

A Parent's Guide to the National Childcare Funding Programmes 2017/2018



**What can your local
City/County Childcare
Committee do for YOU?**



Dublin City

Childcare Committee Company Limited by Guarantee

Coiste Cúraim Leanaí Chathair Bhaile Átha Cliath Cuideachta faoi Theorainn Ráthaíochta

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Introduction

What can your local City / County Childcare Committee (CCC) do for you?

City/County Childcare Committees (CCCs) were established nationally in 2001 to encourage the development of childcare locally. CCCs offer a wide variety of services locally; we offer information and guidance to early years providers, childminders, parents and the general public on a variety of issues relating to childcare.

CCC's administer the National Childcare Funding programmes on behalf of the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA).

The aim of this guide is to provide parents with information about the national childcare funding programmes.

Different Types of Childcare Providers

Childcare services may provide full-time, part-time, sessional and school-age services. Fees charged are generally at the discretion of the childcare service.

Private Childcare Providers

Private Providers offer quality childcare services that are run as private businesses. These childcare services range from small businesses that are operated by sole traders to large childcare facilities that are operated by companies, some of which may have a number of different childcare facilities in different locations. Private Childcare services may offer the Early Childhood Care and Education programme (ECCE), Community Childcare Subvention (CCS), Community Childcare Subvention Plus (CCSP), Community Childcare Subvention Universal (CCSU), Community Childcare Subvention Resettlement (CCSR), Community Childcare Subvention Resettlement (Transitional) CCSR(T) and the Training and Employment Childcare (TEC) Funding Programmes.

Community Childcare Providers

Community Childcare Providers offer quality childcare services that are community based, not-for-profit childcare services. A Community Childcare Service is run by a voluntary Board of Management. Community based childcare services may offer the ECCE, CCS, CCSP, CCSR, CCSR(T) and TEC childcare funding programmes.

Childminders

A Childminder is a self-employed person who provides care for other people's children in their own home. Childminders may offer the ECCE and CCSU programme, subject to meeting certain criteria.

Types of Childcare:

Sessional:

A sessional service refers to a programme for children for up to 3.5 hours per session. Services may offer a morning and/or an afternoon session.

Part-Time Day Care:

A part-time day care service refers to a programme for children over 3.5 hours and less than 5 hours per day.

Full Day Care:

A full day care service refers to a programme of activities for children for more than 5 hours per day. A full day service may include sessional and part-time services and School Age Childcare Services for children attending primary school.

School Age Childcare:

School Age Childcare refers to centre-based services for school aged children from 4 – 12 years which operate during one or more of the following periods: before school - after school - during the school holidays.

Childminders:

Childminding services refers to care for children within a Childminders home. A Childminding service may include sessional and part-time services and School-Age Childcare services for children attending primary school.

Beginning your Search for Early Years Care and Education



Step 1: Consider your early years' service requirements, the type of the service you choose will depend upon:

- your child's needs and your family needs
- the type of service you prefer
- the options available in your community

Step 2: Decide on the type of early years' service you require.

You may choose a full time early years' service (5 hours or more each day) or part time care (3.5 hours up to 5 hours), sessional care (up to 3.5 hours) or perhaps home-based childminding service.

Step 3: Contact your local Childcare Committee who will provide a list of services within your area.

Step 4: Once you find a list of early years' services in your area that provide the care option you require, you can then shortlist your preferred services and contact them directly. Guidance on contacting a service and arranging a visit are detailed on page 5.

Step 5: Find out if you are eligible for financial support through the available National Childcare Funding Programmes. There are various financial supports available for parents and families through the current National Childcare Funding Programmes and also through a Universal Subsidy for children between the age of 6 months to 36 months as detailed in this Parent's Guide. If you have any queries about the Funding Programmes please contact your local Childcare Committee for information.



Contacting an Early Years' Service

Making an informed decision

By completing background research into early years' services, it supports you to make informed decisions related to choosing early years' care and education. The Early Years Care and Education sector is regulated under the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years' Services) Regulations 2016, Tusla Child and Family Agency has statutory responsibility to support compliance and quality standards through regular inspection.

Early Years Inspections:

Inspection is designed to ensure the health, safety and welfare of children and the promotion of their development. It is also to ensure that pre-school services comply with relevant statutory requirements including the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years' Services) Regulations 2016. Tusla Child and Family Agency is responsible for inspecting pre-schools, crèches, day-care and similar Tusla registered services which cater for children aged 0-6 years. This agency has statutory responsibility to assess levels of compliance with the Regulations and works with service providers in partnership to promote a culture of compliance.

Inspection reports are valuable published resources, a list of Tusla registered service inspection reports can be viewed through Tusla's website www.tusla.ie under the Family Support Early Years Inspection section.

The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years' Services) Regulations 2016

It is the duty of every person providing an early years care and education service to take all reasonable measures to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of the children attending the service and to comply with the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016. The Regulations document and the Amendments to the Regulations document are available through Tusla's website www.tusla.ie.

Initial contact / phone interview:

Once you have completed research regarding services, the next task is to shortlist potential early years' services. A brief email or phone interview asking your key questions will guide you to the next stage of

choosing a suitable service. When you contact an early years' service, you can ask a number of questions initially. These questions may help you to shortlist providers and make informed decisions in choosing appropriate care for your child.

Such questions may include:

- Is the service registered with Tusla?
- What are the opening hours of the service?
- What age range does the service cater for?
- Are there spaces currently available or is there a waiting list in operation?
- What types of care are provided, e.g. full day care, part-time, sessional, etc.?
- If your child has specific needs, is the service resourced to meet those needs?
- Which National Childcare Funding Programme does the service participate in, if any?
- What information is already available to you - Website, Facebook page etc.?

Arranging a visit to an Early Years' Service:

After an initial phone interview, you are ready to visit some services. Arrange a number of visits to your shortlisted services during operating hours. If possible, bring another family member and your child along.

It is essential that you meet the manager and staff, explore the setting's environment, and discuss the policies and procedures that are in place. This is your opportunity to ask about the service's approach to behaviour management, the procedures in place for emergencies, is there a healthy eating policy and how the service will cultivate your child's interests and independence. Then as a parent/guardian, you can decide if the service compliments your approach to parenting and and is the appropriate fit for you and your family.

Some points to consider:

- Narrow your choices down to a couple of services that best suit your child and your family.
- Consider first impressions of the service. Would you be happy to leave your child in that service?
- Check references: Tusla's early years' inspection reports are available online; has anyone been able to recommend a service to you?
- What do your instincts tell you about the service?

Choosing an Early Years' Service

QUESTIONS TO ASK & WHAT TO LOOK FOR?



The Learning Environment:

Look for:

- Is the environment spacious, both indoor and outdoor, bright and welcoming?
- Are the premises in good repair, clean, secure and safe?
- Are the rooms well laid out allowing for safe movement of the children?
- Are the equipment and toys age appropriate, safe, in good repair and varied?
- Do all children have easy access to the toys and learning materials?
- Is there evidence of the children's work displayed throughout the service?
- Are children free to choose activities?
- What learning opportunities are offered through the curriculum, e.g. physical play, outdoor play, individual activity, group activity, creative activities, construction opportunities?
- Are the children content, comfortable and happy in their surroundings?
- Are the children engaged with an activity/ meaningful play?
- Can you observe caring and respectful interactions between adult and child?
- How is daily information about children communicated to parents/guardians, i.e. diaries, scrapbooks, etc.

Ask:

- What will a typical day for my child look like? Is independence promoted and encouraged?
- How will staff work with the child to help the settling in process?

- Do the children have an opportunity to mix with those outside of their room, i.e. siblings?
- How often do the children go outside?
- What curriculum approach is used?
- How many children are in the age group you are interested in?
- How do staff manage difficult or challenging behaviour?
- Is there an open-door policy? Can you visit at any time?

Health and Safety:

Look for:

- Clear and clutter free entry and exit points to the building.
- Do the classroom doors have viewing panels?
- Does the Parent Notice board have details of First Aid Certificates, contacts for Health and Safety Officer, Designated Liaison Person for Child Protection concerns?
- Fire Evacuation assembly point sign, fire extinguishers, smoke alarms, fire exits clearly marked, etc.
- Safe and appropriate outdoor play area, nappy changing, sleeping and resting facilities.
- Is there a suitable area for the preparation of food? Is it safe, hygienic and inaccessible to the children?

Ask:

- Who has access to the building?
- Is there a safety statement and can you view it?
- **Transport:** Is there a school drop off/collection service in place? Does the vehicle have seatbelts and /or booster seats as appropriate? Is the vehicle appropriately insured with a qualified driver and staff member?

- **Child Protection:** Is there a child protection policy in place? Have staff attended child protection training and hold up-to-date certification? Is there a Designated Liaison Person and Deputy Designated Liaison Person? Have all staff been Garda Vetted?
- **Collection policy:** Who can collect the child? What measures are in place to ensure only those authorised to collect the child have access to your child? Are passwords or ID required?
- **Illness policy:** What is the setting's illness policy and their policy around the administration of medication?
- **Accident/incident/emergency care:** What procedures are in place in the event of a medical emergency, access to doctor, nurses etc.? At what stage of an emergency will you be contacted? How are you informed of any incidents/accidents relating to your child?
- **Outings:** Are the children taken on outings? If so what kind of trips, how frequent, what are the adult to child ratios? Are these outings covered by insurance? Ask to see the Outings Policy
- **Healthy eating policy:** Do you have to supply lunches or does the service supply food? Are there sample menus available? Can the service cater for specific dietary requirements that your child may have? What are the meal times? What happens if your child doesn't eat their dinner? What types of drinks are permitted in the service? Is water available throughout the day?
- **Is the service registered with Tusla?** A list of registered services can be found on Tusla's website www.tusla.ie

Management & Staff:

Look for:

- Copies of staff qualifications and certificates of Continuous Professional Development on display. All staff working directly with children must hold a *minimum* of QQI Level 5 Major Award in Early Childhood Care and Education
- Is there adequate staff in the rooms to meet the adult:child ratio requirements set out in the Early Years Regulations 2016.
- Are the staff positively interacting with the children and colleagues, e.g. at the child's level, verbal and body language, communication is respectful and encouraging?

- Are staff professional and caring in their approach to the children, colleagues and you as a potential parent of a child in their care?
- Do you feel comfortable and reassured with the manager and any staff that you meet during the visit?

Ask:

- Who will be looking after your child?
- Is there a Key Worker System (key staff member assigned to your child ensuring consistency to your child's day)? How often will you be able to communicate with this person?
- Is there a high turnover of staff? If so, any reasons or explanation for this.
- Are the staff Garda Vetted and references checked as required by the Early Years Regulations 2016? Do new staff members complete an induction followed by adequate supervision?
- Is there a senior member of staff on the premises at all times during hours of operation of the service?
- What opportunities are there for parents/guardians to get involved with the service (e.g. outings, plays, family events, etc.)?
- How are concerns about children, staff or the service dealt with? Is there a complaints policy/procedure?

Fees:

- What is the weekly/monthly charge for the childcare you require? How often are fees paid? What is the preferred method of payment? What period of notice do I need to provide when I no longer need childcare?
- Is a deposit required? Is the deposit refundable? Always ask for a receipt of deposit.
- Are there any extra charges e.g. late collection, additional hours.
- What are the payment arrangements regarding holidays, e.g. Christmas and mid-terms?
- If transport is supplied to and from school, is this an extra cost?
- What National Funding Programmes does the service participate in and which programme are you eligible for?
- Information on the National Childcare Programmes are detailed in this guide.

What's Next once you have chosen an Early Years' Service?



When you have visited some early years' services you may feel you are in a better position to choose the right one for your child.

Once you decide which early years' service option best suits your needs, there are some Simple Steps to take next:

- Contact your provider and book your child into the service depending on availability. If you wish to visit the service again, make an appointment.
 - When paying a deposit, ask for a receipt and be clear of the criteria around refundable/non-refundable deposits. Note that deposits for ECCE only cannot exceed 4 weeks' capitation.
 - If your child's name is placed on a waiting list, ask for written confirmation of this and enquire of the services procedure in managing the waiting list.
 - Arrange a start date and settling in period in line with the procedures of the service.
- Talk to your child about the service, their new teacher and friends.
 - Share all relevant and detailed information with the staff caring for your child such as illnesses, significant life events, likes and dislikes, eating and sleeping patterns, etc. Ensure you have enough time to do this. The more information you provide about your child, the easier it is for staff to meet your child's needs and the easier it is for the child to transition from home to the early years' service.
 - Ensure the service is provided with everything they require to care for your child such as nappies, food, bottles, etc.
 - Ask for a copy of policies and procedures.
 - If you are availing of a funding scheme, ask for clarification on notice period (e.g. if you choose to move to another service, what is the notice period and if the funding stays with the child or with the service in these instances).



Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme

The Free Pre-School Year in the Early Childhood Care and Education Programme (ECCE) is a universal childcare programme designed to give children access to 2 years free pre-school education before they start primary school.

Is my child eligible for the ECCE Programme?

Please see ECCE Eligibility Poster on page 11 of this booklet to find out when your child is eligible for the ECCE Programme.

How much will it cost?

If your child is eligible for the free pre-school year then your child is entitled to a pre-school session of 3 hours per day, 5 days per week, for 38 weeks, for free.

Childcare services can charge for additional services that they provide, such as additional hours and optional extra activities, such as trips, swimming, parties, etc. Childcare services receive a capitation of €64.50 per week for 38 weeks, for each child. If you avail of extra hours/optional activities, your ECCE payment will be applied as a reduction of €64.50 weekly for 38 weeks.

It is not mandatory that children attend 5 days per week but, where they do not, the capitation fee will be reduced on a pro-rata basis.

How do I know which childcare services are in the ECCE programme, and how do I get a place for my child?

A list of current ECCE services is available from your local City/County Childcare Committee. You should make contact with some local childcare services to see if they have ECCE places available. They will explain their fees to you, along with any extras that they offer. Once you have found a childcare service that you wish your child to attend, they will ask you for some information about your child, such as your child's PPS number and date of birth.

Can I transfer my child from one childcare service to another?

You may choose to transfer your child from one ECCE service to another at any stage during the pre-school year. You must give 4 weeks' notice to the childcare service, and you are required to complete a transfer form, which must be signed by the original service

and the new service. If you transfer your child without any notice period, the original service will be paid 4 weeks capitation in lieu of notice and you will have to pay fees for the following 4 weeks in the new service.

Can I use a Childminder instead?

Yes, childminders who meet certain requirements can apply to provide the ECCE programme.

Please contact your local City/County Childcare Committee to find out if any childminders in your area are participating in the programme.

Is my child eligible for the ECCE Programme?

Children are eligible for the ECCE programme once they have turned 3 years of age before one of three entry points; September, January and April and not older than 5 years and 6 months by then end of June of the programme year. Please see the ECCE Eligibility Poster on page 11 of this booklet for further information on eligibility and entry points.

Are there exemptions to the upper age limit?

If your child is above the upper age limit for the ECCE programme there are some circumstances where the child can continue to participate in the ECCE programme.

In exceptional circumstances, exemptions from the upper age limit may be granted where a child has additional needs which delay their entry to school. Applications for such exemptions must be submitted in writing to the DCYA and must include a letter of recommendation from a specialist stating support for the child to avail of a further year of preschool. Exemptions will not be granted where a child will turn 6 during the pre-school year.

The Access and Inclusion Model (AIM)

The Better Start Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) is a model of supports designed to ensure that children with disabilities can access the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme. Its goal is to empower service providers to deliver an inclusive pre-school experience, ensuring that every eligible child can fully



participate in the ECCE programme and reap the benefits of quality early years care and education.

The model is designed to be responsive to the needs of each individual child in the context of their pre-school setting. It will offer tailored, practical supports based on need and will not require a formal diagnosis of disability.

What supports are provided under AIM?

There are 7 levels of supports available through AIM ranging from **universal supports** to **targeted supports**. **Levels 1-3** of the model involve a suite of universal supports which are designed to promote and support an inclusive culture within pre-school settings. However, where a service provider, in partnership with a parent/guardian, considers that some further additional support may be necessary to meet the needs of a particular child, they can apply for one or more targeted supports under **Levels 4 - 7** of the model.

Level 1: An Inclusive Culture: A new Inclusion Charter has been developed for the early years sector. The purpose of the Charter is to demonstrate the sector's commitment to inclusion. Service providers are invited to sign-up to this Charter by producing and publishing their own Inclusion Policy. To support this process, updated Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Guidelines for Early Childhood Care and Education have been produced and a national training programme on the Inclusion Charter and the Guidelines is delivered by the City and County Childcare Committees.

Level 2: Information for Parents and Providers This level recognises the requirement of parents and providers to have clear, consistent and up to date information accessible to them regarding ECCE and AIM services and supports. In depth information on AIM for providers and parents is available on the national website www.aim.gov.ie

Level 3: A Qualified and Confident Workforce This level recognises the requirement to continue to develop a qualified workforce that can confidently meet the needs of all children wishing to participate in the ECCE Programme. A new higher education programme, "**Leadership for Inclusion in Early Years**" or **LINC**, funded by the DCYA, commences annually since 2016. Graduates from the programme will take on the role of Inclusion Co-ordinator within their pre-school setting to support and further guide inclusive practice.

Level 4: Expert Educational Advice Service Under level 4, service providers can access a national service, Better Start, where specialists in early years care and education for children with additional needs can provide expert advice, mentoring and support. The degree of support offered by Early Years Specialists will depend on the needs of the child and the service provider. Application for targeted supports are made with the permission of and through partnership with parents/guardians.

Level 5: Equipment, Appliances and Minor Alterations A national scheme is available to provide specialised equipment, appliances or capital grants towards minor building alterations, where these are necessary based on the recommendation of a designated professional, to support access to facilitate a child's participation in pre-school. Applications for Level 5 supports are made by a service provider, in partnership with a parent.

Level 6: Therapeutic Intervention Therapy services which are considered critical for a child's participation in the Early Childhood Care and Education programme will be made available. Arrangements are in place with the Health Service Executive (HSE) to deliver this service and a number of additional therapy posts have been funded under the Access and Inclusion Model to support this service provision.

Level 7: Additional Assistance in the Preschool Room This level recognises that a small number of children (approximately 1.0% – 1.5% of those availing of the ECCE Programme) will require more support than is available through Levels 1 – 6. Where the above supports are not sufficient to meet the needs of the child, service providers, in partnership with parents, can apply for additional capitation to fund extra support in the classroom or to enable the reduction of the staff to child ratio.

Further detailed information for parents/guardians, including frequently asked questions in relation to the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM), can be found online at www.aim.gov.ie



For more information on the ECCE Programme or AIM contact your local City/County Childcare Committee or the Early Childhood Service where you would like your child to attend.

YOUR CHILDS ELIGIBILITY FOR THE ECCE PROGRAMME

Free Pre-School from 3 years old!*

Children Born in 2012

Birth	ECCE 2015	Entry Point	No. of Weeks for 2015-2016 pre-school year**	ECCE 2016	Entry Point	No. of Weeks for 2016-2017 pre-school year**	Total Eligible Weeks	School Start Year	School Start Age
Jan-12	YES	Sep-15	38	YES	Sep-16	38	76	Sep-17	5.8
Feb-12	YES	Sep-15	38	YES	Sep-16	38	76	Sep-17	5.7
Mar-12	YES	Sep-15	38	YES	Sep-16	38	76	Sep-17	5.6
Apr-12	YES	Sep-15	38	YES	Sep-16	38	76	Sep-17	5.5
May-12	YES	Sep-15	38	YES	Sep-16	38	76	Sep-17	5.4
Jun-12	YES	Sep-15	38	YES	Sep-16	38	76	Sep-17	5.3
Jul-12	NO	-	0	YES	Sep-16	38	38	Sep-17	5.2
Aug-12	NO	-	0	YES	Sep-16	38	38	Sep-17	5.1
Sep-12	NO	-	0	YES	Sep-16	38	38	Sep-17	5
Oct-12	NO	-	0	YES	Sep-16	38	38	Sep-17	4.11
Nov-12	NO	-	0	YES	Sep-16	38	38	Sep-17	4.10
Dec-12	NO	-	0	YES	Sep-16	38	38	Sep-17	4.9

Children Born in 2013

Birth	ECCE 2015	ECCE 2016	Entry Point	No. of Weeks for 2016-2017 pre-school year**	ECCE 2017	Entry Point	No. of Weeks for 2017-2018 pre-school year**	Total Eligible Weeks	School Start Year	School Start Age
Jan-13	NO	YES	Sep-16	38	YES	Sep-17	38	76	Sep-18	5.8
Feb-13	NO	YES	Sep-16	38	YES	Sep-17	38	76	Sep-18	5.7
Mar-13	NO	YES	Sep-16	38	YES	Sep-17	38	76	Sep-18	5.6
Apr-13	NO	YES	Sep-16	38	YES	Sep-17	38	76	Sep-18	5.5
May-13	NO	YES	Sep-16	38	YES	Sep-17	38	76	Sep-18	5.4
Jun-13	NO	YES	Sep-16	38	YES	Sep-17	38	76	Sep-18	5.3
Jul-13	NO	YES	Sep-16	38	YES	Sep-17	38	76	Sep-18	5.2
Aug-13	NO	YES	Sep-16	38	YES	Sep-17	38	76	Sep-18	5.1
Sep-13	NO	YES	Jan-17	23	YES	Sep-17	38	61	Sep-18	5
Oct-13	NO	YES	Jan-17	23	YES	Sep-17	38	61	Sep-18	4.11
Nov-13	NO	YES	Jan-17	23	YES	Sep-17	38	61	Sep-18	4.10
Dec-13	NO	YES	Jan-17	23	YES	Sep-17	38	61	Sep-18	4.9

Children Born in 2014

Birth	ECCE 2016	Entry Point	No. of Weeks for 2016-2017 pre-school year**	ECCE 2017	Entry Point	No. of Weeks for 2017-2018 pre-school year**	ECCE 2018	Entry Point	No. of Weeks for 2018-2019 pre-school year**	Total Eligible Weeks	Start School Year	Start School Age
Jan-14	YES	Apr-17	12	YES	Sep-17	38	YES	Sep-18	38	88	Sep-19	5.8
Feb-14	YES	Apr-17	12	YES	Sep-17	38	YES	Sep-18	38	88	Sep-19	5.7
Mar-14	YES	Apr-17	12	YES	Sep-17	38	YES	Sep-18	38	88	Sep-19	5.6
Apr-14	NO	-	0	YES	Sep-17	38	YES	Sep-18	38	76	Sep-19	5.5
May-14	NO	-	0	YES	Sep-17	38	YES	Sep-18	38	76	Sep-19	5.4
Jun-14	NO	-	0	YES	Sep-17	38	YES	Sep-18	38	76	Sep-19	5.3
Jul-14	NO	-	0	YES	Sep-17	38	YES	Sep-18	38	76	Sep-19	5.2
Aug-14	NO	-	0	YES	Sep-17	38	YES	Sep-18	38	76	Sep-19	5.1
Sep-14	NO	-	0	YES	Jan-18	23	YES	Sep-18	38	61	Sep-19	5
Oct-14	NO	-	0	YES	Jan-18	23	YES	Sep-18	38	61	Sep-19	4.11
Nov-14	NO	-	0	YES	Jan-18	23	YES	Sep-18	38	61	Sep-19	4.10
Dec-14	NO	-	0	YES	Jan-18	23	YES	Sep-18	38	61	Sep-19	4.9

Children Born in 2015

Birth	ECCE 2017	Entry Point	No. of Weeks for 2017-2018 pre-school year**	ECCE 2018	Entry Point	No. of Weeks for 2018-2019 pre-school year**	ECCE 2019	Entry Point	No. of Weeks for 2019-2020 pre-school year**	Total Eligible Weeks	Start School Year	Start School Age
Jan-15	YES	Apr-18	12	YES	Sep-18	38	YES	Sep-19	38	88	Sep-20	5.8
Feb-15	YES	Apr-18	12	YES	Sep-18	38	YES	Sep-19	38	88	Sep-20	5.7
Mar-15	YES	Apr-18	12	YES	Sep-18	38	YES	Sep-19	38	88	Sep-20	5.6
Apr-15	NO	-	0	YES	Sep-18	38	YES	Sep-19	38	76	Sep-20	5.5
May-15	NO	-	0	YES	Sep-18	38	YES	Sep-19	38	76	Sep-20	5.4
Jun-15	NO	-	0	YES	Sep-18	38	YES	Sep-19	38	76	Sep-20	5.3
Jul-15	NO	-	0	YES	Sep-18	38	YES	Sep-19	38	76	Sep-20	5.2
Aug-15	NO	-	0	YES	Sep-18	38	YES	Sep-19	38	76	Sep-20	5.1
Sep-15	NO	-	0	YES	Jan-19	23	YES	Sep-19	38	61	Sep-20	5
Oct-15	NO	-	0	YES	Jan-19	23	YES	Sep-19	38	61	Sep-20	4.11
Nov-15	NO	-	0	YES	Jan-19	23	YES	Sep-19	38	61	Sep-20	4.10
Dec-15	NO	-	0	YES	Jan-19	23	YES	Sep-19	38	61	Sep-20	4.9

*Free pre-school from 3 years old effective from September 2016.

**Eligible weeks per ECCE entry point are estimated. Please refer to your early childhood services ECCE calendar for the exact number of eligible weeks.





An Roinn Leanaí
agus Gnóthaí Óige
Department of
Children and Youth Affairs

**The following section of this guide is derived
from the Affordable Childcare Website**

www.affordablechildcare.ie

**and the Rules for DCYA Childcare Funding
Programmes document, 24th July 2017**

It Starts Now!

Subsidies are being provided to make childcare more affordable for families

- A universal, non-means tested subsidy of up to €1,040 per year for children up to start of the ECCE (free pre-school) programme
- Supports for families on lower incomes of up to €7,500 per year for children up to 15 years of age

Click below to find out what supports may be available to you.



I have a child under
3 years old



I currently get DCYA
Childcare Supports



Can I get help with
my childcare costs?



Frequently Asked
Questions for
Parents

**With Special Thanks to the Department of Children
and Youth Affairs (DCYA) for providing
and sharing this information.**

Community Childcare Subvention Universal (CCSU)



If your child is aged between 6 months and 36 months* and is enrolled in Tusla-registered childcare, you are eligible for a non means-tested universal childcare subsidy of up to €20 per week. That amounts to up to €1,040 per year.

**Your child may continue to receive the universal subsidy until they commence their ECCE (free preschool year). In some cases, this will be slightly older than 36 months.*

CCS Session Type	Universal Band (CCS Band U) (Weekly Subsidy)
Full-time (i.e. 5.01 or more hours)	€20
Part-time (i.e. 3.31 to 5 hours)	€10
Sessional (i.e. 2.16 to 3.30 hours)	€7
Half-sessional (i.e. 1 to 2.15 hours)	€3.50

If your child is under 6 months old, you may qualify for a means-tested childcare subsidy of up to €145 per week. To see if you qualify for this childcare support see Table 1 on page 15.

Children must be enrolled in TUSLA registered childcare services in order to avail of the universal subsidy. To see a list of TUSLA registered childcare providers please see the Affordable Childcare website www.affordablechildcare.ie

How do I apply for the Universal Subsidy

- Speak to your childcare provider to check if they are offering the subsidy
- For the universal payment of up to €20 per week provide the PPSN and date of birth of the child and the PPSN of the parent(s) to your childcare provider to register.
- The subsidy will be paid directly to your childcare provider and will be deducted from the cost of your childcare.

If you have any questions about this scheme, please contact your local City/County Childcare Committee (CCC).



Community Childcare Subvention CCS / CCSP



Community Childcare Subvention CCS

Overview of CCS

The Community Childcare Subvention (CCS) Programme is a childcare programme targeted to support parents on a low income to avail of reduced childcare costs at participating community childcare services. The Department of Children and Youth Affairs pays for a portion of the childcare costs for eligible children, with the parent paying the remainder.

The CCS is only available through participating community not-for-profit childcare services; a list of these services are available through your local CCC. The service provider submits an application for CCS on behalf of the parent. CCS subvention is available for 52 weeks of the year.

CCS services may cater for infant, pre-school and afterschool places. They may also incorporate a breakfast club. Some CCS services may be stand-alone services and cater for just one type of service e.g. afterschool.

Am I eligible for the CCS Programme?

A child must be under 15 years of age to be eligible for the 2017/18 CCS programme. A child will not be eligible if they are enrolled on any other DCYA childcare programme.

If you are a parent/guardian who:

- holds a medical card or GP visit card;
- is on low income;
- is in school;
- in further education;
- job training;
- or in receipt of a social welfare payment,

To view the eligibility criteria see Table 1 on page 15 of this guide.

Community Childcare Subvention Plus (CCSP)

Overview of CCSP

The Community Childcare Subvention Plus (CCSP) Programme provides support for parents on a low income to avail of reduced childcare costs at participating privately owned childcare services and at community not-for-profit childcare services; a list of these services is available through the local CCC. The Department of Children and Youth Affairs pays a portion of the childcare costs for eligible children, with the parent paying the remainder. The eligibility of the parent is determined by their status with the Department of Social Protection and is set out on Table 1 on page 15 of this guide. Interested parents should contact their local participating childcare service in the first instance.

Am I eligible for the CCSP Programme?

A child must be under 15 years of age to be eligible for CCSP, that is, the child must be born on or after 1 September 2002 to be eligible. CCSP subvention is available for up to 52 weeks of the programme year.

If you are a parent/guardian who:

- holds a medical card or GP visit card;
- is on low income;
- is in school;
- in further education;
- job training;
- or in receipt of a social welfare payment,

then you may be eligible for assistance with your childcare costs.

To view CCS/CCSP Eligibility and rates see Table 1 on the next page.

Table 1 CCS/CCSP Eligibility

Your eligibility is determined by your status with the Department of Social Protection (DSP). The level of the subvention is determined by your DSP status and also by the level of childcare you require. The eligibility criteria and subsequent childcare and subvention options are set out in **Table 1** below.

	Band A (with medical card unless otherwise stated)	Band AJ (with medical card)	Band B	Band D
Eligibility criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One Parent Family Payment • Widows/Widowers Pension • Farm Assist • State Pension • Blind Pension • Guardian's Payment • Illness/Injury Benefit • Disability Allowance • Carer's Benefit/Allowance • Back to Work Enterprise/ Education Allowance • Community Employment/ Rural Social Scheme • Domiciliary Care Allowance • Family Income Supplement (FIS) • Secondary Students • Invalidity Pension • Disablement Pension • Official Tusla Referrals (no medical card required) • HSE Public Health Nurse referrals (no medical card required) • TÚS • Part-time Job Incentive Scheme • Gateway 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job Seeker's Benefit/ Allowance* • Supplementary Welfare Allowance** 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical Card • Parents who are in receipt of Social Welfare payments listed under Band A/AJ but have no medical card 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GP Visit Card (over 6yrs+only)*** • Parents who no longer qualify for Band A/AJ this year but who were verified as being on Band A/AJ at the end of the previous school year

*parents who qualify for Band AJ under Jobseeker's allowance/benefit receive maximum subvented childcare of €80 for full day care per week.

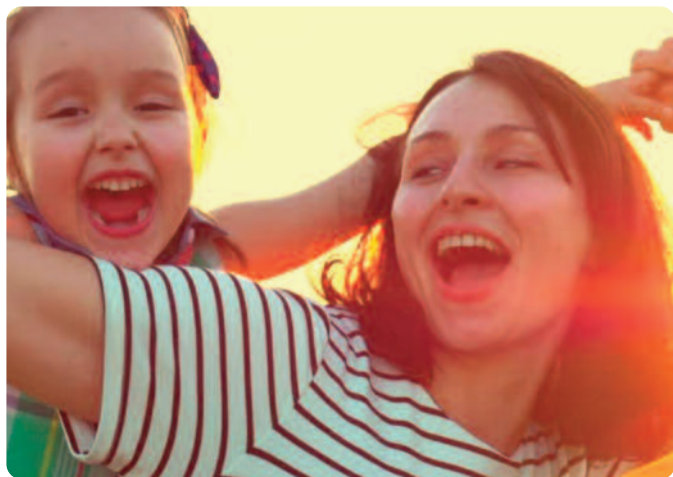
**parents who qualify for Band AJ under Supplementary Welfare Allowance payments receive maximum subvented childcare of €80 for full day care per week.

***Please note GP visit card for children 0-6 years of age does not qualify for CCS/CCSP subvention funding. A Family GP visit card does qualify for CCS/CCPS. The maximum subvention is €145 per week; however, the amount will depend on how much childcare you use and what funding you are eligible for.

Weekly rate	Band A (with medical card unless otherwise stated)	Band AJ (with medical card)	Band B	Band D
(Full-Day payment (5.01 hrs +))	€145	€80	€70	€50
(Part-time payment (3:31-5:00))	€80	€80	€35	€25
(Sessional payment (2:16-3:30))	€45	€45	€25	€17
(Half-session payment (1:00-2:15))	€22.50	€22.50	€12.50	€8.50

For information on CCSR and CCSR(T) see page 16 of this guide.

To qualify for enhanced targeted subsidies you will need to provide proof of eligibility, for more information contact your local CCC to find out more.



Community Childcare Subvention Resettlement (CCSR)

Overview of CCSR

CCSR is intended to support the Programme Refugees (PRs) in their resettlement and integration into Irish society. It enables parents to attend a language and orientation course within their reception centre for eight weeks and then a full year following their move into the community.

Am I eligible for CCSR?

Age of eligible child

Participating pre-school going children must be between 0 and 5 years old on their start date.

School-aged children (between 6 and 12 years) can access childcare for the primary school holiday periods only.

How do I apply for CCSR?

Parent/s must supply a completed eligibility letter submitted and signed by the Department of Justice and Equality. Please contact your local CC for more info.

Types of Places under the CCSR Programme

Part-time places (between 3hrs 31mins and 5hrs) are provided under the CCSR programme.

Community Childcare Subvention Resettlement (Transitional) (CCSR(T))

Overview of CCSR(T)

CCSR(T) provides access to free childcare for children of families experiencing homelessness. The provision provides subvention for all pre-school children, including those of ECCE eligible age range aged 0 to 5 inclusive. The scheme is also designed to help those transitioning from homelessness to permanent accommodation.

CCSR(T) is only available through participating early years services; a list of these services is available through the local CCC.

Eligibility for CCSR(T)

Age of eligible child

Participating pre-school going children must be between 0 – 5yrs on their start date.

How do I apply for CCSR(T)?

- i. A verification letter from Focus Ireland (if in the Dublin area) or from their local authority (for all counties outside Dublin) is required.
- ii. In order to confirm eligibility, both the Parent's and Child's Personal Public Service Number (PPSN) are required, as well as the child's date of birth.



Training and Employment Childcare (TEC)



The objective of the TEC Programmes is to support parents on eligible training courses and eligible categories of parents returning to work, by providing subsidised childcare places. TEC is only available through participating early years services; a list of these services is available through the local CCC.

There are 3 strands of the TEC programme:

- **Childcare Education and Training Support programme (CETS)**

The CETS Programme provides childcare to certain training course participants on courses provided by the Education and Training Boards (ETB, formerly FAS and VEC) and Secondary Schools.

- **Community Employment Childcare programme (CEC)**

The CEC is administered on behalf of the Department of Social Protection (DSP) and provides childcare for children of parents who are participating on Community Employment schemes.

- **After-School Child Care programme (ASCC)**

The ASCC is administered on behalf of the Department of Social Protection (DSP) and provides afterschool care for primary school children for certain categories of working parents and parents on DSP employment programmes (not including Community Employment).

Childcare Education and Training Support programme (CETS)

Childcare places can be full-time, part-time, afterschool only or after-school with transport places. ETBs and Solas have sole responsibility for deciding who is eligible to avail of this strand of the TEC Programme.

Am I eligible for a CETS place?

Participants on the following Further Education Programmes are eligible to apply for CETS funding:

- CETS approved Education and Training Board (ETB) courses
- CETS approved Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS)
- CETS approved Youthreach
- Back to Education Initiative (BTEI)
- Secondary school students completing Junior or Leaving Certificate cycle

How do I apply for CETS?

Parent must provide a letter from their training provider to include hours of course and start and finish dates. Once you have found a childcare service, the service will ask you for a copy of your letter of eligibility as evidence that you are eligible for the CETS programme. They will ask you to complete a TEC Child Registration Form, with details of you and your child's PPS numbers, dates of birth, etc., along with information about the type of childcare place required. They may also ask you for proof of you and your child's PPS numbers and dates of birth.

How much will the CETS place cost?

The maximum amount that you can be charged per week for a CETS place is:

- Full-time Childcare Place - €25 per week
- Part-time Childcare Place - €15 per week
- After-school Childcare Place - €5 per week
- After-school (with transport) Childcare Place - €15 per week

Community Employment Childcare programme (CEC)

The CEC programme provides part-time or afterschool care for children up to 13 years of age.

Am I eligible for CEC?

If you are a parent taking part in a CE scheme, you are eligible for a CEC place for your child. Your CE sponsor should give you a letter of eligibility for CEC.

This letter must contain the following information:

- Name of parent
- Start date of entitlement to childcare support
- Confirmation that the parent is eligible for the CEC programme

How do I apply for CEC?

A list of current CEC services is available from your local City/County Childcare Committee.

Once you have found a childcare service, they will ask you for a copy of your letter of eligibility as evidence that you are eligible for the CEC programme. They

will ask you to complete a TEC Child Registration Form, with details of you and your child's PPS numbers, dates of birth, etc., along with information about the childcare place required. They may also ask you for proof of you and your child's PPS numbers and dates of birth.

How much will the CEC place cost?

The maximum amount that you can be charged per week for a CEC place is:

- Part-time Childcare Place - €15 per week
- After-school Childcare Place - €15 per week

After-School Child Care programme (ASCC)

The After-School Child Care programme provides after-school care for primary school children for certain categories of working parents. It is administered on behalf of the Department of Social Protection (DSP). DSP have sole responsibility for deciding who is eligible to avail of this strand of the TEC Programme.

Places can be after-school only or after-school with transport places. Places can also be approved for full day care up to a maximum of 10 weeks (when your child is on school holidays and you require full day care).

- Pro rata payments are applied for 3, 4 or 5 day places.
- Parents are entitled to a maximum of 52 weeks on the scheme, regardless of how many days a week they may avail of.
- Services will be paid for 52 weeks in total
- Where eligible parents require childcare for morning periods before the child starts school, rather than after-school hours, this can be accommodated under the scheme. The same rates apply.



Am I eligible for ASCC?

In order to be eligible for ASCC a client must be in receipt of Family Income Supplement (FIS) and increase hours of work or **satisfy the below**:

- Be in receipt of Jobseekers' Benefit (JB) or Jobseekers' Allowance (JA), Jobseekers' Transitional payment (JST) or One-parent Family Payment (OFP) or be on a DSP employment programme (or any combination of the above) for at least three months (78 days) **AND** have one or more children aged between 4 and 13 years who are in primary school

AND

- Commence any one of the following: employment (either full-time or part-time) OR increase their employment OR a specified DSP employment programme as follows (except Community Employment): WPP, BTWEA, TUS, Gateway or RSS

How do I apply for ASCC?

Your local DSP office will be able to tell you if you are eligible for an ASCC place. If you are, your DSP office should give you a letter of eligibility for ASCC. This letter must contain the following information:

- Name of parent.
- Start date of entitlement to childcare support.
- Confirmation that the parent is eligible for the ASCC programme

Once you have found a childcare service, they will ask you for a copy of your letter of eligibility as evidence that you are eligible for the ASCC programme. They will ask you to complete a TEC Child Registration Form, with details of you and your child's PPS numbers, dates of birth, etc, along with information about the childcare place required. They may also ask you for proof of you and your child's PPS numbers and dates of birth.

How much will the ASCC place cost me?

The maximum amount that you can be charged per week for an ASCC place is:

- After-school Childcare Place - €15 per week
- After-school (with transport) Childcare Place - €15 per week



Frequently Asked Questions for Parents



When do the new subsidies start?

Registrations for the new childcare subsidies start from August 21st.

Where do I apply?

Is there an application form?

There is no application form for the new scheme. Some providers do have their own application form but this is solely for their own use.

Do parents have to provide any eligibility documentation for the universal subsidy?

No. The universal subsidy is non-means tested and therefore available to all children of the relevant age (i.e. from six months of age up until the time that the child qualifies for entry to the ECCE Programme) in registered childcare. Parents must supply only the name, PPSNs and data of birth of the parent and child.

Is the universal subsidy paid to the parent or the childcare provider?

The universal subsidy is paid to the childcare provider. It should be offset against the cost of childcare for that provider. If, for example, a childcare provider charges €170 per week for a full day care place, the amount charged to parents when the universal subsidy is applied should be €150 per week.

Who is eligible to receive the Universal Subsidy?

Every child in registered childcare from the age of 6 months until they are eligible to start the free pre-school programme (ECCE), is eligible for the universal subsidy. Some children may therefore be slightly older than three years of age.

What does 'registered' childcare mean?

All childcare services in the Republic of Ireland are

compelled to register with Túsła; the Child and Family Agency and are subject to regulation and inspection. Some childminders are also registered with Túsła and therefore may also participate in the scheme. Click here to check what childcare services are Túsła registered in your county

Is the universal subsidy available all year round?

The universal subsidy is available for the full 2017/2018 CCS and CCSP Programmes starting from the 21st August 2017 (up to 52 weeks per year). Childcare provider calendars (weeks open) apply.

Are the subsidies available per child or per family?

The subsidies are available for each eligible child in your family. For instance if you have two children who are not yet old enough to avail of the ECCE (free pre school programme) then both will qualify to receive the universal subsidy of up to €20 per week. This adds up to €1,040 per year per child in full time childcare.

What are the Universal Subsidy Rates?

CCS Session Type	Universal Band (CCS Band U) (Weekly Subsidy)
Full-time (i.e. 5.01 or more hours)	€20
Part-time (i.e. 3.31 to 5 hours)	€10
Sessional (i.e. 2.16 to 3.30 hours)	€7
Half-sessional (i.e. 1 to 2.15 hours)	€3.50

What if my child is only availing of childcare for a couple of days per week?

The universal subsidy is available on a *pro-rata* basis. For example, if a child is availing childcare for two days per week, the amount of subsidy available would be €8 per week ($€20/5 = €4 \times 2 \text{ days} = €8$). The table below gives a breakdown of the daily and weekly universal subsidy rates:

CCS Session Type (Universal)	Weekly Subsidy	Daily Subsidy
Full-time (i.e. 5.01 or more hours)	€20	€4
Part-time (i.e. 3.31 to 5 hours)	€10	€2
Sessional (i.e. 2.16 to 3.30 hours)	€7	€1.40
Half-sessional (i.e. 1 to 2.15 hours)	€3.50	€0.70

If my child is eligible for the ECCE Programme, but can't find a place within a service, will my child be eligible to receive the universal subsidy until an ECCE place is available?

No. The universal subsidy is only available until the child becomes eligible for the ECCE Programme. However, children eligible for the ECCE Programme may still be eligible for the targeted subsidies provided under the CCS and TEC Programmes.

Who is eligible for CCS/CCSP personalised support subsidies?

Take a look at the table on page 15 of this guide. If you are in receipt of the supports listed you may qualify for childcare subsidies of as much as €145 per week per child.

What if my childcare provider puts their fees up?

Childcare fees are set by childcare providers and may be determined by many factors, such as rent, electricity, insurance etc. Childcare providers have been provided with an additional €3.5m 'non-contact payment' to administer these supports to families so any rise in childcare fees should not relate to availability of these supports to your family.



If you have additional questions related to the various funding schemes, please contact your local Childcare Committee for advice and information. Contact details for each Childcare Committee are available on the back of this guide.

Useful Contacts

Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA)

The Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) was established on 2nd June 2011. The DCYA focuses on harmonising policy issues that affect children in areas such as early childhood care and education, youth justice, child welfare and protection, children and young people's participation, research on children and young people, youth work and cross-cutting initiatives for children.

Contact Details:

Department of Children and Youth Affairs
43-49 Mespil Road
FREEPOST F5055
Dublin 4
D04 YP52

Tel: +353 1 6473000
Fax: +353 1 6473101
E-mail: contact@dcya.gov.ie
Web: www.dcy.gov.ie



An Roinn Leanáí
agus Gnóthaí Óige
Department of
Children and Youth Affairs

Pobal

Pobal is a not-for-profit company that manages programmes on behalf of the Irish Government and the EU. Pobal provides a range of services to and on behalf of the Department of Children and Youth Affairs in the area of early education and childcare.

Contact Details:

Pobal
Holbrook House
Holles Street
Dublin 2
D02 EY84



Telephone: 01 511 7000
Fax: 01 511 7981
Email: enquiries@pobal.ie
Web: www.pobal.ie

National Childcare Organisations

Seven national childcare organisations currently receive funding under the Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme to promote quality. These organisations are:

- Barnardos
- Childminding Ireland
- Early Childhood Ireland
- Forbairt Naíonraí Teo
- Irish Steiner Kindergarten Association
- St. Nicholas Montessori Society of Ireland



City / County Childcare Committee Contact Details

Carlow	059 9140244	Limerick	061 600918
Cavan	049 4365856	Longford	043 3342505
Clare	065 6864862	Louth	042 9336364
Cork City	021 4310500	Mayo	094 9047010
Cork County	022 23880	Meath	046 9073010
Donegal	074 9123442	Monaghan	047 72896
Dublin City	01 8733696	Offaly	057 9135878
Dun Laoghaire Rathdown	01 2896600	Roscommon	094 9622540
Fingal	01 4851727	Sligo	071 9148860
Galway	091 752039	South Dublin	01 4570122
Kerry	066 7181582	Tipperary	062 64200
Kildare	045 861307	Waterford	051 295045
Kilkenny	056 7752865	Westmeath	044 9335454
Laois	057 8661029	Wexford	053 9237156
Leitrim	071 9640870	Wicklow	0404 64455

This document was revised by Dublin City Childcare Committee in August 2017.

