a child in attendance on the service to make a complaint. The policy also included an effective date of August 2025 and a review date of August 2027.

(2)

The registered provider confirmed that no complaints were received by the school age service.

Child Care Act 1991, Section 58(G) as amended by Part 12 of the Child and Family Agency Act, 2013

It shall be the duty of every person providing an early years service to take all reasonable measures to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of children attending the service and to comply with regulations made by the Minister under this Part.

Regulatory Requirement Met

- The registered provider furnished the inspector with risk assessments conducted in the service, which included risk assessments for outdoor play and the precautionary measures taken by the service to mitigate the risks.
- Records were held on file of all training and supervision meetings held with staff working in the service.
- The inspector was also furnished with minutes of a meeting conducted with staff on 10 and 12 December 2025. The minutes included confirmation of the following.
- The service was a no phone zone except in exceptional circumstances when a personal phone may be left at the staffed reception to allow an administration staff member swap with a staff member and maintain ratio if it was necessary for a staff member to take a call.
- Following a recent incident, two staff members are assigned to go outdoors with children to ensure that children are adequately supervised at all times.
- The registered provider informed the inspector that additional heavy duty wire fencing was proposed to be erected outside of the existing timber fence that surrounds the outdoor play area. This will raise the height of the fencing and guard against unsupervised exit from the premises.