

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WH015		
Name of Service:	Kidz Aloud		
Address of Service:	Ranaghan, Castlepollard, Co. Westmeath		
Eircode:	N91 HW71		
Name of Registered Provider:	Antoinette O'Neill		
Service type:	Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	26/01/2026		
No of pre-school children:	AM	26	PM NA
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla, Child and Family Agency, SAP Office, St. Loman's Campus, Mullingar, Co Westmeath.		
Inspection undertaken by:	C.O' Connor Hughes		
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.		

Description of service

The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme offered to children aged 2 and 6 years. The service operates between the hours of 09:15-12:15 on a Monday to Friday basis.

A fit for purpose inspection was carried out on the 3 July 2023 to increase the number of children from 50 to 66 children.

The Early Years' Service is located in a two- storey purpose-built premises with set down and parking areas to the front. Two large, interconnected pre-school rooms, the Green and Red room, a staff room, an office and a kitchen are provided. The service is located in Collinstown, Co. Westmeath. Two outdoor play areas are attached to the rear of the premises.

Staffing

The registered provider employs three staff members in the service. The deputy designated person in charge and two staff members were working directly with the children on the 26 January 2026. The registered provider arrived shortly after the inspector's arrival and was present for the inspection and the closing meeting.

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.

Regulation 8- Notification of Change in Circumstance

Regulation 9- Management and recruitment - (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(c)(d) (4)

Regulation 11 -Staffing levels - (1) (2) (8)(a)

Regulation 19- Health, welfare and development of child - (1)(a)

Regulation 20 – Facilities for Rest and play

Regulation 22- Food and Drink

Regulation 23- Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

Regulation 24-Checking In and Out and Record of Attendance

Regulation 25- First aid - (1) (2)(a)(b)

Regulation 26- Fire Safety Measures (1)(a)(b) (4)

Regulation 27- Supervision

Regulation 28 – Insurance

Regulation 33-Furnishing of Information to Agency

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 registered provider, person in charge, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Part II - Registration and Register

Regulation 8 - Notification of change in circumstances

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a temporary pre-school service shall, subject to paragraph (3), notify the Agency in writing of any proposed change in the details in relation to the pre-school service contained in the register pursuant to section 58C(2) of the Act or Regulation 7(2) at least 60 days before it is proposed that the change would take effect.

Compliance Information

(1)
A change in circumstance was submitted to increase the number of children attending the service. This change was approved by TUSLA registration office on the 18 July 2023.

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*

(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.*

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(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 person in charge and deputy were available in the service.

(b)

The deputy designated person in charge was present in the service and the registered provider arrived to the service shortly after the inspector's arrival.

Four staff files including the file of the registered provider were reviewed and the following was noted:

(2)(a)(b)

The required number of written validated references from a previous employer or a source other than a previous employer were available in respect of all adults in the service. Two written references were available in respect of the registered provider.

(c)

A Garda Vetting disclosure was available in respect of the four staff files reviewed. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d)

Police vetting was available in respect of one adult who had lived outside the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

(3)

The registered provider ensured that vetting procedures were carried out in respect of adults before the commencement of employment in the service.

(4)

Staff members working directly with children attending the service held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at levels 5 to 6 on the National Framework of Qualifications or a letter of eligibility to practice.

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.*
- (3) Subject to paragraph (5), a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 2 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) therefore at that reference number is satisfied.*

Compliance Information

- (1)
The minimum ratio of adults to children was adhered to during the inspection.
- (3)
There were twenty-six children attending the service supervised directly by three adults.

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*

Compliance Information

- (1)(a)
There was a calm and happy atmosphere in the service as children learned through play during the morning session. Children were happily engaged in the various play experiences and activities including imaginative, creative, free play and stretching exercises to music in the pre-school rooms and the outdoor play areas supported by the adults.
- Children enjoyed a healthy snack provided by their parents and guardians and took their time conversing with their peers and the adults. Children tidied up their belongings after their snack and placed their bags on the low-

level shelving in the pre-school rooms. Children were encouraged to be independent and put on their own coats and hats as they prepared to go to the outdoor play area and were assisted by the adults as needed. Adults held children in positive regard using their individual names, interacting and conversing with children at eye level. Adults praised children on completion of activities. Seamless transitions were noted as a bell was used to give children notice of changing from one activity to another.

The service worked in partnership with parents in the following ways: A verbal handover is given on collection, monthly emails are sent to parents with information and updates, the one-to-one meetings are arranged with parents as required. The child's learning journal depicting the child's play and work activities is shared with parents at the end of the pre-school term. "Our community display board" was noted in the main corridor showcasing Castlepollard's local amenities and the local national schools that some children may attend in the surrounding areas.

The indoor and outdoor environments provided an experience that was developmentally challenging, diverse, creative and enriching for the children. The interconnected rooms were bright and colourful. Low level tables and chairs were in place. Age and stage appropriate toys and play materials were accessible to children on low level shelving. Photographs including "our family", artwork and posters were displayed in the playroom. Defined areas of interest included a construction area, a home area, a hair salon, a shop and dress up in the pre-school rooms.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

(1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child 19 to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day, and

(b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.

(4) Where outdoor space to which the pre-school children attending the service have access is provided on the premises of a sessional pre-school service other than such a service to which paragraph (2) applies, a temporary pre-school service or a pre-school service in a drop-in centre, the registered provider shall ensure that such outdoor space is suitable, safe and secure.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

Suitable play equipment was provided indoors and outdoors which included toys and equipment for construction, tabletop activities, arts and crafts and home corners.

(b)

Cosy rest areas and soft furnishings were provided in the pre-school rooms.

(4)

The outdoor play areas were safe and secure surrounded by high fencing. A natural grass and synthetic surface area was noted. Toys and equipment included a mud kitchen, climbing frame with slides, sand play, tyres, children's benches, tricycles and tractors. A shed was available for the storage of toys and equipment.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 22 – Food and drink

A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

Nutritious and varied lunches were provided by the parents and guardians for the children attending the ECCE service. Lunches consisted of sandwiches, crackers, a selection of fruit and yoghurts with water to drink. A refrigerator was available for the storage of perishable food items in the kitchen and in the Red room.

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 main entrance to the service was secure. The service met the necessary safety requirements in respect of the indoor environment, toys, equipment and the safe storage of cleaning agents. The inspector signed the visitors book on arrival.

Infection Control:

The premises was visually clean. Warm running water, paper hand towels and liquid soap were available for use in the sanitary accommodation. The temperature recorded at the wash hand basins was 38 degrees Celsius. Openable windows provided natural ventilation in the playrooms and in the sanitary accommodation. Foot operated pedal bins were available for the hygienic disposal of waste. A respiratory station with tissues was noted. Good hygienic practices were observed as children wiped their noses and washed their hands immediately supervised by the staff member. A prompt was given to children to use soap when handwashing. Children washed their hands before the snack and after using the toilet.

Administration of Medication:

A temperature reducing medication was stored inaccessible to children in the office and was available if a child should get a high temperature.

Fire Safety:

The fire exit routes in the premises were unobstructed. The fire assembly point was noted in the outdoor play area to the rear of the service. Upon discussion with the inspector staff were familiar with safe evacuation practices to the front of the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) no person other than-

(i) pre-school child attending the service,

(ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,

(iii) an employee, or

(iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and

(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (3)(b) is retained for a period of one year from the date to which it relates.

Compliance Information

(1)

The records of arrival and departure reviewed verified that each child attending the service was checked in and out of the service by a staff member.

(3)(a)(b)

All entry to the service with the exception of (i), (ii), (iii) and (iv) was approved by a staff member.

(4)

A record in writing referred to in paragraph (3)(b) is retained for a period of one year by the service.

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)
Two adults were qualified in First Aid response (FAR) and available on the premises during the hours of operation.
- (2)(a)
First aid boxes were located in the pre-school rooms.
- (b)
A first aid box was accessible to adults caring for children in the service.

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 firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.

(4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire shall be displayed in a conspicuous position in the premises.

Compliance Information

- (1)(a)
A written record for the completed monthly fire drills was available on the premises. The last fire drill was recorded as taking place on the 15 December 2025.
- (b)
A record was available demonstrating the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises. The firefighting equipment and the smoke alarms in the premises were serviced

in September 2025.

(4)

A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in a conspicuous position in the service.

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 layout of the two occupied pre-school rooms, the sanitary facilities in the service and the outdoor play areas allowed for children to be supervised by adults during the inspection.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

There was evidence of current insurance cover for the number of children attending the service. The expiry date noted was 27 March 2026.

Part IX - Inspection and Enforcement

Regulation 33 – Furnishing of information to agency

A registered provider shall furnish the Agency with such information as the Agency may reasonably require for the purpose of enforcing and executing these Regulations and the information shall be in such form, if any, as may be specified by the Agency.

Compliance Information

The registered provider furnished the required information for the inspection.