

E-Bulletin June Edition



Welcome to your Early Years e-Bulletin

It has been a very busy but exciting period for the Department of Children, Disability and Equality. I am delighted to share the details of many positive developments in the sector in recent months.

I am pleased to welcome the new maximum fee caps that will be introduced to Core Funding Partner Services for the 2025/2026 programme year, together with increased State investment that will improve affordability, quality, accessibility, and sustainability in the sector.

Under the new maximum fee caps, the highest fees charged by Partner Services will be reduced from September 2025, so that no parent will pay more than €295 for between 40 and 50 hours of childcare per week, before other State subsidies are applied. A parent being charged the maximum permissible fee of €295 per week for



E-Bulletin June Edition

a full day place would be entitled to receive the universal National Childcare Scheme subsidy of €96.30, meaning their own co-payment would be no more than €198.70 per week. Higher subsidies are available for many parents, depending on their level of income and the age and number of children in their family.

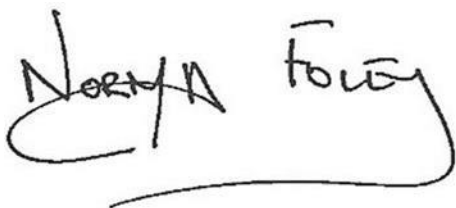
This represents the first step in my commitment to progressively reduce the cost of early learning and childcare to €200 per month per child over the lifetime of the Government. Not only will this reduce costs for families facing the highest fees in the country, but it will also address extreme fee income disparities across the sector.

Partner Services facing sustainability concerns can continue to avail of supports – including financial supports – through my Department's case management process. Furthermore, centre-based Partner Services will receive a new funding element this year: the Staff Funding Additional Contribution. This new grant will support Partner Services to meet the costs of new minimum pay rates in the sector, when these are agreed by the independent Joint Labour Committee for Early Years Services.

Improved pay and conditions will support quality and consistency of care and reduce staff turnover, which remains high in the sector. The Government supports outcomes from the Joint Labour Committee through the Core Funding scheme, and I look forward to the progress of the Joint Labour Committee's negotiations.

As we head into the summer period, may I thank you for all your dedicated hard work and I hope that you get to enjoy a well-deserved break over the coming months.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Norma Foley', with a long horizontal flourish underneath.

Norma Foley TD

Minister for Children, Disability and Equality

E-Bulletin June Edition



**An Roinn Leanaí, Míchumais
agus Comhionannais**
Department of Children,
Disability and Equality

Core Funding Programme Year 4

Core Funding will enter its fourth programme year from September 2025 to August 2026. For the first time, there will be an upper limit on fees for all new and existing services receiving Core Funding this September. For a typical full day care place (that is, 40 – 50 hours per week), parents can be charged no more than €295 per week.

With the universal subsidies available through the National Childcare Scheme, all parents will be paying less than €200 a week for the first time for between 40 and 50 hours of care. This will reduce costs for families who are facing the highest fees across the country in around 10 per cent of early learning and childcare providers. In reality, the vast majority of parents are already paying less than this and will continue to be protected with the freeze on fees that has been in place since 2022.

With an average full day fee of €197 nationwide and the universal subsidy covering almost half of this cost, the continued freeze on fees and new maximum fee cap will continue to improve affordability for families. The fee caps are facilitated by the common fee structure, which was introduced in the 2024/2025 programme year. Each Fee Band in the structure has a maximum allowable fee under Core Funding for these services.

E-Bulletin June Edition

The maximum allowable fees from September 2025 are below:

Fee Band	Hours per week	Maximum weekly fee for <u>ALL</u> Partner Services in 2025/2026
Band A	Less than 10 hours	€59
Band B	Between 10 hours and 19 hours 59 minutes	€118
Band C	Between 20 hours and 29 hours 59 minutes	€177
Band D	Between 30 hours and 39 hours 59 minutes	€236
Band E	Between 40 hours and 49 hours 59 minutes	€295
Band F	50 or more hours	€354

State funding for early learning and childcare providers through Core Funding will be increased by nearly €20 million for the forthcoming 2025/2026 programme year, bringing it to a record level of a minimum €350 million.

In addition, a maximum of €45 million in State funding will be made available, specifically ringfenced to support providers in meeting the costs of increases in minimum rates of pay arising from the Joint Labour Committee process.

The new maximum fee cap and increased State investment are important steps towards the Government's commitment to progressively reduce the cost of early learning and childcare to €200 per month per child during the lifetime of the Government.

Applications to Core Funding Year 4 are now open on the Early Years Hive. Further detail on Year 4 of Core Funding, including an overview of the changes and the Core Funding Partner Service Funding Agreement, can be found [here](#).

E-Bulletin June Edition

2025 Re-registration of Services

As referred to in the section below from Tusla, over 4,000 services are required to complete the re-registration process later this year. In order to ensure a smooth reregistration, the Department would encourage providers to follow the steps outlined by Tusla at their earliest possible convenience. This will also ensure that there are no delays or issues relating to payments under any of the Department's schemes, all of which require a valid Tusla registration as part of the funding agreement. It is important to note that the Department cannot pay any scheme funding for any unregistered period with Tusla. A valid registration is required for each service type a service offers, for example, pre-school, school-age or childminding.



E-Bulletin June Edition



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland



Arna chomhchistiú ag
an Aontas Eorpach

Co-Funded by the
European Union

Nurturing Skills Learner Fund (NSLF)

The Pilot Nurturing Skills Learner Fund (NSLF) continues to support early years educators to undertake approved qualifications at Levels 7 and 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications, while they continue to work within the early learning and care sector within a service that has a Core Funding contract with the Department.

The NSLF aims to help meet the Government objective of achieving a graduate-led workforce in early learning and care services by 2028.

Applications for the NSLF for the academic year 2025/2026 are now closed. All applicants will receive communication from Pobal regarding the outcome of their application. For those who are awarded NSLF funding, we wish them every success in their studies.

Information for Continuing Students

This section relates to existing students who successfully received NSLF funding for Academic Year 2024/2025 and wish to continue to receive funding for NSLF for Academic Year 2025/2026.

Pobal will contact continuing students directly in early summer asking individuals to verify their continuing eligibility for NSLF and their intention to progress with their studies. Once eligibility is confirmed a new Letter of Conditional Funding will issue to the student for the academic year 2025/2026.

NSLF is co-funded under the Irish Government's Employment, Inclusion Skills and Training (EIST) scheme and the European Union's European Social Fund + (ESF+).

E-Bulletin June Edition

Temporary student recruitment in Early Learning and Care



In light of the current staffing pressures in services, on a temporary basis the Department of Children, Disability and Equality is opening its accelerated process for assessment of equivalence with the level 5 minimum qualification requirement for students currently enrolled on a recognised level 6, 7 or 8 course to help services with short-term staffing shortages.

This 'Fast Track' process for assessment of equivalence with the level 5 minimum qualification requirement is open to students who are currently enrolled on and have completed their first year of study and work placement on a level 6, 7 or 8 course that is on the list of the Department's Early Years Recognised Qualifications.

Students who are approved through the 'Fast Track' accelerated assessment process will receive a Letter of Temporary Permission to Practice from the Department valid until 1 September 2025, which is recognised by Tusla as meeting the requirements of Section 9(4) of the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

E-Bulletin June Edition

The Registered Provider is responsible for all vetting, induction training, supervision and other governance requirements for staff, as set out in the Regulations, for students who are employed as a result of these temporary arrangements.

If a student does not yet have either a Level 5 or higher qualification or a Letter of Qualification Recognition, the student may apply for a Letter of Temporary Permission to Practice provided the student:

- Is currently registered on a level 6, 7 or 8 programme listed on the DCDE approved qualification list;
- Has successfully completed the first year of the course; and
- Has successfully completed a practice placement working with children in an ELC setting as part of their studies.

In order to apply for a Letter of Temporary Permission to Practice, a student should:

- Complete a Student Fast Track Application Form for Temporary Permission to Practice and have it signed and stamped by their further or higher education institution; then
- Email a scanned copy of this signed and stamped form to eyqualifications@dcde.gov.ie where it will be assessed and, if approved, a Letter of Temporary Permission to Practice will be issued to the student.

A student who has a Letter of Temporary Permission to Practice may be employed to work with children in an ELC setting until at latest 01 September 2025.

In addition, the application process remains in place for individuals – including students – to obtain a general (not time-limited) Letter of Qualification Recognition to Practice, on the basis of equivalence of their qualification profile with a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at level 5 on the National Framework of Qualifications. The Department has launched an online application process for current students who wish to apply for a standard letter of qualification recognition at the minimum regulatory requirements which can be found [here](#).

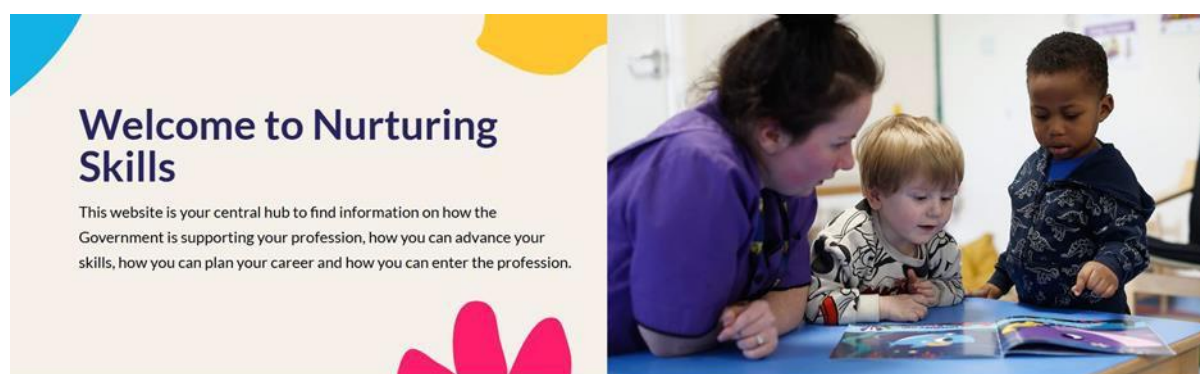
E-Bulletin June Edition

New online resource now available

We are pleased to share that the new Nurturing Skills website and Learning Hub was officially launched on 24 May at the national conference: Continuing the Journey: Exploring the updated Aistear: The Early Childhood Curriculum Framework.

The website has been developed as a central hub for early years educators and school-age childcare practitioners. It brings together key information on how the Government is supporting the workforce, outlines opportunities to advance your skills and provides guidance on planning your career, as well as information about entering the profession. We encourage you to explore the Nurturing Skills website and to make full use of the wide range of supports and resources now available.

Access the website here: www.nurturingskills.ie



**Nurturing Skills for Early Years Educators, School-Age
Childcare Practitioners and Childminders**

E-Bulletin June Edition

National Aistear Conference

On Saturday, 24 May, the Department of Children, Disability and Equality, together with the Department of Education and Youth, and the National Council for Curriculum Assessment hosted a national Aistear conference in Dublin. This conference, Continuing the Journey: Exploring the updated Aistear, focused on the updated Aistear: The Early Childhood Curriculum Framework. It was attended by over 400 early years educators and key stakeholders from across the country.

A wonderful keynote was provided by Professor Iram Siraj, with valuable inputs also from Arlene Forster, Dr Geraldine French, Grainne Mc Kenna, Shirley Heaney, Máire Uí Mhurchú, Lorraine Farrell, Dr Mary Daly and Dr Sharon Skehill. The speakers explored the updated framework, reflecting on the educators shared journey and provided inspiration on how to meaningfully bring the updated Aistear to life within daily practice.

The conference proved to be very engaging and thought-provoking, providing a celebration of current inspirational practice and an exploration of the key changes and messages that have underpinned the update of Aistear.

The Department would like to offer its thanks to all attendees for their participation on the day, and to educators for an ongoing commitment to early childhood education.

Please see a selection of photos below from the day.

E-Bulletin June Edition

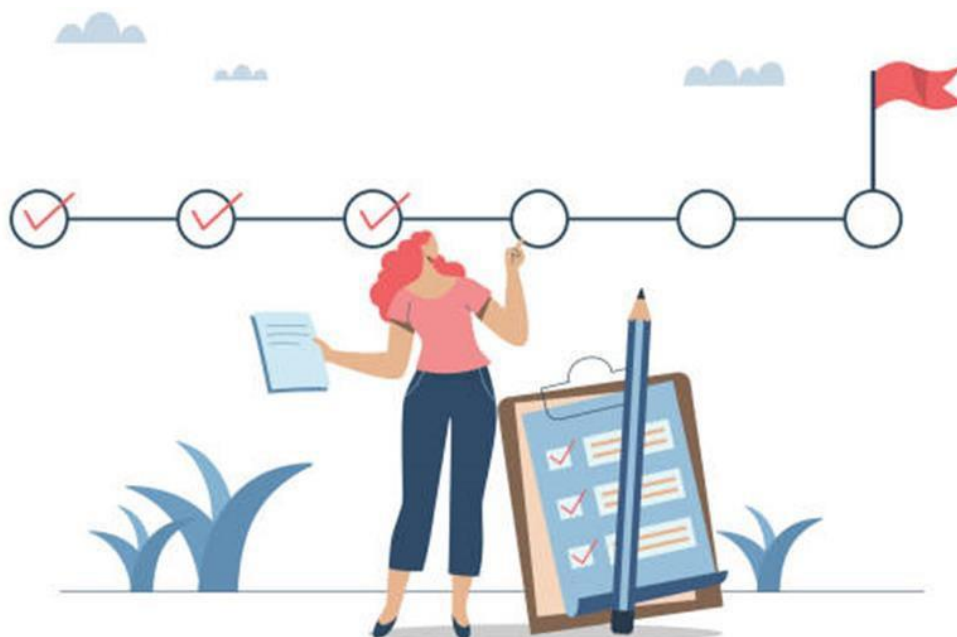
National Aistear Conference 2025



E-Bulletin June Edition

Equal Start Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

RSM UK have commenced work to develop a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for Equal Start, on behalf of the Department. The purpose of the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework is to facilitate oversight of the work and impact of Equal Start and to assess the efficacy of Equal Start to achieve its goal and objectives.



E-Bulletin June Edition

€25m Building Blocks' funding to deliver 1,500 more ELC places

Minister Foley announced €25 million in funding to deliver 1,500 additional early learning and childcare places across the country on 19 May.

A total of 78 applications were received for the Building Blocks Extension Grant scheme, of which 49 were recommended by Minister Foley to be put forward to the next stage of the grant process. These 49 services will deliver up to 1,500 additional full-time places for one–three-year-olds, with places expected to begin to come on stream later this year.

The purpose of the Building Blocks Extension Grant Scheme is to deliver additional capacity in the sector by supporting existing private or community early learning and childcare services to undertake physical extensions to existing premises, or for community services to purchase or construct new premises.

Of the 49 services progressing to the next stage, 24 are community extension projects, four are purchasing projects, seven are private extension projects and 14 are community construction projects.

The Building Blocks Extension Grant Scheme is part of the wider Building Blocks Capital Programme for Early Learning and Childcare under the National Development Plan. It is the third capital scheme under the Building Blocks programme. It follows the Building Blocks Improvement Grant, delivered in 2023 and the Building Blocks Expansion Scheme, delivered in 2024.

Minister Foley is considering the possibilities for future capital programmes, including potentially operating a Building Blocks type scheme in 2026 to further support the expansion of provision. As soon as those details are finalised, there will be further communication with the sector.

Further details on the announcement of the Building Blocks Extension Grant Scheme can be found in the press release [here](#).

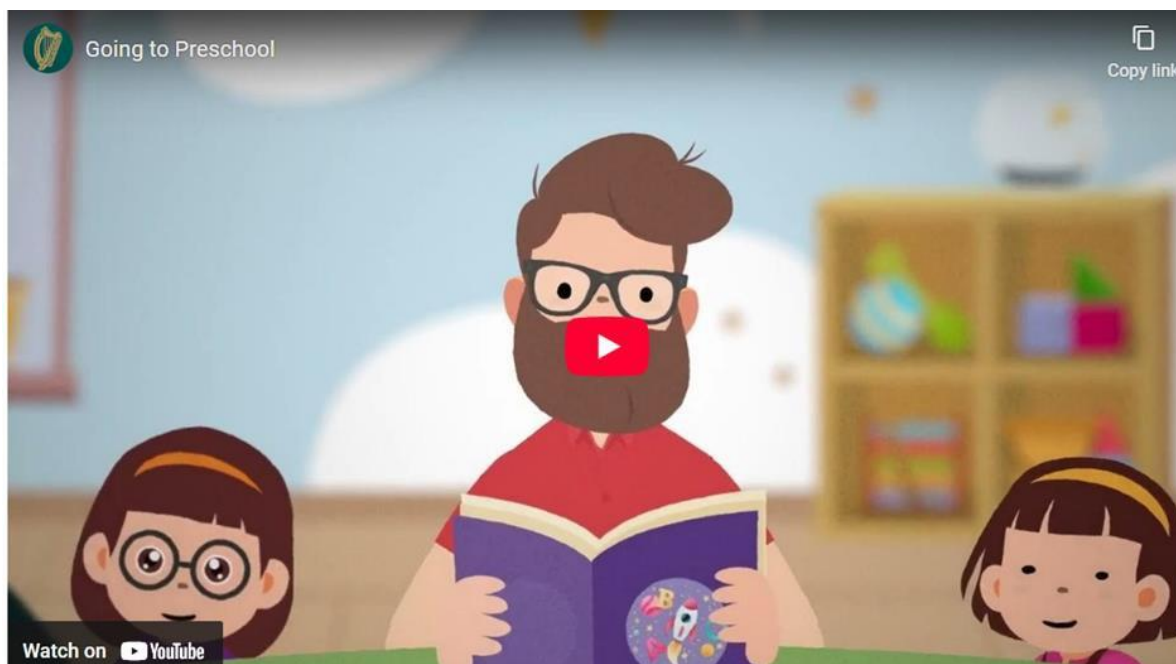
E-Bulletin June Edition

Let's Get Ready



Let's Get Ready is a wonderful [website](#) full of all the information families need for starting pre-school and primary school.

Going to pre-school can be a daunting experience for a child. Here is a new animation video to help children understand the fundamental experience of pre-school. Please share with families who have a child starting pre-school in September.



E-Bulletin June Edition

Childminders play a big impact on our child's day to day lives. This animation video will help children understand the day-to-day life in a childminder.



[Let's Get Ready](#) has all the information all families need for starting pre-school and primary school.

Children finishing pre-school and making the transition to primary school can pick up their free My Little Library Book Bag. [Let's Get Ready](#) has all of the information needed on My Little Library, including your My Little Library invitation.

E-Bulletin June Edition

Let's Play Ireland

[Let's Play Ireland](#) is an annual Government-led campaign designed to remind everyone, young and old, of the fundamental importance of play. Play in all forms is very important for the development of children. [Let's Play Ireland](#) has endless fun ideas and information to keep families busy this summer!



[Let's Play Ireland](#) has:

- Rainy day play ideas
- Messy play ideas
- Types of play
- Outdoor play ideas
- Fun things to do as a family
- Information about National Play Day 2025

E-Bulletin June Edition

Register for free membership to Barnardos' online library

Funded by Department of Children, Disability and Equality, Barnardos Library has unique collection of online resources to support you in your work, whether you are developing and reviewing policies, researching best practice or engaging in continuing professional development.

Benefits include access to:

- EBSCO Discovery Service
- Education Source Database
- Sociology Source Database
- A growing eBook collection
- Physical library collection of over 1800 books (hard copies) - postage options available on request
- Table of contents alerts from the Journal of Infant Mental Health
- A monthly members update of content that has been added to the library collection



Email Barnardos Library for more information here: resources@barnardos.ie. You can register for free membership with the link [here](#).

Department of Education and Youth Inspectorate Update for Early Learning and Care Settings June 2025



An Roinn Oideachais
agus Oige
Department of Education
and Youth

Inspectorate visits focusing on slow relational pedagogy with young children

In July and August, the Department of Education and Youth Inspectorate will conduct visits to a sample of early learning and care (ELC) settings during which there will be a particular focus on slow relational pedagogy with children under three years of age. The specific areas of enquiry for these visits will be informed by relevant aspects of the updated Aistear: The Early Childhood Curriculum Framework.



These visits will be conducted in accordance with the published parameters of standard Early Years Education Inspections (EYEI). The activities undertaken in the course of the visits will include observation of practice, professional dialogue with educators, leaders and managers, and engagement with children.

These Inspectorate visits will not result in a published inspection report on the individual setting. However, data from all of the settings visited will be anonymised and aggregated to produce a composite report and inform other communications on the topic.





EARLY YEARS INSPECTORATE

New Applications and Change in Circumstances 2025

Every year, there is a significant increase in the number of applications to establish new early years services or to make changes to existing services in time for the new academic year. We recognise the challenges providers experience to have everything in place and would like to re-iterate the importance of early preparation and submission of applications to be assured of approval within your prospective timeframes.

If you are trying to open a new service or make a change to an existing service to take effect in September 2025 period, please take note of the following timeframes for approval:



Proposed New Service Applications

All potential early years and school age care service providers must submit a complete application at least three months before intending to commence operation of an early years or school aged care service. Fully completed applications (which includes the submission of all required documentation) for proposed new services that are submitted before 1 June 2025 will be approved for opening in September 2025.

E-Bulletin June Edition

Applications submitted after this date are unlikely to be approved in time for a September opening date. All new applications for preschool settings currently require a fit for purpose inspection and time taken to complete same. This should be factored into your preparation.

Change in Circumstance Applications

In accordance with the Regulations, a Registered Provider must submit a complete change in circumstance application at least 60 days in advance of the proposed change. Fully completed applications (which includes the submission of all required documentation) for change in circumstances that are submitted before 1 July 2025 will be approved for operation in September 2025. Applications submitted after this date are unlikely to be approved in time for the beginning of the new academic year.

Please note that some categories of change requests such as change of service type to part time or full day, change of address and increase of numbers may require a fit for purpose inspection and time taken to complete same. This should be factored into your preparations.



E-Bulletin June Edition

Important Information for all applications:

- To ensure a fair and transparent process for everyone, complete applications are dealt with in order of date of receipt. As soon as applications are submitted, an automatic acknowledgement email will be sent. The registration team will then review and assess each application and liaise with you.
- Only applications with all the required documentation submitted are processed.
- While an application is being processed, we will communicate with you regarding key stages of the application. For example, we will advise you if information is missing, where the service has been passed to our inspection team for a 'fit for purpose' inspection and when the application is approved or closed.
- We do not provide daily updates as this would take us away from the work of processing the applications themselves. We ask that you are patient and allow us to undertake the necessary work. Where information is submitted correctly, we will process all applications as quickly as possible.
- We will only provide updates and respond to queries from the registered provider concerning an application, we do not provide information to third parties.

We make every effort to support providers during what is understandably an anxious and stressful time. However, we are seeing an increase in our officers experiencing threatening, rude and/or abusive conduct. Please be advised that staff have been instructed to terminate such calls and the matter will be referred to a senior manager. This conduct will not be tolerated under any circumstances so please ensure you treat our officers with respect.



E-Bulletin June Edition

We will continue to work hard to support providers to complete their applications successfully. We ask providers:

- read the information available on the website carefully,
- understand the required timescales,
- ensure that all necessary documents are submitted for each application,
- work with our staff through the relevant application process.

The Early Years Inspectorate takes no responsibility for late or incomplete applications.

Garda Vetting

From 1 February 2025 Tusla commenced providing the Garda Vetting Application Service for anyone who is a Registered Provider of an early years' service (under part VIIA of the Child Care Act 1991, as amended) or anyone who is planning to submit an application to become a Registered Provider. This includes:

- Registered Providers of pre-school services
- Registered Providers of school-age services
- Childminders
- Head of Boards of management who carry out quality assurance visits and other persons assigned to carry out quality assurance visits on behalf of the Head.

You can find more information on the new [Garda Vetting section of our website](#)

E-Bulletin June Edition

Childminding



The Early Years Inspectorate's system for processing applications for the registration of childminders is now well established. We have published a [range of resources](#) to support childminders and prospective childminders with the regulatory process. Resources include bite-size videos and guidance documents.

Guidance Documents and Videos	
Childminding Applications	
Guidance Documents	Supporting Videos
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Guide to the Tusla portal for Childminders▪ Guide to Registration application for Childminders	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Setting up an account on the Tusla Portal▪ Getting started with your childminding application▪ Completing the online application on the Tusla Portal
Pre-Registration Assessment	
Guidance Documents	Supporting Videos
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Guide to Pre-Registration Assessments for Childminders▪ Corrective Action Process for Childminding Services.▪ Safe sleep for babies and children Guidance for Childminders▪ A Guide to Assessment Findings Review for Childminders	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Pre-Registration Assessment▪ Childminding Home Visit▪ Corrective Action Process▪ Assessment Findings Review Process

E-Bulletin June Edition

More than 30 childminders have now successfully registered for the first time under the new regulations. We have established a feedback survey to enable childminders to tell us how they found the process and the ICT system supporting it.

If you have questions about childminding regulations, [our Childminder Frequently Asked Questions page](#) can provide further assistance. If you cannot find the answer to your question, you can contact the Childminder helpline.

Childminding Advice & Information

For information about the regulation of childminding, please have a look at the extensive [Childminder Frequently Asked Questions](#) on our website

If you can't find the answer to your question in the FAQs you can contact our Childminding helpline, either via email - cm.registration@tusla.ie or on (061) 440600 (option 9)



E-Bulletin June Edition



government supporting communities

We are delighted to be able to bring you the latest updates from Pobal Early Years and keep you updated on what's happening. See below for all the latest highlights.

1. Payment Dates

June 2025 Payments	
6 June	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) L7• National Childcare Scheme (NCS)• Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) (including AIM L1)
13 June	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) L7• National Childcare Scheme (NCS)• Community Childcare Subvention Programme (CCSP)
20 June	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) L7• National Childcare Scheme (NCS)
27 June	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) L7• National Childcare Scheme (NCS)• Community Childcare Subvention Programme (CCSP)• Core Funding
July 2025 Payments	
4 July	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) L7• National Childcare Scheme (NCS)
11 July	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) L7• National Childcare Scheme (NCS)• Community Childcare Subvention Programme (CCSP)
18 July	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) L7• National Childcare Scheme (NCS)
25 July	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) L7• National Childcare Scheme (NCS)• Community Childcare Subvention Programme (CCSP)
August 2025 Payments	
1 August	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) L7• National Childcare Scheme (NCS)• Core Funding
8 August	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) L7• National Childcare Scheme (NCS)• Community Childcare Subvention Programme (CCSP)
15 August	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) L7• National Childcare Scheme (NCS)
22 August	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) L7• National Childcare Scheme (NCS)• Community Childcare Subvention Programme (CCSP)
29 August	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) L7• National Childcare Scheme (NCS)• Core Funding

E-Bulletin June Edition

2. Annual Early Years Sector Profile Survey

We understand everyone is busy this time of year, so big thanks to service providers for taking the time to complete the 2024 / 2025 survey. The survey closed on 3 June.

The Sector Profile survey is really important, it allows us to assess the impact of Core Funding since its inception. It's therefore mandatory for all services contracted into Core Funding to complete the survey.

The survey and its results are valuable in terms of provision of early learning and care and school-age childcare into the future. It plays a central role in informing Government policy development and assessing the impact of policy change. It gives a comprehensive national analysis of services throughout Ireland.

Current information and data are available on the [Early Learning and Care Childcare website](#).



3. Pobal at Bloom

Pobal staff were on hand at Bloom in the Phoenix Park over the June Bank Holiday weekend at the Budding Bloomers area. This year there was a childminding focus.

This is our third year attending Bloom and every year we are delighted to meet parents, children and families. We were helping to explain the benefits of encouraging childminders to register so that parents could avail of the National Childcare Scheme, if they use a childminder.

Thanks again to our colleagues in the Department of Children, Disability and Equality for all the work they put into this each year.

E-Bulletin June Edition



Three of the many staff from Pobal who gave of their time to help promote the Government supports for early learning and childcare at Bord Bia Bloom.

4. Programme Readiness for the 2025/2026 Programme Year

Programme Readiness has commenced!

Information, guidance and training will be communicated on [the announcements page](#) of the Early Years Hive throughout Programme Readiness.

This year we have introduced graphics for our Programme Readiness announcements, be sure to keep an eye out for these over the coming weeks.

Help for each programme can be found under the relevant heading on [the Help & Support page](#) of the Early Years Hive.



E-Bulletin June Edition

5. Our Customer Service - You asked, we listened

We continue to listen to your feedback in the Early Years Provider Centre (EYPC).

We have made changes throughout the year to improve customer experience.

Some of the most recent things we have done include:

- **Notifications – ‘unread’:** Service providers can now mark notifications as 'unread' once they are opened on the Early Years Hive. This means other users in their service can read the notification if required.
- **Phone System Upgrade:** We have recently upgraded our phones in the EYPC, to answer your calls in the most efficient way possible. Included in this upgrade was a set of improved voice response messages to give services providers different ways of contacting us.

We will continue to work on improvements in the future. Watch this space.



E-Bulletin June Edition

6. Aistear National Conference

Pobal and Better Start spent an inspiring day at the Aistear National Conference on 24 May. The event launched the [Nurturing Skills website](#), an online platform supporting over 31,000 staff working early learning and care, school-age childcare and childminding settings in Ireland. We were proud to work on this innovative platform designed to support staff in their ongoing professional journey to deliver high-quality early learning and childcare.

The conference was a fantastic opportunity to network and collaborate with our colleagues in the wider sector. Many thanks to the Department of Children, Disability and Equality for hosting such an enjoyable day.



Staff from Pobal who attended the national Aistear Conference.

E-Bulletin June Edition



Forbairt Cáilíocht
Luathbhlianta Náisiúnta
National Early Years
Quality Development

Better Start Early Years Learning and Development

On 24 May, the Department of Children, Disability and Equality launched the new [Nurturing Skills website](#). This website will act as the central hub for early years educators, school-age practitioners and childminders; providing information, tools and resources that can help educators with career and professional development in the sector.

Simultaneously, the Better Start Learner Management System was rebranded as the Nurturing Skills Hub. The Hub offers early years educators, school-age practitioners and childminders access to various Continuous Professional Development (CPD) courses. Information on how to register on the Nurturing Skills Hub can be [found here](#).



AIM

Access and Inclusion Model (AIM)

The new programme call opened in May 2025, with training held to help settings with their applications. Check out the [AIM Hive Guides](#) for support with submitting your AIM application and completing your AIM Review & Confirm applications for children returning for another year.

The AIM application process remains open year-round, and service providers and parents are advised to apply at least three months before the child plans to start in ECCE. This makes sure their application can be processed in time.

Transitions are high on the agenda at this time of year. Better Start have a number of tip sheets which you can find [here](#).

[My Inclusion Plan \(MIP\)](#) places the child at the centre and can be used by educators in partnership with parents/caregivers to gather strengths-based information about the child.

As we make our way towards the new pre-school year, a child coming to your setting might be a Lámh user. The Lámh project has an ambition for everyone to learn to say 'hello'. In this video, Jack and his Mum are amazed to see everyone using Lámh. See Jack's story [here](#).

