

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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| TUSLA Identifier: | TU2025DR006 |
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| Name of Service: | Blue Stars Early Years Service |
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| Address of Service: | Office 3, Lower Ground Floor, Whelan House, South County Business Park, Dublin 18, Co. Dublin |
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| Eircode: | D18 T9P8 |
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| Name of Registered Provider: | Analisse Cedeno |
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| Service type: | Part Time |
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| Date of Inspection: | 09/12/2025 |
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| No of pre-school children: | AM | 7 | PM | 2 |
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| Address of the Early Years Inspectorate: | The Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, St John's Road West, Dublin 8. |
| Inspection undertaken by: | S. Early O'Brien & J.A. McKimm |
| Title: | Early Years Inspectors |

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).

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| Conditions if applicable | N/A |
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Description of service

Blue Stars Early Years Service is registered as a part-time service and is one of three services privately owned by the registered provider. The service provides care and education to children aged three to six years of age with a diagnosis of ASD, based on specific teaching methods adapted from the Montessori curriculum, Aistear, and the Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA). The service also implements Individualised Educational Plans (IEP) for each child attending the service. The fees are funded through the Home Tuition Scheme by the Department of Education and Youth.

The premises consists of one larger central care room in addition to a one-to-one care room and a sensory and movement room, all with adjoining sanitary accommodation for both children and staff. A staff room/kitchen and a large enclosed outdoor space to the front of the premises are also available. The service operates a morning session from 09:00 to 13:00 and an afternoon session from 13:30 to 17:30, Monday to Friday for 44 weeks per year.

Staffing

There are eight staff employed in the service. This includes the registered provider and a behaviour support specialist. On the day of inspection, six of these adults were working directly with the children including the registered provider. There was one student on work placement.

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 announced and focused on the area of governance, health, welfare and development of child, safety and records. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under the following regulations:

Regulation 9 (1)(a)(b)(2)(3)(4) - Management and recruitment,

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

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

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 inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, 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.

(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 centre manager is the designated person in charge of the service and there is a named person appointed to deputise as required.
 - (b) The deputy manager was present, in charge of the service and present in the service throughout the inspection.

(2)

Documentation was reviewed in respect of nine adults working directly with the children in the service on the day of inspection and met regulatory requirements as follows:

(a)(b) Of the 18 validated, written references that were required, 14 were available from a past employer and 4 from a source other than a past employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were on file and had been obtained for nine adults, demonstrating that the service adhered to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Police vetting was required and available for seven staff members who had lived outside of the State for a period of more than six months as an adult.

(4)
There was documentary evidence available to demonstrate that eight staff members held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or higher on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed equivalent.

Non-Compliance Information

(3)
The registered provider did not take appropriate measures to ensure that all employees were suitable to work in an early years' service prior to commencing employment. While it is acknowledged that two validated references were available for one staff member employed in the service, one of the references was validated on 25 September 2025 but not before the staff member commenced employment on 01 September 2024.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

To prevent this non-compliance from happening in the future the registered provider will ensure that required references are made available and verified prior to the staff member commencing employment.

Supporting documentation submitted

The registered provider has submitted evidence of two validated references on file for one staff member.

Summary Comment

The inspectorate has deemed that the actions submitted adequately address the non-compliance and will inform the next inspection.

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.

(8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-

(a) a registered provider of a pre-school service other than a child-minding service or a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that there are at least 2 adults on the premises at all times,

Compliance Information

- (1)
An adequate number of adults were working directly with the children at all times during the inspection.
- (2)
The minimum ratio of adults to children for part-time care was adhered to at all times during the inspection. On the day of inspection there were 7 children attending the service being supervised by 6 adults on the morning of inspection and 2 children being supervised by 6 adults in the afternoon.
- 8(a)
There was a minimum of two adults on the premises at all times during the inspection.

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

(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

(1)(a)(b)

Basic Needs

Children's care needs were observed to be met promptly on the day of inspection. The staff used the PECS system to aid with communication and transitions between activities. All the individual care needs of the children were met due to the very high ratio in place, and the service had a key worker system in place which ensured the care provided to each child was consistent in its approach.

The person in charge reported that all meals are provided by parents and guardians for children attending the service. Drinking water was accessible to children throughout the day and all children were given water with their snack. Children were enabled to decide for themselves when they were hungry with a rolling snack available.

They were encouraged to feed themselves and staff sat with each child during snack time and supported them if they required assistance.

Children were supported with toileting and nappies were changed when required. Staff were very respectful in their interactions with the children during these times.

Supporting Relationships

Staff interacted warmly with the children throughout the inspection and were observed supporting children in their play. The play experiences in the service were observed to be child-led. Staff were observed supporting the children's learning, sitting and engaging with the children and using prompts to extend play experiences. Staff demonstrated kindness and warmth during interactions observed by the inspectors. Staff were observed to use encouragement, gentle tones and praise when promoting positive behaviour. Comfort was offered to children promptly when required and the children appeared happy and content throughout the inspection.

Transitions from play to snack and other activities were managed effectively by staff and children. Children's choice was respected with the use of choice boards displayed and used by staff and children in planning what happens next. Children's learning and development is documented on Individual Education Plans (IEP's) and information is shared with parents on an online application.

Physical and Material Environment

Care rooms were arranged to provide a range of play materials and areas of interest providing children with the freedom to play and explore. Areas of interest included, small world toys, construction toys, jigsaws, rest areas with books, home corner, dress up area, sensory equipment in the movement room, a sensory chill zone and an art area. The care rooms provided a range of developmentally appropriate play experiences for the children and were adequately resourced with a variety of materials. Family photos, birthday displays, visual routines, choice boards and children's artwork were displayed in the care rooms.

The environment was laid out to support the children's independence. Play materials were observed to be accessible to the children on low level shelving. Low level tables and chairs were available in the care rooms.

A fully enclosed outdoor play area was located to the front of the premises. Staff advised that children have access to the garden daily. The outdoor space is directly accessible from the main care room. The play area has a variety of age and stage appropriate equipment. Children were not observed to use the outdoor play space on the day of inspection.

Programme of Activities

Children were observed to make choices on their own play materials within the environment in using choice boards or in accessing resources directly.

Positive language was observed to be used across the staff team and with the children. Language development was supported in discussions observed both in play and at snack time where the adult's promoted language with the children to re-enforce their understanding in associating an object to a picture and a word.

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.

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Staff stated weekly observations were being utilised by staff to inform IEP's to progress learning and development. 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, occupational therapists and speech and language therapists.