

TÚSLA

An Ghníomhaireacht um
Leanaí agus an Teaghlach
Child and Family Agency

**EARLY
YEARS**
INSPECTORATE

Early Years Inspectorate

Regulatory Notice

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Title	Definition of Enrolment in a School Age Service
Ref	01/25

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1.0 Background

The Child Care Act 1991, Section 58A, defines:

- A **'pre-school child'** as a child who has not attained the age of six years and who is not attending a recognised school.
- A **'school-age child'** as a child under the age of 15, attending a school-age service and enrolled in a school providing primary or post primary education.

The Department of Education has confirmed that, to be considered enrolled in a school, the child must be:

1. Physically attending the school, and
2. Registered on the Primary Online Database (POD). (in relation to children in primary education)

It is clarified that merely having an offer of a school place does not constitute enrolment.

2.0 Decision of the Early Years Inspectorate

The Early Years Inspectorate (EYI) has concluded the following criteria for recognising a school-age child:

- **Physical attendance:** The child must be physically attending primary school and registered on the POD or physically attending post primary education¹.
- **Settling-in period:** Services may accommodate a 'settling-in' period prior to school commencement. This period must:
 - Be limited to two weeks (10 working days) before the start of school.
 - Be supported by accurate and verifiable records indicating this timeframe.

Records falling outside this timeframe will be considered non-compliant during inspections.

3.0 Rationale

This decision safeguards appropriate care ratios and ensures that staffing levels meet the developmental needs of children in pre-school settings. It also prevents unregistered pre-school services from inappropriately operating as school-age services.

4.0 Timeframe

This decision is effective immediately.

¹ Note – Children attending 'non-recognised' schools under Section 14 Education (Welfare) Act, 2000 will not be registered on the POD. Therefore, this element does not apply. The other elements regarding physical attendance and the setting-in period remain relevant.