

A Parent's Guide to the National Childcare Funding Programmes 2016/2017



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



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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 childcare providers, childminders, parents and the general public on a variety of issues relating to childcare.

CCCs administer three 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

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 Private Programme (CCSP) and Training and Employment Childcare (TEC) Childcare Funding Programmes.

Community Childcare Providers

Community Childcare Providers offer 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 CCS, ECCE and TEC childcare funding programmes.

Childminders

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

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?

The age criteria for the current and coming pre-school year is as follows in relation to the ECCE Programme:

To avail of the ECCE programme at any stage during the year before the pre-school year	Children must have been born between the following dates (both dates inclusive)
September 2014 – June 2015	2nd February 2010 – 30th June 2011
September 2015 – June 2016	2nd February 2011 – 30th June 2012
To avail of the ECCE programme with effect from	Children must have been born between the following dates (both dates inclusive)
September 2016 – June 2017	1st January 2012 – 31st August 2013
January 2017 – June 2017	1st January 2012 – 31st December 2013
April 2017 – June 2017	1st January 2012 – 31st March 2014

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.

What if my child is too old to participate in the ECCE programme?

If your child is above the age range for the ECCE programme, there are some circumstances under which they may still avail of the programme:

The upper age limit of 4 years 7 months may be extended where a child is not in a position to commence

primary school until they are more than 5 years 6 months of age, due either to the enrolment policy of the local school, or because s/he has been assessed as developmentally delayed. Applications for an extension of the upper age limit will be examined on a case-by-case basis. Please note that under the Education and Welfare Act 2000 all children must be enrolled in a primary school by the time they reach their 6th birthday.

Children with a Disability entering the ECCE year in September 2016

A new National Disability Model – Access Inclusion Model (AIM) will be fully operational in September 2016. AIM focuses on the developmental level of children with disabilities, their functional ability and their needs. It does not focus on diagnosis, and in any event, it recognises that many children may not have a formal diagnosis at the time of presenting to pre-school.

There are 7 levels to the new National Disability Model.

Level 1: An Inclusive Culture: This level is the critical foundation for the model. This sets out that a strong culture of inclusion must be fostered and embedded to support all children's maximum participation in the ECCE Programme. Recommendations include the development of a national inclusion policy for ECCE, the identification of an Inclusion Co-ordinator in each ECCE setting, funding being made available to provide training in inclusion for these and other early years practitioners, and a small increase in capitation for ECCE settings who meet certain criteria to incentivise fully inclusive practice.

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 services and supports. Recommendations include the development of a national website which is linked from all relevant children's services and the development of information packs which can be provided at local level.

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. It supports the recommendation from the Interdepartmental Group (IDG) on Future Investment in Early Years and School Aged (Including After-School and Out-of-School) Care and Education to continue to raise the minimum qualification for employment in the sector. It also seeks dedicated funding for formal and informal training and a structure to be put in place to ensure same.

Level 4: Expert Educational Advice and Support: This level addresses the needs of early years practitioners across the country to have timely access to advice and support from experts in early years education (and disability in particular) to assist them meet each child's needs. It recommends an enhancement of the Better Start Early Years Specialist Service (EYSS) that was established in 2014.

Level 5: Equipment, Appliances and Minor Alterations Capital Grant: This level recognises that some children require specialised equipment, appliances, assistive technology and/or that some ECCE settings may require minor structural alterations to ensure children with a disability can participate in the ECCE Programme. It recommends the provision of annual funding, the establishment of a grant and an application process to access these supports.

Level 6: Therapeutic Intervention: This level provides for access to therapeutic services where they are critical to enable the child be enrolled, and fully participate, in the ECCE Programme. It recommends further enhancement of HSE Therapy Services to enable priority be given to this important aspect of early intervention.

Level 7: Additional Assistance in the Pre-School 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. The IDG recommends the provision of additional capitation to providers where an application process has demonstrated that supports for Levels 1 – 6 have not, or will not, by themselves, meet the child's needs. The additional capitation will be agreed with the provider and parent. It can be used by the provider to buy in additional support, to reduce the staff/child ratio, or for other specified purposes, all centred on supporting the pre-school leader to ensure the child's optimal participation.

To find out more information on the ECCE Programme or the Access and Inclusion Model contact your local City/County Childcare Committee or your Early Childhood Service where you would like your child to attend the ECCE programme.

A full list of conditions and frequently asked questions about the ECCE programme is available on the Department of Children and Youth Affairs website www.dcy.gov.ie.

Further details in relation to AIM – Access and Inclusion Model can be found at www.preschoolaccess.ie.

Community Childcare Subvention (CCS) Programme

What is the CCS Programme?

The Community Childcare Subvention Programme (CCS) and Community Childcare Subvention Private Programme (CCSP) is a support programme for Community and Private based childcare services to provide quality childcare at a reduced rate to parents. It enables community and private childcare services to reduce fees for parents in receipt of certain social welfare payments, Family Income Supplement, and holders of medical cards and GP visit cards. Participation in the CCS programme is for both community and private childcare services.

Am I eligible for the CCS programme?

If you are a parent in receipt of a social welfare payment, you may be eligible. See the table on the next page for more details.

How do I know which childcare services are currently in the CCS Programme?

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

Can I use a Childminder instead?

Childminders cannot offer the CCS or the CCSP programme.

Band Table and Rates of Payment

The table on the next page outlines the weekly subvention rates for parents considered to be 'Band A', 'Band AJ' or 'Band B' based on the type of service the child is availing of. The list of payments under Band A in the table is not exhaustive.

Where clarification is required on which Band you qualify for, please contact your local City/County Childcare Committee.

It is important to note that a Medical Card is required with Band A and Band AJ payments.

A full list of conditions and frequently asked questions about the CCS programme is available on the Department of Children and Youth Affairs website www.dcy.gov.ie.

If you have any queries or concerns in relation to the CCS programme, please contact your local City/County Childcare Committee who will be able to help you with your query.



DCYA CHILDCARE FUNDING PROGRAMMES:

INFORMATION AND FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Community Childcare Subvention (CCS) Eligibility Criteria

The table below outlines the CCS eligibility criteria for Bands A, AJ and B, based on the type of service the child is availing of. (The list of payments under Band A/AJ in the table is not exhaustive). A Medical Card is required with Band A and Band AJ payments.

Table: CCS Band Eligibility

Band A (with medical card)	Band AJ (with medical card)*	Band B
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One Parent Family Payment • Widows/Widowers Pension • Pre-retirement Allowance • 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 School students • Invalidity Pension • Disablement Pension 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job Seekers Benefit/ Allowance • Supplementary Welfare Allowance** • Tús • Part-time Job Incentive Scheme • Gateway 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical Card • GP Visit Card (over 6yr+ only)*** • Parents who are in receipt of Social Welfare payments listed under Band A/AJ but have no medical card • 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
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Official Tusla Referrals (no medical card required) • HSE Public Health Nurse referrals (no medical card required) 		

DCYA CHILDCARE FUNDING PROGRAMMES: INFORMATION AND FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- * Parents who qualify for Band AJ (with medical card) e.g. a parent in receipt of Jobseekers Benefit/Allowance (JB / JA) and with a medical card qualify for subvented childcare to a maximum of €50 subvention for full day-care per week (Band AJ). This cap applies where a child attends from 3 full days to 5 full days per week (Note: where a child attends for 1 or 2 full days only it will not be pro-rated). Parents in receipt of Jobseekers Benefit/Allowance (JB / JA) and do not have a medical card qualify for subvented childcare under Band B.

This applies to Community Services only

- ** Situation: Parent receiving Basic Payments under the Supplementary Welfare Allowance Scheme, and awaiting a decision on a Jobseekers Benefit/Allowance claim: If the claim is successful attracts a full rate Band A eligibility, with a medical card (e.g. One Parent Family Payment) then the eligibility for that payment can be back dated to the September of that given academic year for which the basic payment applied. However, the successful claim, which must have been backdated to include the CCS snap-shot window, must be appealed as part of the CCS Appeals Process
- *** GP visit card is now universal for children 0-6 and therefore will now only apply to Band B subvention eligibility for 6yrs+.
- **** Domiciliary Care Allowance eligibility documents may be dated to within one year prior to the CCS eligibility window (or for CCSP, within one year prior to childcare start date)
- ***** Family Income Supplement (FIS) eligibility documentation will be accepted where the start date of the FIS payment is valid during the CCS eligibility window (for CCSP eligibility documentation will be accepted if FIS payment start date is valid within one month prior to the childcare start date).

Note for CCS:

No Band is automatically applied to those parents on **Maternity Benefit**, partaking in a **Springboard course** and/or a **National Internship Programme (NIP/JobBridge)**, or in receipt of the ETB/SOLAS Training Allowance during the CCS Snap-shot window. The appropriate band will be decided on a case by case basis, based on the allowance received immediately prior to the course/programme/training/benefit

Note for CCS Private:

No Band is automatically applied to those parents on **Maternity Benefit**, partaking in a **Springboard course** and/or a **National Internship Programme (NIP/JobBridge)**, or in receipt of the ETB/SOLAS Training Allowance during the week the child is registered for the CCS Private Programme. The appropriate band will be decided on a case by case basis, based on the allowance received immediately prior to the course/programme/training/benefit.

Try out the CCS Band Calculator on the PIP Homepage at www.pobal.ie to get an idea of what Band might be approved. This is a guide for assistance only and does not guarantee the Band that will be approved."

Training and Employment Childcare (TEC) Programmes

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.

There are 3 strands of the TEC programme:

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

The CETS Programme formerly catered for FÁS and VEC training course participants and now provides subsidised childcare on behalf of the Local Education and Training Boards (ETBs).

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

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

- **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.

Childcare Education and Training Support programme (CETS)

CETS is for parents completing ETB / Solas courses (formerly FÁS and VEC courses). It is administered on behalf of the Department of Education.

Childcare places can be full-time, part-time, after-school 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.

How do I know if I'm eligible for a CETS place?

If you are a parent and are undertaking training through ETBs or Solas, you may be eligible. You should ask your training provider if you are eligible. If you are, your training provider should give you a letter of eligibility for CETS. This letter must contain the following information:

- Name of parent
- Name of eligible course
- Start date of the course
- End date of the course and/or the number of weeks of the course
- Confirmation that you are eligible for childcare under the CETS programme

How do I access a place?

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

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 me?

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

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.

How do I know if I'm eligible for an ASCC place?

In general, to qualify for support under the ASCC programme, you must:

- Be in receipt of Family Income Supplement (FIS) (regardless of duration); **OR**
- Be currently getting a Jobseeker's Benefit (JB), Jobseeker's Allowance (JA) or One Parent Family Payment (OFP) or on a DSP employment programme; **AND**

- Have been in receipt of a JB, JA or OFP payment or have been on a Department of Social Protection (DSP) employment programme (or any combination of the 4) for at least 3 months; **AND**
- Have one or more children aged between 4 and 13 who are in primary school; **AND**
- Either start a new job or increase the days you currently work; **OR**
- Start a DSP employment programme (except CE)

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

How do I access an ASCC place?

A list of current ASCC 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 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

Community Employment Childcare programme (CEC)

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

How do I know if I'm eligible for a CEC place?

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 access a CEC place?

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 me?

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
- Part-time Childcare Place (maximum of 10 weeks) - €15 per week

General questions about TEC programmes

Am I guaranteed a childcare place, if I get a letter of eligibility?

For all 3 TEC programmes, places are allocated on a first come, first served basis, up to a maximum number of places available. Therefore, eligibility for a TEC programme does not guarantee you a subsidised childcare place.

Can I transfer from one childcare service to another?

You can choose to transfer your child from one TEC service to another. You must give 2 weeks' notice to the childcare service, and you are required to complete a TEC leaver form, which must also be signed by the existing service, and the new service.

Can I use a childminder instead?

Childminders cannot offer the TEC programme.

A full list of conditions and frequently asked questions about the TEC programmes is available on the Department of Children and Youth Affairs website www.dcyja.gov.ie.

If you have any queries or concerns in relation to the TEC programmes, please contact your local City/County Childcare Committee who will be able to help you with your query.



Síolta Information for Parents

Síolta, the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education, was developed by the Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education on behalf of the Department of Education and Skills. It was published in 2006, following a three-year developmental process, which involved consultation with more than 50 diverse organisations, representing childcare workers, teachers, parents, policy makers, researchers and other interested parties.

Síolta is designed to define, assess and support the improvement of quality across all aspects of practice in early childhood care and education (ECCE) settings where children aged birth to six years are present. These settings include:

- Full-time and Part-time Daycare
- Childminding
- Sessional services
- Infant classes in primary schools

Since December 2008, the **Early Years Education Policy Unit**, in the Department of Education and Skills, has been responsible for the implementation of Síolta. Early Childhood Care and Education services participating in the Free Pre-school Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme are required to “adhere to the principles of Síolta.”

Core Elements of Síolta

Síolta is comprised of three distinct but interrelated elements: **Principles, Standards** and **Components** of Quality. The 12 Principles provide the overall vision of the Framework, while the 16 Standards and 75 Components allow for the practical application of this vision across all aspects of ECCE practice. The Components of Quality are further explained by a set of Signposts for Reflection and ‘Think-about’s’ which are intended to support practitioners in early education settings to become aware of and critical of their practice. These core elements of Síolta are set out in detail in each of the **Síolta user manuals**.

For more information go to www.siolta.ie .

Aistear Information for Parents

Parents play a key role in their children’s education. Effective early childhood settings and schools take account of the influence of the home on children’s learning and they build on the experience children bring to the setting or school. Establishing strong links with parents helps make children’s education as successful as possible.

The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) developed Aistear: **the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework** (2009) in partnership with the early childhood sector. Parents played a key role in this.

Aistear states that: *“Parents are the most important people in children’s lives. The care and education that children receive from their parents and family, especially during their early months and years, greatly influence their overall development. Extended family and community also have important roles to play”.* **(Principles and themes, p.9)**

For more information and lots of useful resources go to the NCCA Aistear Toolkit at www.ncca.ie .

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 Leanaí
agus Gnóthai 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
- National Childhood Network



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 8077660	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 and Roscommon County Childcare Committee in 2016.

