

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2018DS506
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Name of Service:	Blue Stars Early Years Services
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Address of Service:	23 Bellevue Avenue, Glenegeary, Dublin 16, Co. Dublin
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Eircode:	A96A097
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Name of Registered Provider:	Analisse Cedeno Ameijeiras
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Service type:	Part Time
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Date of Inspection:	06/03/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	6	PM	6
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	1st floor Trinity Building, IDA Business Park, Southern Cross Road, Bray, Co. Wicklow.
Inspection undertaken by:	Sarah Quigley
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

Blue Stars Early Years service is registered as a part-time service and is one of two services privately owned by the registered provider. The early years service provides care and education to children on the Autistic spectrum based on specific teaching methods adapted from the Montessori curriculum, Aistear, and the Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA), implementing Individualised Educational Plans (IEP). The fees are funded through the Home Tuition Scheme by the Department of Education and skills. The service caters for children from 3 years to 6 years and operates Monday to Friday from 9am to 1pm and 1.30pm to 5.30pm. A maximum of 6 children are catered for in the morning and afternoon session.

The service operates from the ground floor of a purposely adapted commercial unit located in a residential area of Gleneageary, South Co Dublin. One large open plan care room and a separate sensory room are provided for the children. An outdoor play area is located to the rear of the premises.

Staffing

The service currently employs 5 staff members who work directly in the service each day, the registered provider and a manager work between the 2 services operated by the registered provider. On the day of inspection 6 staff members were present including the manager. The registered provider was not present for the inspection.

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/ information and records. 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, manager, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

(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

(2) Documentation was reviewed in respect of all 5 adults employed to work in the service on the day of inspection, and the centre manager. The following records were available for the 6 adults:

(a) (b)

The registered provider demonstrated that they had verified the references obtained from two sources for each of the adults.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures from The National Vetting Bureau for the 6 adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) International police vetting for the adults who required it.

(3) Documentation reviewed evidenced that the procedures specified under Regulation 9(2) had been carried out prior to the adults commencing employment in the service.

(4) There was evidence that 4 of the adults had attained at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Framework for Qualifications, or a qualification deemed to be equivalent. Two adults who did not hold a relevant qualification were in possession of a letter of eligibility to practice from the department.

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) An adequate number of adults were working directly with the pre-school children attending the service during the inspection.

(2) The registered provider ensured that the minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained in the service on the day of inspection. There were 6 children present in the service being supervised by 6 adults during the inspection.

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)
Records were reviewed for each of the 12 preschool children who are enrolled to attend the service by the inspector to assess compliance. The documentation reviewed evidenced that each of the 12 records detailed all of the required information outlined under Regulation 15(1).

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:

- (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)
- (h) A record was available in the care room detailing the attendance of each preschool child on the day of inspection. A review of documentation evidenced that attendance records had been maintained daily in the service.
 - (i) An accurate staffing roster was available in the service detailing hours of work for each staff member on the day of inspection. A review of documentation evidenced that staff members attendance had been recorded daily in the service.
 - (j) Written records of accidents and incidents which occurred in the service were available on the day of inspection. A sample reviewed on the day of inspection documented necessary details.
 - (k) Written records of medication which had been administered to a child attending the service were reviewed on the day of inspection. The sample reviewed documented all of the necessary details.

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-

(b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.

Compliance Information

Suitable and appropriate care practices were observed throughout the inspection, as evidenced by the following;

The adults interacted with the children in a caring and kind manner and children were observed to be visibly calm, content and engaged in their activities throughout the inspection. Children moved from one-on-one activities and lessons with staff members to an area named as central table where a variety of activities were available. Adults were observed using soft tones and respectful language during all interactions which reflected in the calm atmosphere of the service. The adults were observed to be responsive to each child's individual needs during the inspection.

Staff supported children to communicate through verbal and non-verbal cues and utilised individual picture cards to signal transitions to the children. Individual educational plans (IEPs) based on tailored assessments were observed to be documented and in place for each child and the high adult to child ratio in place ensured the children's needs were met in a timely manner on the day of inspection. Staff stated weekly observations were being utilised by staff to inform IEP's to progress learning and development. Augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) devices were in use to implement the natural language acquisition (NLA) method with the children. Daily records were maintained in the service detailing children's learning targets and staff described their practice of holding structured team meetings to discuss each child's progress. Evidence was available to indicate that the service adopted a multidisciplinary, collaborative way of working with parents and occupational therapists.

The service operated a rolling snack table whereby children could choose to independently take their lunch boxes from the fridge and eat at any time. Drinking water was available at all times. A designated rest area was in place so children could take time away from the group if desired. The children all accessed the outdoor area on the day of inspection and were dressed appropriate to the weather. The children were all offered time in the sensory room by staff members during the inspection.

Children were supported to wash their hands at regular intervals during the inspection and nappies were changed regularly and as required.

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

The inspector found by observation of practice, review of documentation, discussion with the registered provider, and inspection of the premises that the following steps to safeguard children attending:

General Safety:

The entrance door into the service was adequately secured to ensure the safety of the children within and to avoid unauthorised persons gaining access or children exiting unsupervised. The toys and play equipment observed in use by the children on the day of inspection were safe and in good working order. The registered provider had taken measures to ensure the indoor play environment was safe and free from hazards. Cleaning products and hazardous materials were stored securely out of reach of the children.

Infection Control:

An infection control policy was in place to inform practice. Waste was managed appropriately with the use of pedal-operated, lidded bins throughout the service. The children were supported to wash their hands at regular intervals including after nappy changing and before snack. Schedules were in place and maintained to ensure the service, equipment and materials are regularly cleaned. The person in charge outlined appropriate exclusion periods for adults and children with infectious illnesses were implemented in the service as per the policy.

Administration of Medication:

There was written evidence of prior parental consent for the administration of both temperature reducing and prescribed medications, and there were procedures in place to safely administer and document such medication if required, including in the case of an emergency. The registered provider detailed the procedures for administering medication when required during discussions with the inspector and had appropriate documentation available to record such administration if required.

Fire Safety:

The designated fire escape routes were clearly indicated and free from obstruction on the day of inspection. The registered provider adequately outlined the evacuation procedures in place in the event of a fire and stated that fire drills are practiced regularly on a monthly basis.

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 was trained in First Aid Responder (FAR) and was immediately available to the children at all times on the day of inspection.

(2)

(a) The first aid box was stored in a conspicuous location within the service.

(b) A first aid box was available to the registered provider and children in the service at all times.

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.

(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 was available detailing fire drills that had taken place in the service.

(b) There was record to show that the firefighting equipment had been serviced and that maintenance of the fire detection and alarm system had taken place as required.

(4)

The procedures to be followed during a fire drill and in the event of a fire were displayed in a conspicuous location within the service.