

**TÚSLA**  
An Ghníomhaireacht um  
Leanaí agus an Teaghlach  
Child and Family Agency

**EARLY  
YEARS**  
INSPECTORATE

# Early Years Inspectorate

## Regulatory Notice

QMS Reference	EYI-RN11.1
Version	1.0
Issued	December 2024
Title	Definition of Enrolment in a School Age Service
Ref	03/24

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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 education<sup>1</sup>.
- **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.

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<sup>1</sup> 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.