

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LK006
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Name of Service:	ACM Kidz
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Address of Service:	14/15 Castle Street, Castleconnell, Co. Limerick
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Eircode:	V94 CW29
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Name of Registered Provider:	Josephine O Donovan
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	16/01/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	24	PM	17
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate, 2 nd Floor Estuary House, Henry Street, Limerick.
Inspection undertaken by:	M Riordan
Title:	Early Years Inspector

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
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Description of service

ACM Kidz is a community childcare service located in the village of Castleconnell, in Co. Limerick. It provides a full day care, sessional and part time preschool service to children aged 2 to 6 years. A service for school aged children is provided each afternoon. The service is housed in a purpose-built facility within a two-story terraced house in the village centre. It features four well-equipped childcare rooms. A large well-resourced outdoor play facility is located to the rear and side of the premises.

Staffing

The registered provider is the manager of the service. There are 12 additional staff employed at the service. All staff working directly with preschool children have achieved a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education. Staff engage in ongoing and continuous professional development.

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/ health, welfare and development of child/ safety/ premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

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.

Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the person in charge, 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*
- (c) there is a clear management structure in the service that identifies the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and unpaid worker.*

(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) The registered provider had appointed a designated person in charge to manage the service on a daily basis.

A person to deputise in the absence of both managers was also available.

(b) The designated person in charge or their deputy were rostered on duty each day.

(c) There was a clear management structure in place at the service that identified the lines of authority and accountability.

(2)(a) There were 2 written and validated references available in respect of 7 new staff members who had commenced employment since the service was last inspected.

(b) Where past employer references were not available, references from an alternative source such as previous schools and colleges were provided.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for 7 new staff members who had commenced employment in the service since it was last inspected. 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 4 new staff member who had resided outside of the state for a period longer than 6 consecutive months.

(4) All staff held an appropriate qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education.

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.

Compliance Information

(1) The manager of the service ensured that at all times the correct number of staff were available to work at the service.

(2) On the day of the inspection there were 24 preschool children present in the morning with 5 adults. The adult/child ratio was correct. In the afternoon when the sessional service was over, there were 17 Preschool children present with 4 adults. The adult/child ratio was correct.

Additional staff were available for the preparation, cooking and serving of food and snacks for the 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

Compliance Information

Basic Needs

The service had a healthy eating policy. A healthy breakfast of cereal, milk, and toast was provided for those who arrived early. Parents supplied healthy snacks for children attending the morning sessional service. Perishable foods were stored in a refrigerator, and children's drinks were easily accessible to them throughout the day. Fresh dinners were served to all children who attended the service for part-time and full-time care.

Sanitary facilities were located near the Preschool rooms, with hot water, liquid soap, and paper hand towels available for handwashing. Nappy changing facilities were also provided.

Outdoor play areas were directly accessible from each room on the ground floor. The playground was safely enclosed and protected with high walls, steel gates and fencing. Synthetic grass and rubber matting covered all outdoor surfaces, thereby reducing the risk of injury while children played outside. Lots of ride down toys, low level slides, swings and slides helped promote gross motor development.

Supporting Relationships around children

A strong ethos of teamwork was evident in the setting. Staff communicated with each other and with management on a regular basis when planning events and programmes of activities for the children. Staff operated at all times in close partnership with parents. Informal information was exchanged each morning at drop-off time and when the children were collected each afternoon. For the younger children in the service written information was given to parents on a daily basis to ensure parents were aware of all activities involving their child during their day at the service. Knowledge and observations of each child's interests, their strengths, their developmental and care needs, any changes to their lives and any concerns parents or staff had were shared on an ongoing basis. Staff and families worked together to achieve the same goals for the children.

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

(1) The registered provider ensured that a person trained in first aid for children was at all times, immediately available to the children attending the pre-school service. There were 5 staff working at the service who held up to date first aid responder certification.

(2) The registered provider ensured that a suitably equipped first aid box for children was

(a) safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position in each room of the service

(b) was available to the children attending the pre-school service at all times.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-

- (a) of sound and stable structure,*
- (b) safe and secure,*
- (c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated*
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

Compliance Information

- (a) The building appeared to be of sound and stable structure both internally and externally and no obvious defects were noted on inspection.
- (b) The premises indoors and outdoors appeared safe and secured. A buzzer system on the entrance door and at the gate to the outdoor lay area ensured all who entered the premises were checked in by an authorised person.
- (c) All areas were well lit by natural light and by artificial light when needed. There was no evidence of mould, mildew, stale smells, stuffiness or condensation.
- (d) All areas inside and outside were well maintained, and routine cleaning schedules were in place for all internal and external areas.
- (e) There were an adequate number of toilets, nappy changing areas and wash hand basins in the service for the number of children and adults present each day. A disability toilet was available if required.