

Tusla ABC Outcomes Framework 2022–2026

What is the Area-Based Childhood Programme?

The **Area Based Childhood Programme (ABC)** is a prevention and early intervention programme funded by the Government of Ireland through Tusla and implemented in 12 communities nationally. It aims to improve outcomes for children, young people, and their families living in Ireland's most disadvantaged communities, where poverty is deeply entrenched. The Programme works in partnership with families, practitioners, communities, and national stakeholders to deliver services for children and families with a particular emphasis on improving health, educational and social outcomes and improving the effectiveness of existing services for children and young people.

What does the ABC Outcomes Framework do?

The ABC Outcomes Framework provides a structured approach to collecting and reporting on the collective impact of the ABC programme. In turn, this supports consistent measurement and reporting of outcomes relevant to the ABC programme, evidence-based implementation and data-informed decision-making in improving outcomes for children. The ABC Outcomes Framework aims to:

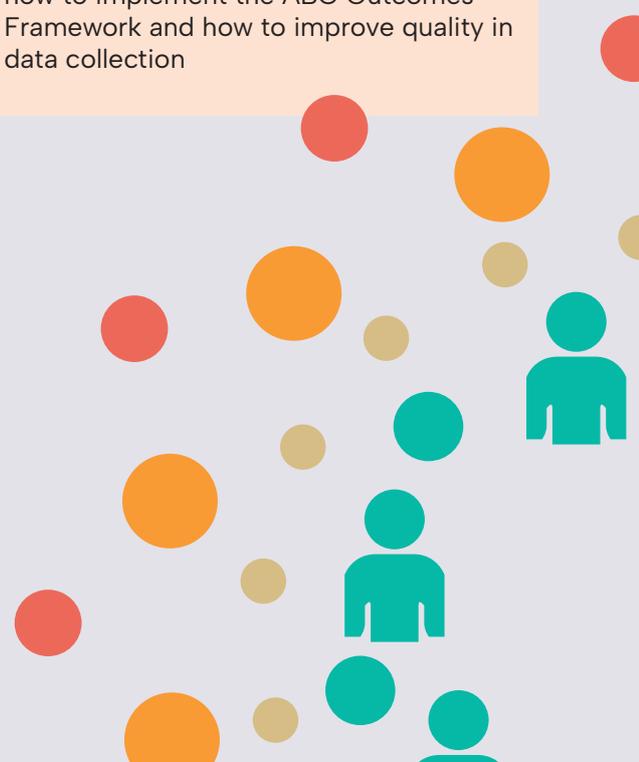
- Provide an opportunity to measure collective change and improve practice and learning within the ABC Programme
- Provide standardised language, definitions and measures for the collective change articulated by the ABC programme
- Build evidence of what works and what may need to be adapted
- Support improved quality and evidence-based decision making
- Underpin external evaluation processes of the ABC programme.

Developing the ABC Outcomes Framework

STAGE	DESCRIPTION
1. Inception and scoping	<p>This stage involved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inception meetings with Tusla to agree project scope, reporting processes and timelines • Establishing a Project Steering Group within Tusla • Refining and agreeing the methodology for developing the ABC Outcomes Framework • Submission of an Inception Report to the Project Steering Group.
2. Document review/desk research of policies, frameworks, and strategies	<p>This stage involved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revisiting the 2019 PEIN-ABC Working Group data collection process on ABC interventions, intended outcomes and measures used across ABC services • Identifying common outcomes and measures from interventions implemented across ABC services • Desk review of the national and international framework, policies and strategies on child well-being and child outcomes to shape, align, and inform the development of the ABC Outcomes Framework. A list of documents reviewed to develop the ABC Outcomes Framework is provided in Annex 3 • Reviewing of updated ABC service level logic models, Tusla documents and PPFS documents and studies • Developing a draft outcomes framework ensuring alignment with the overarching Tusla PPFS Outcomes, where relevant.
3. Consultations with ABC areas	<p>This stage involved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two consultations with five ABC Learning Communities to test the outcomes developed from Stage Two. The consultations allowed the review and discussion of outcomes relevant to each ABC Learning Community • Testing outcomes for relevance and measurable contribution to the national ABC programme • Developing indicators and measures, ensuring alignment with the Tusla PPFS Outcomes Framework where relevant • Consultation with ABC Quality Implementation Champions on draft indicators and measures for the ABC Outcomes Framework • Based on consultation feedback, identification of recommended measures for the ABC Outcomes Framework. Measures had to pass agreed criteria to be included in the ABC Outcomes Framework (see Section 3.3).
4. Building a Common Measurement Framework	<p>This stage involved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A final consultation to test the ABC Outcomes Framework with the twelve ABC areas. The testing consultation focused on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » A final review of the elements of the ABC Outcomes Framework including layout, outcomes, indicators, measures, disaggregation, and information about the measures » Developing recommendations on implementation, resources and capacity development needs. • A final mapping and integration process with the Tusla PPFS Outcomes Framework.

Operationalising the ABC Outcomes Framework

PERIOD	KEY ACTIVITIES	PROGRESS
August 2022 – December 2022	Integrate the ABC Outcomes Framework into the organisational logic model(s) and M&E Plans	In 2023, each ABC area submitted a list of interventions, with key outcomes aligned to the ABC Outcomes Framework. Each ABC area selected at least three outcomes from the ABC Outcomes Framework to report on
	Submit organisational logic models to Tusla for feedback and approval	In consultation with ABC Learning Communities, an intervention mapping exercise was conducted to map each ABC-funded intervention onto the ABC Outcomes Framework
	Develop, test, and standardise bespoke questions for those outcome indicators without standardised measures within the ABC Outcomes Framework	Some bespoke measures were developed, agreed upon and incorporated across ABC areas. Others are in the process of being developed
	All ABC areas provide feedback to Tusla on anticipated implementation challenges	Completed
January 2023 – December 2023	Activation and implementation of organisational logic models to begin January 2023	All ABC areas effectively started collecting data using the ABC Outcomes Framework in September 2023
	Design the ABC Information Management System for analysis, reporting and visualisation of ABC Programme data	A scoping review of Information Management Systems was completed in 2024. This provided the key requirements and costs of establishing an Information Management System for the ABC Programme
	Ongoing capacity building for ABC areas	In 2023, trainings were delivered to more than 50 ABC areas staff and their partners on how to be outcomes focused, how to implement the ABC Outcomes Framework and how to improve quality in data collection



ACTIVE AND HEALTHY

- Children meet age-appropriate development milestones
- Children's nutritional needs are met
- Positive physical and mental wellbeing



Child

ACHIEVING FULL POTENTIAL

- Timely access to quality ABC speech, language and communication development supports
- Children achieve age-appropriate speech, oral language, and communication abilities
- Achieved key literacy skills
- Improved emotional regulation and prosocial behaviour

- Positive perinatal wellbeing
- Secure parent-child attachment
- Positive parental mental wellbeing



Parent & Family

SAFE AND PROTECTED

- Improved resilience and coping skills
- Improved sense of safety (at home, at school and in the community)

- Improved parenting competence and confidence (self-efficacy)

- Improved use of conflict resolution skills

ECONOMIC SECURITY

- Children and families have a sense of belonging to their communities.

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- Children and families experiencing homelessness and poverty are prioritised within ABC services

CONNECTED & RESPECTED

- Children have a positive sense of self
- Positive peer relationships

- Positive parent-child relationships

- Participatory culture and practice is embedded across ABC services

- Improved interagency collaboration
- Child well-being supports and interventions are implemented in line with quality standards
- ABC services adopt and embed trauma-informed practices

Cross-cutting outcomes