

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015LK006
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	ACM Kidz
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	14/15 Castle Street, Castleconnell, Co. Limerick
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<b>Eircode:</b>	V94 CW29
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Josephine O Donovan
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<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	19/11/2024
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	22	PM	11
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor Estuary House, Henry Street, Limerick.
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	M Riordan
<b>Title:</b>	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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not applicable
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### Description of service

ACM Kidz is a community childcare service based in Castleconnell, Co. Limerick. It provides sessional, part-time, and full-day care, as well as after-school services for children attending local primary schools. The service is housed in a purpose-built facility within a single-story terraced house in the village centre. It features two well-equipped childcare rooms, which open directly onto a spacious outdoor play area and garden at the side and rear of the building.

### Staffing

The registered provider is the secretary of the management committee in the ACM community centre. A designated person in charge is appointed to overlook the daily operation of the service. There are 4 additional staff working at the facility. All staff have achieved a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education.

### 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.

### Additional Information

The inspection was triggered by information received by the Early Years Inspectorate.

### Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, 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 named person to deputise was available if required.

(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 from past employers available in respect of all adults working at the service.

(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 all staff. However, for 1 staff member the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. Please refer to the information outlined under regulation 23 of this report.

(d) Police vetting was available for 2 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 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

*A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.*

#### Compliance Information

The following policies of the service were reviewed.

1. **Policy on Behaviour Management:** This policy focuses on encouraging positive behaviour in the service. It includes strategies for promoting good behaviour and guidelines for resolving conflicts.
2. **Policy on Accidents and Incidents:** The policy outlines safety measures to prevent accidents and injuries to children. It includes a safety statement, risk assessments for the building, and procedures for handling accidents and incidents. The manager is responsible for ensuring regular risk assessments.
3. **Risk Management Policy:** This policy details the process for identifying and managing risks within the service. It includes regular risk assessments conducted by the Early Years manager to identify potential hazards.
4. **Supervision Policy:** This policy emphasizes the importance of excellence and effectiveness in the workplace. It highlights cooperation and collective responsibility and outlines the process for regular staff appraisals.
5. **Staff Training Policy:** The policy describes the induction process for new staff and outlines support for their ongoing training and development. It also details the support available to staff working at the service.

## 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 registered provider 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 22 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 11 Preschool children present with 3 adults. The adult/child ratio was correct. The registered provider was supernumery on the day of inspection. She was available to help at busy times during the day in particular at dinner time when assistance was needed reheating and serving food.

### Part IV – Information and Records

#### Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

- (1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:*
- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;*
  - (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;*
  - (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;*
  - (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;*
  - (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;*
  - (f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;*
  - (g) the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner;*
  - (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;*
  - (i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.*

### Compliance Information

- (1) A sample of 11 children’s registration forms were viewed. The service had a record in writing containing the following particulars for each of these children.
- (a) The name and date of birth of the child.
  - (b) The date on which the child first attended the service.
  - (c) Provision to record the date on which the child ceased to attend the service was available on all forms.
  - (d) The name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service.
  - (e) Authorisation for the collection of the child.
  - (f) Details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention.
  - (g) The name and telephone number of the child’s registered medical practitioner.
  - (h) Record of immunisations received by the child was available on each form reviewed.
  - (i) Written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.

### Part IV – Information and Records

#### Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

*(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:*

- (a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;*
- (b) details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services;*
- (c) details of the adult:child ratios in the service;*
- (d) the type of care or programme provided in the service;*
- (e) the facilities available;*
- (f) the opening hours and fees;*

- (g) the policies, procedures and statements the service is required to maintain in accordance with Regulation 10;*
- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*
- (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

### Compliance Information

- (1) The registered provider displayed the following information about the service in writing on a large notice board in the main hallway for parents to view.
- (a) The name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and each staff working at the facility.
  - (b) Details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide service to.
  - (c) Details of the adult/child ratios in the service.
  - (d) The type of care or programme provided in the service.
  - (e) The facilities available.
  - (f) The opening hours and fees.
  - (g) A record in writing was maintained of policies and procedures required in accordance with Regulation 10. A summary of the policies were shared with parents at time of enrolment.
  - (h) Details of attendance by each pre-school child daily was recorded.
  - (j) The service had a medication administration record template available that could be used in the event of a child requiring medication to be administered at the service.
  - (k) Details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service was recorded.

## 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 has a Healthy Eating policy. A healthy breakfast of cereal, milk, and toast is provided for early arrivals. Parents supply snacks like fruit, cheese, crackers, and sandwiches for children attending the morning session. Perishable foods are stored in a refrigerator, and children's drinks are placed at a hydration station for easy access throughout the day. Precooked meals are delivered to the service. Dinners are reheated and served to the children attending for part-time and full-time hours. Chicken curry and rice were offered on the day of the inspection. Afternoon snacks are offered each evening to the children who stay late.

Sanitary facilities are located near the Preschool rooms, with hot water, liquid soap, and paper hand towels available for handwashing. Nappy changing facilities are also provided, along with spare clothes for children if needed. Outdoor raingear and wellingtons are available to ensure children can play outside in any weather.

Children enjoy a change of environment throughout the day with lots of time spend in the outdoor play areas to the rear and side of the premises.

##### Physical and Material Environment:

Both playrooms at the service are spacious and bright, featuring a variety of interest areas for the children. Play equipment is easily accessible, stored in clearly labelled boxes on low-level shelving. Child-sized tables and chairs are available for activities and mealtimes. Equipment and furniture are rotated regularly to provide children with new materials that cater to their evolving abilities and interests. The walls display artwork, educational posters, and photos of the children engaging in activities, along with a family tree showcasing children's family photos.

The outdoor areas provide ample space for physical and imaginative play. There is a sheltered area for protection if needed, and the garden includes natural materials such as mud kitchens, digging spaces, and raised beds.

A climbing area helps children develop balance, coordination, and an understanding of safe risk. The area located to the rear of the premises allows for ball sports, while the other spaces support riding bikes, trikes, and bubble cars. Large sandboxes offer sensory play opportunities, and outdoor playhouses and garden benches encourage children to spend time outdoors each day.

### Non-Compliance Information

#### Basic Needs

The rest area in Preschool Room 1 lacked comfortable seating that would allow both staff and children to sit together in a quiet, comfortable space. The cushions on the floor did not provide an adequate relaxation area for children who needed a break from the more active and busy play areas in the room.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective and Preventive Action

Low level soft couches and soft cushions were added to the rest area in Preschool Room 1. Regular audits of room designs will take place by the service management to ensure quiet, comfortable areas are accessible in both rooms of the facility.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence of the revised layout of the rest area in Preschool room 1 was submitted.

### Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified has been adequately addressed.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

*A registered provider shall ensure that all reasonable measures are taken to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of a pre-school child attending the service and that the environment of the service is safe.*

### Compliance Information

#### General Safety:

The registered provider took appropriate steps to ensure the safety and well-being of preschool children. The environment was secure, with internal doors locked to prevent access to unsafe areas, and external doors requiring a pin code to prevent unsupervised exits.

Emergency exits and fire doors were unobstructed, and window blinds and curtain cords were safely secured. All toys and play equipment were age-appropriate, in good condition, and free of hazards. Electric cords were kept out of reach, and storage areas were inaccessible to children. The outdoor play area was regularly checked, and all checks were signed off by staff each day.

### Non-Compliance Information

#### General Safety:

Garda vetting was available for all staff members. However, for 1 staff member their vetting disclosures was not dated within the previous three years in adherence with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.

### Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective & Preventive Action

#### General Safety:

An application to renew Garda vetting for 1 staff member whose vetting disclosure was not dated with the previous 3 years was submitted.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

#### General Safety:

Documentary evidence of the new application was forwarded to the Office of the Early Years Inspectorate.

### Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified has been adequately addressed.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures

- (1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of-
- (a) any fire drill that takes place in the premises, and
  - (b) the number, type and maintenance record of fire fighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.

#### Compliance Information

- (1)(a) Fire drills took place on a monthly basis. The most recent fire drill took place on the 4<sup>th</sup> of November 2024.
- (b) All fire extinguishers and smoke alarms were serviced on an annual basis. The most recent check was carried out in September 2024.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 27 – Supervision

*A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.*

#### Compliance Information

The supervision of children at the service was mainly through visual observation. On the day of the inspection, there were enough qualified staff present to ensure adequate supervision. Children who could use the toilet independently did so, while staff remained nearby to offer support if needed. Closer supervision was provided during activities with higher risks, such as outdoor play. The room layouts allowed for easy visual monitoring, while also offering children the option for quiet time or personal space when necessary.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 28 - Insurance

*A registered provider shall ensure that the pre-school service is adequately insured.*

#### Compliance Information

The registered provider had a current insurance certificate which outlined that adequate insurance was available for up to 67 children to attend the service. The insurance cover commenced on the 4<sup>th</sup> of May 2024 and is due to expire on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of May 2025.