



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

Department of Children and Youth Affairs

Rules for

**Training and Employment Childcare
(TEC) Saver Programme**

Valid for the 2020/2021 Programme Year

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Introduction

As part of the Department of Children and Youth Affairs' commitment to raising the quality of early years care and education, the new National Childcare Scheme (NCS) went live on 20th November 2019. Parents can now apply directly to NCS for financial support, meaning providers no longer need to manage parental paperwork in order to apply for subsidies within this scheme. NCS provides financial support for eligible children aged between 24 weeks and 15 years who are attending participating Tusla registered services. Further information on NCS is available in the NCS Policy Guidelines which are available on PIP and the DCYA website (www.dcy.gov.ie) and on the NCS website (www.ncs.gov.ie).

The NCS replaces the previous targeted childcare programmes and so the TEC programme closed to new registrations on February 14th 2020. The children whose parents were registered on TEC up to that date, and opted to retain their registration under TEC, are referred to as 'TEC Savers' and the programme is now known as the **TEC Saver Programme**. The TEC Saver Programme will continue for an interim period or until the parent is no longer eligible. No new registrations for new children can be made under the TEC Saver programme. The TEC Saver Programme will cease operating once all participants registered before February 14th 2020 have completed their allotted time on their TEC scheme.

The TEC Programme is an overarching childcare programme funded by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs and is specifically designed to support parents/guardians on eligible Education and Training Board training courses, as well as certain categories of parents/guardians returning to work, by providing subsidised childcare places. The TEC Programme provides childcare support for:

- parents/guardians on certain education and training courses (CETS),
- parents/guardians working on Community Employment programmes (CEC), and
- for families on Family Income Support (ASCC)

The TEC Saver Programme is processed online via the Programmes Implementation Platform (PIP). The PIP system is administered by Pobal, on behalf of the Department.

The approved childcare funding is paid directly to the Service Provider and must be deducted directly from the service's fee for the service provision.

Service Providers can contact the Early Years Provider Centre at eypc@pobal.ie or 01-5117222 for assistance in administering the rules of the TEC Saver Programme as well as any technical issues with their PIP Portal. Pobal's 'TEC Saver How to Guide' for the TEC Saver Programme is available on the PIP portal through www.pobal.ie.

Note: Throughout this document, a 'service' means a Tusla registered Early Learning and Care (ELC) and/or School Aged Childcare (SAC) service and a 'Service Provider' means a provider of ELC and/or SAC.

The local City and County Childcare Committees (CCCs) are the first port of call for both parents/guardians and childcare providers in relation to any queries on the TEC Saver Programme. The CCCs are funded by the DCYA to act as the local agent in the delivery of Early Learning and Care (ELC) and School Aged Childcare (SAC). The CCCs provide assistance and guidance to local Service Providers and parents in relation to the childcare programmes, and support quality in keeping with national frameworks and policy objectives. Contact details for your local CCC can be found at myccc.ie.

Note: Information in these DCYA Rules for TEC Saver Programme are subject to change. Please check the PIP Homepage regularly for updates.

Chapter 1 Obligations of a Service Provider

1.1 Obligations of a Service Provider

There is an obligation on those in receipt of public funding to strictly adhere to all the rules contained in this entire document as set out by the Minister for the Department of Children and Youth Affairs.

1.2 Status of a Service Provider

The Service Provider must be a limited company *or* a designated activity company *or* a sole trader *or* a school board of management *or* a not for profit organisation *or* a partnership.

The Service Provider shall take all 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](#) and the [Child Care Regulations \(The Child Care Act 1991 \(Early Years Services\) \(Amendments\)\) Regulations 2016 and the Child Care Act 1991 \(Early Years Services\) \(Registration of School Age Services\) Regulations 2018](#).

1.3 Tusla Registration

It is compulsory for all services providing childcare to register with Tusla. Full details on how to register a service can be found on the Tusla website www.tusla.ie

A service must be registered with Tusla to receive funding from DCYA. All facilities/locations operated by a service must be registered with Tusla, have an individual DCYA reference number and children must attend the facility/ location in which they are registered. Proof of Tusla registration must be available on the premises for inspection.

Service providers must be registered with Tusla for the places being provided:

- Full day-care places (more than 5 hours per day)
- Part-time places (between 3 hours 31 minutes and 5 hours per day)
- Sessional places (between 2 hours 16 minutes and 3 hours 30 minutes per day)
- Half-session places (between 1 hour and 2 hours 15 minutes per day)

E.g. Services cannot be funded for part-time places when registered with Tusla as a sessional service. [School Age Services Regulations](#) introduced by the Minister in February 2019 now make it compulsory for services providing childcare to school age children to register with Tusla. Full details of these regulations can be found on the Department website at www.dcy.gov.ie and on the Tusla website at www.tusla.ie or alternatively you can contact your local CCC (myccc.ie).

Please note that if a service solely provides support for the provision of homework, this type of service is not deemed as providing childcare and currently does not need to be Tusla registered. Homework Clubs are not eligible to receive funding under the TEC Saver Programme. For further information please contact your local CCC.

1.4 Tusla Deregistration

As the Independent Regulator, Tusla's role is to monitor the safety and quality of care and support of children in early years' provision to ensure compliance with regulations. Where there are consistent and serious breaches, Tusla may take action up to and including prosecution and removal from the register of early years' services.

If Tusla issue a service with notice of removal from the register, a parent is entitled to remove their child from the service and re-register the child in a new service during the notice period without being required to serve the normal four week notice period to the service as per the rules for attendance in Chapter 8 of this document. Therefore the Saver has up until the end of a 12 week continuous period to take up a TEC Saver Programme childcare place in a registered service to retain their Saver status (see Chapter 4.3: Retention of Saver Status).

1.5 DCYA Reference No.

All facilities/locations operated by a service must have an individual DCYA reference number and children must attend the facility/location in which they are registered. To request a new DCYA reference number please visit the HIVE and follow the steps in this guide.

1.6 Change of Circumstances for a Service Provider

In the following circumstances an existing service must request a new DCYA reference number.

- i. In the case of a transfer of ownership of a service (childcare provider), the service must visit the HIVE with all relevant details in order to request a new DCYA reference number.
- ii. In the case of a change of legal status of a service (childcare provider), the service must visit the HIVE with all relevant details in order to request a new DCYA reference number.
- iii. In the case of a change of address of a service (childcare provider), the service must ensure the new address/premises is registered with Tusla and then the service should visit the HIVE with all relevant details in order to request a new DCYA reference number.
- iv. In the case of expansion of a service to additional Tusla registered premises, the service must visit the HIVE with all relevant details in order to request a new DCYA reference. Please note that the children in attendance at the new/additional premises must be registered under the new DCYA reference number.

1.7 Staff Qualifications

Under the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016, all staff working directly with children in an ELC service working with children aged from 0 – 6yrs must hold at least a Level 5 major award in childcare on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ), or equivalent as deemed by The Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA).

The DCYA has published a list of qualifications that meet the regulatory requirements for working in the ELC sector in Ireland. This list can be found on the Department's website.

If a person does not hold a qualification on the DCYA's recognised qualifications list, the individual is required to apply for the recognition of their qualifications at EYQualifications@dcya.gov.ie. In order to be recognised, qualifications must demonstrate sufficient content in the areas of child development, early childhood education and child health and wellbeing. Applicants who start

employment without qualification recognition are in breach of the Regulations. For further information please refer to the DCYA website which will explain the process in more detail.

1.8 Contact Information

A service provider must provide an e-mail address to be used for communications in relation to the service and the Department reserve the right to communicate important information, including information relating to payments, electronically. A postal address must also be provided. Where the home address is different to the facility address, both addresses must be provided (this does not apply to limited company). A contact telephone number, at which the PAU/service provider can be contacted during work hours, must also be provided.

The Service Provider must have access to facilities that enable them to conduct business online and a PIP user account in order to participate in the TEC Saver Programme. The Service Provider shall administer the TEC Saver Programme entirely via PIP. They shall access Pobal's website (www.pobal.ie) to ensure that they are familiar with the most up to date online programme administration procedures as well as any TEC Saver Programme 'How-to Guides' for Service Providers, available on the PIP portal.

1.9 Funding Agreement

The Service Provider shall complete all requirements and have a TEC Saver Funding Agreement in place with the Department of Children & Youth Affairs on or before 19th August 2020. A later date may be permitted where the Minister deems it appropriate.

1.10 Registration of Fees List & Service Calendar

The Service Provider must upload a fees list and a service calendar to PIP at least three weeks prior to the service opening for the new programme year. Therefore if a service opens on 17th August in line with the 2020/2021 programme year, both the fees list and calendars must be uploaded on PIP on or before 3rd August 2020. The fees lists will demonstrate that the appropriate reductions in childcare fees for qualifying parents will be applied. This fees list and service calendar will be subject to review by the relevant CCC. For more information please refer to Chapters 2 and 3 of this document and/or the TEC Savers How To Guides on PIP.

Chapter 2 Fees List

2.1 Obligations of a Service Provider

Service Providers must complete a Fees List at the beginning of each programme year. A services' fees list must show details of all the fees charged to parents, as well as details of any additional charges, discounts, voluntary donations etc. applied by the service. **A services' fees list for TEC Saver Programme must be on PIP on or before the 3rd August 2020.**

If a service provider does not offer any deposits, discounts or optional extras this must also be reflected on the fees list.

2.2 Deposits

A service provider must give an accurate description, including the total cost and frequency with which they may occur, of any deposit requested on its' fees list.

The maximum deposit a provider may charge is equivalent to two weeks' payment. The full amount of the **DCYA subvention held on deposit must be refunded** to the parent/guardian **once the child's registration is approved**.

When and how the balance of the deposit is returned to the parent/guardian is a matter for the provider. However, it is recommended that this timeframe is agreed initially between both parties i.e. when monies are exchanged.

For example: Where a service's weekly fee is €200 and the subvention due is €145, the service may charge a two week deposit of €400. Once the registration has been approved the service will refund the amount of €290 to the parent.

2.3 Optional extras

Childcare providers may charge for optional extras, but a parent/guardian may choose not to avail of any of the optional extras. Optional extras must be identified on the fees list at the start of the programme year. Each option must be individually identified. Services cannot prioritise the provision of a childcare place on the basis of uptake of optional extras.

A service provider must give an accurate description, the total cost and frequency with which they may occur, of any optional extra requested on its' fees list.

2.4 Parents Information Letter

Parents/guardians must sign a PIP approved Service Fees Information Letter to indicate that they understand the charges that the service will apply. Fees lists are subject to review by the Department/Pobal/CCC.

2.5 Fee Changes

Any changes to Fees List must first be approved by the CCC. Parents must be given four weeks' notice of any change to the Fees List. Where the Fees List has been revised, amended Fees List letters must then issue and be signed by the parents/guardians for the service's files. Copies of letters subsequently issued and signed must be retained on file on the premises. An updated copy of Fees Lists must be published in an area of the service accessible to parents, as well as on any online platform maintained by the provider for the purpose of advertising its services.

2.6 Document Display Requirement

A copy of the Fees List, together with copies of any standard letters issued to parents, must be published in an area of the service accessible and visible to parents.

2.7 Document Filing Requirement

Service Providers must have a signed letter on file in respect of each parent/guardian of a child on the TEC Saver Programme, showing the fees that have been approved. These fees must match those shown on the Fees List.

Chapter 3 Service Calendar

3.1 Service Calendar Requirement

Service Providers must complete a Service Calendar at the beginning of each programme year. The services' calendar must be uploaded on PIP on or before 3rd August 2020 for the 2020/2021 programme year. The calendar is subject to review by the Department/Pobal/CCC.

3.1.1 Calendar for Parents

A service calendar must be distributed to all parents/guardians showing the days the service is due to be open under the TEC Saver Programme year 2020/2021.

3.1.2 Calendar Minimum Opening Weeks

Services in contract for the TEC Saver Programme must be open for a minimum of 38 weeks over the programme year.

3.2 Non Payment Week

If a service is closed for 3 days or more in a single week this is regarded as a non-payment week.

3.3 Document display requirement

A copy of the up to date service calendar, together with copies of any standard letters that relate to DCYA programmes issued to parents, must be published in an area of the service accessible and visible to parents as well as on any online platform maintained by the provider for the purpose of advertising its services.

3.4 Changes to Service Calendars

3.4.1 Approval of Calendar Changes

Any changes to a service calendar must first be approved by the CCC.

3.4.2 Notice of Calendar Change

Parents must be given four weeks' notice of any change to the services' calendar once the calendar has been approved by the CCC.

3.4.3 Displaying of Revised Calendar

Where the calendar has been revised, an amended copy of the calendar must be published in an area of the service visible and accessible to parents, as well as on any online platform maintained by the provider for the purpose of advertising its services

3.5 Payment of 52 weeks for 50 weeks' attendance

If under registration, the start and end dates for a child's placement equals 50 weeks or more of attendance in the programme year, the service will be paid for 52 weeks. These payments are calculated at the end of the programme year.

For further information on service calendars please contact your local CCC or refer to Pobal's 'How To Guide-TEC Saver Programme Fees List and Service Calendar' on PIP

Chapter 4 Savers

4.1 What is a TEC Saver?

“TEC Saver” means a person who, prior to midnight February 14, 2020, was registered on TEC, which was superseded by NCS, who chooses not to move to NCS and instead retains their existing level of subsidy for an additional interim period.

4.2 To Retain the Saver Status

An eligible child must be:

1. Under the age of 15 years and;
2. Registered on TEC prior to the closure of TEC to new registrations on 14th February 2020;
3. In attendance at a TUSLA registered service;
4. Registered by the Service Provider on the PIP online system under the TEC Saver Programme Funding Agreement, and,
5. In attendance in the service in accordance with the session type and pattern of attendance that the child has been registered on PIP.

Checks will be done on the saver’s eligibility status by the normal eligibility checking process for CETS, CEC and ASCC.

4.3 Retention of Saver Status

If a parent wants to move their child to a different service; in order to retain saver status on TEC there should be no gap in funding when moving from one service to the other. If a parent/guardian removes their child from a service voluntarily, they have the 4 week notice period (notice in lieu) to take up a TEC Saver Programme childcare place in another service to retain their “saver status.” TEC eligibility must be re-confirmed by appropriate documentation. If a parent does not register with a new service within the 4 week time period they will no longer be deemed a TEC Saver and should apply for childcare funding through the NCS.

4.4 Services Operating 38 weeks

Children who are registered in services who operate over 37 calendar weeks and are therefore not in attendance during non-term time over the summer, will be able to retain their saver status providing

- (1) they attend their chosen Tusla registered service no later than 4 weeks from the start of the programme year
and
- (2) they continue to meet the criteria of an eligible saver.

Chapter 5 Overview of TEC Saver Programme

5.1 TEC Saver Programme

The TEC Saver Programme is an overarching childcare programme funded by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs and is specifically designed to support parents/guardians on eligible Education and Training Board training courses, as well as certain categories of parents/guardians returning to work, by providing subsidised childcare places. The TEC Programme provides childcare support for parents/guardians on certain education and training courses (CETS Savers), parents/guardians working on Community Employment programmes (CEC Savers), and also for families on Family Income Support (ASCC Savers) for participants registered on or before February 14th 2020. The TEC Saver programme will cease operating once all participants registered on or before the 14th February 2020 have completed their allotted time on the TEC Saver Programme.

5.1.1 Childcare Education and Training Support Saver Programme (CETS Savers)

The CETS Saver Programme is administered and funded by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs. It provides childcare to certain training course participants on courses provided by the Education and Training Boards (ETB, formerly FAS and VEC), specifically, courses run in training centres (formally FÁS training centres), ETB VTOS courses, and Secondary Schools students for participants registered on or before February 14th 2020. The duration of CETS Saver Programme corresponds with the start and end dates stated on the eligibility letter up to a maximum of 50 weeks per year.

(The new NCS broadens the eligibility for childcare provision to all QQI certified education and training programmes, depending on the circumstances of the applicant. Further information on NCS is available in the NCS Policy Guidelines which are available on PIP and the DCYA website).

The CETS Saver Programme is closed for new registrations. The CETS Saver Programme will cease operating once all participants registered on or before the 14th February 2020 have completed their allotted time on the programme.

5.1.2 Community Employment Childcare Saver Programme (CEC Savers)

The CEC Saver Programme is administered and funded by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs and provides childcare for children of parents/guardians who are participating on Community Employment schemes and registered on CEC on or before February 14th 2020. The duration of participation on the CEC Saver Programme corresponds with the start and end dates stated on the Community Employment eligibility letter provided by the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection up to a maximum of 50 weeks per year. The CEC Saver Programme is closed for new registrations. The CEC Saver Programme will cease all operations once all participants registered on or before the 14th February 2020 have completed their allotted time on the programme.

5.1.3 After-School Child Care Saver Programme (ASCC)

The ASCC Saver Programme is administered and funded by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs. It provides afterschool care for primary school children for certain categories of working parents/guardians and parents/guardians on employment programmes (not including Community Employment) registered on ASCC on or before February 14th 2020, based on eligibility criteria provided by the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection. The ASCC Saver Programme is available for a once off maximum of 52 weeks and for this final programme year this allowance must be used consecutively. **The ASCC Saver Programme is closed for new registrations.** The ASCC Saver Programme will cease operating once all participants registered before the 14th February 2020 have completed their allotted time on the scheme.

5.2 Types of Childcare Places under the TEC Programme

- Full day-care places (more than 5 hours per day, CETS only)
- Part-time places (between 3 hours 31 minutes and 5 hours, CETS, CEC (CEC AS under top-up arrangements)
- After School (up to 3 hours 30 minutes, CETS, CEC AS and ASCC)
- After School + Transport (CETS and ASCC)

5.3 TEC Top Ups

Extra funding is provided to compensate for school holidays. This is referred to as a 'top-up'. The TEC Saver Programme is only available through participating early year's services; a list of these services is available through the relevant local CCC.

Children who were registered in the TEC Programme on or before the 14th of February 2020 are called 'Savers'.

5.4 Service closure

If a childcare provider closes its service, notice must be submitted in writing immediately to their local County Childcare Committee and to pipdocuments@pobal.ie. A service closure and a change of circumstances require the service to end date registrations for all current registrations at closure date.

Chapter 6 Eligibility/Registration - TEC Saver Programme

6.1 Eligibility for TEC (CETS, CEC and ASCC)

All TEC participants' eligibility is determined by the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (DEASP) and/or Solas - ETB and is outlined below for each programme.

6.1.1 Eligibility Criteria for CETS

Prior to February 14th 2020, registered participants on the following Further Education Programmes were eligible to apply for **CETS** funding:

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

There is no minimum age requirement, but a child must be under 15 years of age on the childcare start date for CETS.

6.1.2 Documents/information required for CETS

Parent/guardian TEC Savers must provide a letter from their training provider to include hours of the training and education course, and start and finish dates at the commencement of each term, or on request. Both the parent/guardian and child's Personal Public Service Numbers (PPSNs) are also required.

6.1.3 Eligibility Criteria for CEC

Under the **CEC** programme (pre-school and after-school), a Community Employment (CE) participant who required childcare in order to begin or continue on a CE scheme was eligible for a childcare place on the CEC scheme up until February 14th 2020. CEC was closed to new registrations after that date. A child must be under 5 years of age on the childcare start date for CEC (Pre-School). A child must be under 13 years of age on the childcare start date for CEC (After-school).

6.1.4 Documents/information required for CEC

Parent/guardian must provide a letter from their CE Sponsor before the commencement of CEC to include hours of work and start and finish dates. Updated paperwork may be requested at any time.

6.1.5 Eligibility Criteria for ASCC

Under the ASCC programme parents were eligible for **ASCC** up until February 14th 2020 if they have one or more children aged between 4 and 13 who are in primary school and:

- were in receipt of Working Family Payment (WFP) (regardless of duration);
or
- were claiming (**and had been for the three months prior to February 14th 2020**), either Jobseeker's Benefit (JB), Jobseeker's Allowance (JA), Jobseeker's Transitional payment (JST) or One-Parent Family Payment (OFP) or were on a DEASP employment programme;
and
- either:
 - started a new job; or
 - increased employment; or
 - started a DEASP employment programme (except CE*).

Note: **CE is excluded from eligibility for ASCC as the CE Childcare (CEC) Programme provides subsidised childcare for all CE participants with children from 0 to 13 years of age.*

A child must be in primary school and less than 13 years of age on the childcare start date for ASCC (including summer prior to starting secondary school).

6.1.6 Documents/information required for ASCC

Parents/guardians may provide either a letter from the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (DEASP) confirming their status, or a printed statement from their automated statement facility on their website. NOTE: Availing of ASCC does not preclude subsequent application for Working Family Payment (WFP), where other WFP eligibility criteria are met.

Documentation containing PPSN and any other personal information must be destroyed once no longer required.

6.2. Transport service

- i. "With transport" means that the child will be transported to school (drop-off) and from school (pick up) by the service.
- ii. CETS part-time childcare does not include transport. Parents/guardians must choose between having the extra hours of childcare through a part-time place, i.e. more than 3.5 hours, and paying for transport as an optional extra or choosing the after-school with transport session and paying for the extra care (time) needed beyond 3.5 hours

6.3 Sign-in

- i. The TEC parent/guardian must sign-in on a weekly basis with the childcare provider to declare to the service that they are still in attendance at their relevant course/work placement; sign-in sheets cannot be pre-signed. Failure to sign in will result in the service submitting a leaver form for that child.
- ii. The childcare provider must contact their local CCC where a parent/guardian hasn't signed in if there are exceptional circumstances, for authorisation to keep the TEC Saver place open. (Please see "non-attendance" rule below).
- iii. An additional adult may sign-in on behalf of a parent/guardian who is not in a position to drop off/collect their child. A signed letter of permission must be provided by the parent/guardian to the childcare provider to this effect.

6.4 Mid-term/Summer Periods

A parent/guardian may seek to extend their childcare to cover mid-term and summer periods under CETS, CEC and ASCC. This holiday time is referred to as a 'top-up' and is up to 14 weeks for CETS, and 10 weeks for CEC and ASCC. There are no changes required for top ups as they are pre-programmed at the initial (pre-NCS) registration

Table 1 TEC Funding Rates

Targeted Programmes: Funding Amounts	Childcare Education and Training Support (CETS) (pro-rata up to 5 days per week)	After-School Childcare (ASCC) (pro-rata up to 5 days per week)	Community Employment Childcare Pre-school (CEC PS) Flat Rate*- 5 days per week)	Community Employment Childcare After-School Childcare (CEC AS) Flat Rate - 5 days per week)
Full-Day Weekly Payment (5 to 10 hours per day)	€145pw	N/A	N/A	N/A
Part-time Weekly Payment (3:31-5:00 hours per day)	€80pw + 14wk top-up at €65 extra per week	N/A	€80pw * pro-rata when full-time childcare used a couple of days and child is in ECCE also	N/A
Sessional Weekly Payment (2:16-3:30 hours per day)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Half Session Weekly Payment(1:00-2:15 hours per day)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
After-School (up to 3:30 hours per day)	€45pw + 14wk top-up at €100 extra per week	€45pw + 10 wk top-up at €100 extra per week	N/A	€45pw + 10wk top-up to part-time at €35 extra per week
After-School + Transport	€80pw + 14wk top-up at €65 extra per week	€80pw + 10 wk top-up at €65 extra per week	N/A	N/A
Maximum Parental Contribution (pro-rata applicable) <small>*Subvention plus parental contribution combined cannot exceed the cost of the place as per service fees list</small>	Full-Day Part-time After-School After-School with Transport	€25pw €15pw €5pw €15pw	€15pw	€15pw

6.5 Registering a child on the TEC Saver Programme

6.5.1 Agreeing Childcare Provision

The Service Manager must confirm and agree with parents/guardians the number of days, session type and pattern of attendance that the child is being registered for prior to registering the child for a TEC Saver Programme place on PIP.

6.5.2 Parent Declaration Form

Parents/guardians must sign a PIP Parent Declaration Form to indicate that they understand the terms of the programme and that all child registration details are accurate. A record of each agreement must be maintained by the childcare provider.

6.5.3 TEC Saver Programme Child Registration on PIP

The Service Provider must register children on the PIP online system under their TEC Saver Programme Funding Agreement. Please refer to PIP 'TEC Saver How to Guide' via the PIP Homepage. Subvention will be paid in respect of eligible children with effect from the child's start date.

6.5.4 Registering Children's Attendance

Each child's PIP registration must reflect the actual attendance pattern of the child. Where there is a discrepancy between attendance and registration, the childcare provider must amend the registration on PIP at the next available Saver Management Window. Failure to update registrations to reflect the actual attendance pattern will result in an over-claim due to the Department. Over-claims will be recouped in accordance with the TEC Saver Programme Funding Agreement (Instructions on Child Registration are available on the PIP Portal).

Chapter 7 Saver Management Windows

7.1 The Saver Management Window

The "Saver Management Window" is a periodic re-opening of PIP at defined times throughout the programme year to allow Service Providers to make amendments to existing registrations to reflect changes in attendance, level of service etc. **All registrations must be submitted on PIP within the first Saver Management Window (10th August – 9th November 2020).**

7.2 Leavers and Cancellations

Service providers are allowed to submit leavers/cancellations of registrations at any time and not specifically during the Saver Management Windows.

Further information on the "Saver Management Window" system will be made available on the 'TEC Savers How to Guide' via the PIP portal.

7.3 2020/2021 Saver Management Windows

The Saver Management Windows for the 2020/21 programme year are as follows:

Table 2 Saver Management Windows

From	To
August 10 th 2020	November 9 th 2020
December 18 th 2020	January 11 th 2021
February 12 th 2021	March 8 th 2021
March 26 th 2021	April 19 th 2021
June 25 th 2021	July 19 th 2021

Payment of subsidies will take account of updates made within the “Saver Management Window”.

Chapter 8 Attendance

8.1 Non Attendance

If a child has not attended, the Service Provider should contact the parent/guardian to establish the cause of the child’s absence within the first week of the absence commencing. Where a child has not attended the service for 4 consecutive weeks, the service must complete a PIP Leaver form stating the date the child last attended the service.

8.2 Special Circumstances

In certain special circumstances, a service may apply to the local CCC to retain the registration beyond 4 weeks to 6/12weeks. (Please refer to NCS Policy Guidelines for details of special circumstances www.ncs.gov.ie). The relevant CCC may seek supporting proof of special circumstances. Acceptable proofs may include a letter or medical certificate which can be uploaded onto the system by the provider (as provided by and with the agreement of the parent).

Where possible providers should apply to the relevant CCC for special circumstances prior to end of 4th week of absence.

Table 3 Qualifying Special Circumstances

Qualifying Circumstances	Maximum Absence for which Subsidy is payable
Immediate family bereavement	6 weeks
Extended travel once a year to the birthplace of the child or either of the child’s parents	6 weeks
Prolonged illness (more than four weeks), of either the child or a parent	12 weeks

Where an application for special circumstances is submitted and the relevant CCC decides that special circumstances do not apply, the provider must end date the registration and payment will cease with effect from that end date (Which can be no later than the end of the four weeks of continuous absence).

Where no letter is submitted by end of six weeks of continuous absence and the child has not returned to the service within that time, the provider must end date the registration and payment will cease with effect from that end date (Which can be no later than the end of the 4 weeks of continuous absence).

Where a letter is submitted no later than 6 weeks from the original absence but later than 4 weeks (and consequentially the registration has been end dated), the registration may be restored during the next Saver Management Window.

8.3 Reduction in Attendance/PIP Updating

Where attendance differs from registration in a consistent pattern over a 4 week period, registrations must be updated to reflect the actual pattern of attendance.

Where a service is notified that a child registered on the TEC Saver Programme is reducing their level of attendance e.g. from 4 full days per week to 2 full days per week or from full-time to part-time, the service will set a leave date on the current registration and re-register the child with the new level of attendance.

Updates on PIP registrations must be completed within the next available Saver Management Window. Failure to update registrations to reflect the actual attendance pattern will result in an over-claim due to the Department. Over-claims will be recouped in accordance with the terms of the TEC Saver Programme Funding Agreement.

8.4 Persistent Under-attendance

Where attendance has been less than the registered hours in each of the previous 4 weeks a service may apply to the local CCC to retain the registration beyond 4 weeks to 12 weeks, these applications are limited to prolonged illness i.e. regular attendance at medical or therapeutic appointments by the child, the parent or a sibling.

In all instances providers should notify the relevant CCC in advance of a forthcoming continuous absence where they believe exceptional/special circumstances will apply.

8.5 Departure from service

If a child leaves the service, a provider must inform Pobal immediately stating the date the child last attended the service. Parents/Guardians must give providers four weeks-notice of a departure from a service. This will allow the providers to update PIP with payment ceasing on the actual date of departure. In cases where no notice of departure is given to the provider, the provider may claim 4 weeks subsidy in lieu of notice.

While a parent/guardian is free to remove their child from a service at any point, they will not be allowed to avail of further childcare funding while the approved funding is committed to the service during this four weeks-notice period. If the child is not in attendance in a new service by the end of the notice period the child will lose its saver status.

8.6 Exception to the Four Weeks' Notice Period Rule

A parent/guardian can remove their child from a service and re-register them in a new service without being required to serve the four weeks' notice period where a service has been given notice by Tusla that they are to be removed from the Tusla register. Therefore the Saver has up until the end of a 12 week continuous period to take up a TEC Saver Programme childcare place in a registered service to retain their Saver status (see Chapter 4.3: Retention of Saver Status).

Chapter 9 Record Keeping

9.1 Obligation of a Service Provider

Service Providers must keep an accurate record of each child's **actual attendance** to include daily arrival and departure times for each child. The services' registrations on PIP must match actual attendance (actual child attendance and not opening times of session/service) as recorded in the attendance records. A copy of a good practice attendance records can be found on page 25 of this document.

9.2 Requirement to Maintain Attendance Records

The Approved Service Provider shall maintain attendance records on a daily basis of registered children that records the daily hours of attendance, showing the child's full name, date of attendance, time of child's arrival and time of child's departure and the name of the person responsible for recording each arrival and departure. The record of attendance for each room must accurately reflect the children in the room, and must be updated when a child leaves or enters.

The arrival and departure of each child must be recorded in real time by the Service Provider. Attendance records must be kept in an appropriate manner that is sufficient to establish actual duration of attendance of each named child in terms of hours. The child's name must be recorded in a consistent manner in order to facilitate identification of patterns of attendance (i.e. if the attendance records are weekly sheets, the child's name should be in the same place each week). Weekly or monthly attendance sheets are preferable as they facilitate establishing patterns of attendance. In addition the following points should be noted:

1. Maintain separate attendance records /roll books for each session/room.
2. If a child moves to another room to avail of their ECCE session, then this should be identifiable through the attendance records.
3. State Child's full name (as per PIP records)
4. Keep names of children in a consistent sequence throughout the cycle. Retain records of children who have left the service i.e. do not delete or overwrite.
5. Ensure attendance records /roll books are filled out by staff member working in the room.
6. Keep Parent's Sign in and out book separate to Attendance records /roll books.
7. Don't use individual daily sheets/diaries. Weekly/monthly records facilitate ascertaining patterns of attendance.
8. Input time of arrival and departure for all children within the service including Afterschool and Breakfast clubs. Don't use ticks.
9. Ensure Staff attendance is recorded daily on each room/session attendance records/roll book.
10. Where electronic records are maintained, the service must be able to produce weekly/monthly reports for individual children which show their level of attendance for the cycle to date.

Attendance records will be reviewed during compliance visits. Please see 'Good Practice on attendance records' guide on page 25 of this document.

9.3 Failure to Maintain Appropriate Attendance Records

Failure to maintain attendance records may result in an assumption of zero hour's attendance. The DCYA may withdraw future payments from the provider and/or require repayment of over-claimed monies already paid for the period concerned.

Failure to maintain sufficient attendance records (e.g. where attendance records are kept, but in a format which does not allow a compliance visit officer to determine the hours which a child has attended, such as through use of "ticks") may result in an assumption of minimal hour's attendance (i.e. sessional/half sessional service). The DCYA can withdraw future payments from the provider and/or require repayment of over-claimed monies already paid for the period concerned.

Chapter 10 Compliance

10.1 Responsibility of a Service Provider

It is the responsibility of the Service Provider to ensure compliance with their Funding Agreement requirements, which includes adherence to this rules document. Service Providers should ensure that they understand and adhere to the contents of this document, as well as with the funding agreements and 'How To' guides available on the PIP portal. Failure to do so will result in a finding of non-compliance, will require corrective action and could result in sanctions against the Service Provider up to but not limited to exclusion from DCYA funded programmes.

In order to make compliance visits as efficient as possible for both providers and visit officers, Service Providers should ensure that their compliance file is kept up to date and contains:

- attendance records;
- PIP parental declaration forms;
- Parent/guardian letters;
- Fee records;
- Staff qualifications;
- Higher Capitation forms;
- Evidence of Tusla registration.

The compliance file must be kept on site and available for inspection at all times.

Services should also ensure that:

- PIP registrations are correct,
 - PIP Fees list and PIP calendar, for all approved funding programmes, are clearly displayed for parents and,
 - **There is a staff member on site at all times who has access to the compliance file and can facilitate the visit. Failure to do same could result in a service being found non-compliant.**
- Please note that if the records are readily available for review any interruption to the service will be minimal, other than seeking clarifications when required.

10.2 Compliance Visits

- i. Services must facilitate compliance visits which will be made without notice, to include access to the premises, personnel and relevant records.
- ii. All documentation related to the financial affairs of the service, accounts, fees records, staff qualifications, PIP, fees lists, registers and attendance records must be on-site at all times. These records must be kept for a minimum period of seven years from expiry of contract.
- iii. Compliance visit officers may inspect and take copies of, any books, records or other documents (including books, records or documents stored in non-legible form), or extracts therefrom, that he or she finds in the course of his or her inspection.



Good Practice Guide - Attendance Records

The maintenance of good attendance records is a requirement for both compliance with the DCYA Rules for TEC Saver Programme and the [Child Care Act 1991 \(Early Years Services\) Regulations 2016](#) and [Child Care Act 1991 \(Early Years Services\) \(Registration of School Age Services\) Regulations 2018](#). Attendance records can be maintained in a variety of formats e.g roll books, weekly sheet formats or electronic formats. Pobal/the DCYA don't direct any specific format be used however from a good practice perspective we have collated some tips on how attendance can be consistently recorded to meet the DCYA Funded Programme requirements. For more support please contact your local City/County Childcare Committee.

From the Start

- Ensure there are attendance records /roll books for each session/room including Breakfast clubs.
- State Child's full name (as per PIP records) - Don't use nicknames.
- Keep names of children in a consistent sequence throughout the cycle (facilitates attendance tracking). If a new child starts with the service, add their name to the bottom of the list.
- Use a ball point pen not pencil.
- Ensure attendance records/ roll books are accessible from beginning of cycle (including where a child's registration period has expired).
- Ensure attendance records /roll books are filled out by staff member working in the room.
- Keep Parent's Sign in and out book separate to Attendance records /roll books (if necessary).
- Don't use individual daily sheets/diaries.
- Date the week of attendance.

Each Day

- Input time of arrival and departure for all children within the service including Afterschool. (Where a service collects children from a school for an afterschool service, please record attendance from the time the children are under the services responsibility.) Don't use ticks.
- Ensure Staff attendance is recorded daily on each room/session attendance records/roll book.

Absences/ Leavers/ Movers

- Be consistent in documenting non-attendance e.g. always use an X for absent.
- If a child leaves the service, leave name on roll book and put a line through the remaining days of programme cycle to show as a leaver.
- If a child moves session/room within the service during the cycle – enter a note to reflect this on attendance records/ roll books.
- If child shares their day/week on an ongoing basis between different sessions/rooms – enter a note to reflect this on attendance records/ roll books.
- A Child should be recorded in record of attendance for each room they attend if moving rooms during day/week.
- Don't use Tippex on the attendance sheet/roll book - keep the information visible if a child has left.

Weekly Sheets

- If using weekly sheets, keep in date order and secure in a folder.

Electronic Records

- Make sure they are consistent and show attendance of child for full cycle.
- Where electronic records are maintained, the service **must** be able to produce weekly/monthly reports for individual children which show their level of attendance for the cycle to date. It is

Archiving

recommended that these reports are regularly produced and made available for compliance purposes.aka sure that the password is to hand and that a staff member understands how to retrieve



the information from the system.

- Attendance records/ roll books must be kept for the time periods outlined in each programmes' Funding Agreement e.g 2020/2021 ECCE requirement states 7 years after the cycle ends.

Sample Staff Attendance Record

Room:										
Week Ending: _/_/	Monday		Tuesday		Wednesday		Thursday		Friday	
Staff Name:	Start Time:	Finish Time:	Start Time:	Finish Time:	Start Time:	Finish Time:	Start Time:	Finish Time:	Start Time:	Finish Time:



Sample Child Attendance Record

Room:											
Week Ending: _/_/___	Monday		Tuesday		Wednesday		Thursday		Friday		
Childs Name	Time of Arrival	Time of Departure	Time of Arrival	Time of Departure	Time of Arrival	Time of Departure	Time of Arrival	Time of Departure	Time of Arrival	Time of Departure	

11.1 Force Majeure and Funding

Force Majeure allows a party to suspend or terminate the performance of its obligations when certain circumstances beyond their control arise. The Department is under no obligation to fund ‘force majeure’ days and do so at their own discretion.

The DCYA force majeure policy relates to contractual force majeure (not to be confused with employer force majeure).

11.2 Force Majeure Clause

“If and to the extent that a Service Provider is hindered or prevented by circumstances not within its reasonable ability to control, including but not limited to, acts of God, inclement weather, flood, lightning, fire, trade disputes, strikes, lockouts, acts of terrorism, war, military operations, epidemic, pandemics, acts or omissions of third parties for whom the Affected Party is not responsible (Force Majeure) from performing any of its obligations under the TEC Saver Programme Funding Agreement, the Affected Party shall be relieved of liability for failure to perform such obligations.”

TEC Saver Funding Agreement 2020-2021

11.3 Reporting of Force Majeure Incident

Service Providers must contact Pobal to inform them of their intention to claim force majeure at the onset of the incident in question, giving a brief outline of the issue and their estimated number of days’ closure.

11.4 Force Majeure Claim Process Deadline

Service Providers should formally claim force majeure with Pobal via pipdocuments@pobal.ie no later than 3 days after the incident, even if the incident is ongoing.

Chapter 12 Childminders

12.1 Definition of a Childminder

A childminder is defined as a self-employed person who minds other people’s children in their own home. They offer a flexible service, tailored to each child, thereby helping parents and guardians to balance their work and family commitments

12.2 Childminders and Tusla registration

Childminders who are in contract for the TEC Saver Programme must be registered with Tusla. To be registered with Tusla a childminder must comply with the requirements for childminders as outlined in the [Child Care Regulations \(The Child Care Act 1991 \(Early Years Services\)\(Amendments\) Regulations 2016](#) and the [Childcare Act 1991\(Registration of School Age Services\) Regulations 2018](#).

12.3 Childminders Maximum Numbers

Under the new regulations if a childminder is minding a mix of both pre-school and school age children, **Table 3** below sets out the maximum numbers of children that they can care for at the same time.

Table 4 Childminder maximum numbers

No. of pre-school children being cared for	Maximum no. of school age children
0	12
1	10
2	7
3	5
4	2
5	1

12.4 Conditions of Tusla Exemption from Registration

A childminder is exempt from registering with Tusla if they care for a mix of pre-school and school age children (up to a maximum of 6 children) as set out in **Table 4** above.

Table 5 Childminder Tusla registration exemption

No. of pre-school children being cared for	Maximum no. of school age children
1	5
2	4
3*	3

* no more than 2 babies under 15 months

If a childminder is minding more than 6 mixed aged children at any one time, they must register with Tusla. A childminder who is required to register should apply to register as a pre-school childminder if they care for more pre-school children than school age children, and as a school age childminder if they care for more school age children than pre-school children.

For further information on the regulatory requirements for childminders please see the [Quality and Regulatory Framework](#) for Childminders (QRF) on the Tusla website.

Chapter 13 Financial Requirements

13.1 Responsibilities of a Service Provider

It is an essential requirement that all public monies are appropriately accounted for and used for their intended purpose.

The Service Provider will maintain up-to-date child registration information on PIP.

The Service Provider shall maintain appropriate records to enable verification by the Department or agents acting on its behalf (including Pobal) that the general terms of the TEC Saver Programme Funding Agreement are complied with.

In particular, such records will include the following;

- (1) **An attendance register which clearly shows the dates, times and durations of attendance for each individually identified child for every day that the child is in attendance;**
- (2) Parental agreements which set out the number of childcare weeks and the number of childcare hours each week that have been agreed to be provided to the eligible Saver with the commitment by the Service Provider to offset the subsidy in full against the agreed fee, which is signed by the parent (Parental Declaration Form).
- (3) Records of income, to include receipts from parents, to be kept up to date and available for verification purposes.

Failure by the Service Provider to maintain accurate attendance records and/or accurate update child registration details, as required in the TEC Saver Programme Funding Agreement may result in an immediate suspension of TEC Saver Programme funding and/or a requirement to repay over-claimed monies already paid and may result in a termination of the TEC Saver Programme Funding Agreement.

The Service Provider shall maintain appropriate annual accounts for each financial year in accordance with the timescales set out by the Companies Registration Office (CRO) (for limited companies) or by the Revenue Commissioners (for unincorporated entities). Copies of such accounts must be provided to Pobal or the Comptroller and Auditor General (C & AG) on request. Pobal CAR may share information found in the course of a governance, audit or compliance check with the relevant authorities, including, but not limited to, the Office of the Director of Corporate Enforcement, the Charities Regulator, and the Office of the Revenue Commissioners.

The Service Provider shall within its annual accounts separately record all monies received from Pobal relating directly or indirectly to the operation of the TEC Saver Programme and ensure that appropriate financial records are maintained.

The Service Provider shall respect and comply with the statutory role and regulatory and public accountability responsibilities of the Department, its agents and other relevant statutory bodies and at all times co-operate fully with the Department, its agents and all other statutory bodies in this regard.

The Service provider shall ensure that all financial records relating to monies received in relation to the operation of the TEC Saver Programme are available to Pobal on request. All financial records, including attendance records etc., must be retained for a period of 7 years.

13.2 De-committal and Recovery Procedures

Service Providers may at times be overpaid during the course of the year due to transfers, closures etc. If, at the end of the year (or on closure of a service), a service has been overpaid, a revised TEC Saver Programme allocation notification will issue and any excess TEC Saver Programme funding must be returned to Pobal.

The DCYA and/or Pobal, (on behalf of the DCYA), reserve the right to recoup overpayments made from one childcare funding programme from monies due for another. Pobal will liaise with services impacted by decommittal/recovery to agree an appropriate repayment plan.

Chapter 14 FAQs for TEC Programme

14.1 When does an ASCC letter of eligibility expire?

ASCC eligibility letters must be first registered for approval within one week of the date of the letter for a maximum of 52 weeks which must run consecutively.

14.2 Can a child still attend the service if the parent/guardian is not attending course/work placement due to sickness?

This will be considered on a case by case basis and a childcare provider must contact their local CCC for authorisation to keep the childcare place open. Documentary evidence of this must be retained for compliance purposes

14.3 Is it possible to have changeable care arrangements (no fixed pattern)?

This is subject to the agreement of the childcare provider. The parent/guardian may need to seek an alternative childcare provider if their provider cannot accommodate changeable arrangements.

14.4 Is it possible to have week-on/week-off childcare?

Yes. Instructions for the provider on how to do this can be found in the 'TEC Savers How to Guide'

14.4 If a CETS child does not attend for childcare for one week does the parent/guardian have to pay the parent contribution?

As part of the CETS registration, the service provider must request the parent's course calendar to note the weeks the parent/guardian is not on the course. The parent/guardian does not have to pay the parent/guardian contribution for the weeks the course is not running.

14.5 What should a childcare provider do if a child attends two days in one week and three days the next as an on-going pattern?

A childcare provider should submit registration on PIP for the two days per week with a request for PIP support to allocate an extra day every second week.