

# Childcare How Much?



## // Parent's Guide to Government Funded Childcare //



# Introduction

If you are looking for childcare, you probably have a good idea of what you want -- a place that is safe, happy, and loving, where children can learn and have fun. At the same time, childcare must also meet your needs.

Childcare should be convenient, affordable, and offer care when you need it. Finding childcare that has the quality and convenience you want --at a reasonable cost--can be a real challenge. It is rare to find the perfect facility but it is possible to find a very good facility that will meet your needs.

This guide is a short introduction to the childcare available, and eligibility of children and families for Government Funded Childcare schemes. By going to a preschool, your child will learn to get along well with other children, and will become more independent. They will develop good language skills, and be more confident. Children who go to preschool settle more easily into 'big' school. From the beginning they will understand what is going on in the classroom and will enjoy learning.

## Finding a service

Finding the right service for you & your family is not just about affordability. You should also look for a quality experience for your child. Good quality childcare has many long term benefits for children and their families and a quality, play-based curriculum will promote children's development in all areas.

### Get Organised

- Do your homework and ask friends & family for recommendations.
- Find out about the funding schemes available and see what childcare services are signed up to.
- If you're on a training scheme or in receipt of a social welfare payment this could reduce your childcare costs – get informed about what schemes are out there and how they might affect you.
- Contact your City or County Childcare Committee or the HSE for names, contact details of childcare facilities and a list of childminders.

### You should expect:

- A warm greeting and a brief tour.
- Short introductions to both adults and children.
- An invitation to stay a while to see the daily routine and children playing.

Most services will have information to hand, possibly in the form of a Parent's Handbook. This should contain comprehensive and accurate information detailing opening hours, fees, facilities offered, policies and procedures etc.

### Know your Options

Categories of Childcare for children in the 0-6 year old bracket:

**1. Sessional Services** – Services which offer a planned programme to pre-school children for a total of not more than 3.5 hours per session. Services covered by the definition may include pre-schools, playgroups, crèches, Montessori pre-schools, naíonraí, notifiable childminders or similar services which generally cater for pre-school children in the 0-6 year age bracket.

**2. Part-time day care** – Services offering a structured daycare service for pre-school children of more than 3.5 hours and less than 5 hours per day and may include a sessional pre-school service for pre-school children not attending the part-time day care service. The service must provide the same physical environment, including rest, play and sanitary facilities, as for full day care. Services covered by the above definition may include pre-schools, playgroups, crèches, Montessori pre-schools, naíonraí, notifiable childminders or similar services which generally cater for pre-school children in the 0-6 year age bracket.

3. **Full Day Care Services** – Services offering a structured day care service for children for children in the 0-6 year age bracket which may include a sessional pre-school service for pre-school children not attending the full day care service. Services such as those currently described as day nurseries and crèches are included in this definition.

4. **Drop-In Centres** – Services offering day care which is used on an intermittent basis for a period of not more than two hours while a parent/guardian is availing of a service or attending an event. Such services are mainly located in shopping centres, leisure centres or other establishments as part of customer/client service.

5. **Childminding** – A service offered by a person who single-handedly takes care of pre-school children in the childminder's home for a total of more than 2 hours per day. There are exemptions to this – further information in relation to choosing a childminder is available from SDCCC

**Siolta** –Siolta is the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education in Ireland. Siolta provides quality standards for all people working with children and can help parents to understand what happens in everyday practice in a childcare service. Siolta has 12 principles one of which is recognition that parents are the primary educators of the child and have a major role in promoting her/his well-being, learning and development. For more information on the principles of Siolta and how they can be applied in any childcare setting check out [www.siolta.ie](http://www.siolta.ie)

**Aistear** –Aistear is the curriculum framework for children from birth to six years in Ireland. It provides information for adults to help them plan for and provide enjoyable and challenging learning experiences, so that all children can grow and develop as competent and confident learners within loving relationships with others. Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework presents children's learning and development using four themes.

These are:

- Well-being
- Identity and Belonging
- Communicating
- Exploring and Thinking

The themes describe what children learn—the dispositions, attitudes and values, skills, knowledge, and understanding. For more information check out <http://www.ncca.biz/Aistear/>



## Funding Scheme

## Child's Age

ECCE

Early Childhood Care & Education Scheme

Free Pre School Hours

Not Means Tested

Page 5

Pre School Age:

Between 3years, 2 months and 4years, 7months on the 1st September each year

CETS

Childcare Education & Training

Page 6

0-12 years

CCS Community Childcare Subvention Scheme

Available in community based services only

Page 7 - 8

0-12 years

## Type of Service Provided

## Parent/Guardians Status

There are a few variations of this scheme either:

**Sessional Service:** will generally provide B/W 2hours 15 mins 3:30 mins per day.

3hrs per Day; 5 days per week 38 weeks per year

Or

2 hours 15 mins per day; 5 days per week; 50 weeks per year

**Full or Part Time Service:**

Cost of childcare reduced by €48.50 per week if the service is run over 50 weeks

Or

€64.50 per week if the service is run over 38 weeks

Any parent/ guardian can access the scheme  
- not means tested

All types of childcare services

This scheme is open to parents completing a FÁS or VEC course

All types of childcare service

Childcare subsidies are available for:

- Families in receipt of social welfare payments
- Families in receipt of Family Income Supplement
- Parents of child referred to a service by HSE
- Parents with a Medical Card or GP card

See page 8 for details

# Early Childhood Care & Education (ECCE) scheme - Your Free Pre School Year

The ECCE scheme provides a free pre-school year in a childcare service in the year before children start primary school. The scheme is universal and is open to all parents regardless of income.

## Is my child eligible for a place?

If your child is aged between 3years, 2 months and 4years, 7months on the 1st September each year they are eligible for a place for one year. For example:

- If your child was born between February 2nd 2006 and June 30th 2007 you are eligible for a free place from September 2010
- If your child was born between February 2nd 2007 and June 30th 2008 you are eligible for a free place from September 2011.

If your child is eligible for both years you can choose which September you would like your child to start their preschool year.

## How do I get a place?

- Parents must sign up for the scheme before September of the year they wish their child to avail of the place.
- The scheme is widely available in many childcare services contact your City or County Childcare Committee for a list of services in your area.
- Contact your local childcare facility to see if they have a place available and arrange to visit the service.

## What about children with special needs?

- Children who have been assessed by the HSE or a treating Consultant as having special needs which delay their entry to school may be entitled to the pre-school year over a two year period.
- In these cases parents should apply directly to the Office of the Minister for Children & Youth Affairs call 01-6354000.

## What will it cost?

- If your child is eligible you are entitled to a number of free pre-school hours, 5 days per week and depending on your needs you can access this for either 38 weeks or 50 weeks per year.
- A grant or capitation is paid directly to your service provider for your child's place.
- The free preschool subsidy is only available for a limited number of hours and weeks per year.
- You will have to pay an additional fee where your child is attending the service for more than the free preschool hours.

## My childcare service has offered additional activities for an extra charge. Do I have to pay?

- You may be offered some additional activities /services during your preschool session or a longer session but these are optional.
- If you don't pay for the additional activities the childcare service must provide an alternative for your child.
- If you have any queries on this contact your City or County Childcare Committee.

## My childcare service has requested a voluntary donation. What should I do?

- If you wish to make a voluntary donation to your childcare service you should ask your provider for their bank account details & lodge it directly there.

## I've signed up to a childcare service but my child hasn't settled. Can I transfer my child to another service?

- It may be possible – check with your City or County Childcare Committee.

# Childcare Education & Training Support (CETS) Scheme

Free childcare places are available to eligible FAS & VEC trainees under the Childcare Education & Training Support scheme.

## Is my child eligible for a free CETS place?

Parents who are doing a FAS or VEC course can get free childcare under this scheme. Talk to your FAS or VEC coordinator to find out if you can get a free CETS childcare place

## How do I access a place?

- You should contact the course coordinator for the training course and if check if you are eligible for a place.
- They will be able to give you a list of participating services.
- Contact the childcare facility most convenient for you to see if they have a place available and arrange to visit the service.

## If my course is only 10 weeks long can I access a CCS (see page 5) place once the course is over?

It is only possible to sign up for CCS in September so if you've done this you should be able to take up a CCS place if your service has a place available for you.

## What type of service am I entitled to?

Depending on the course you are doing you may be able to access one of the following:

- A Full Day Place (10 hours per day)
- A Half Day Place (5 & ½ hours per day)
- An Aafterschool Place (at least 3 hours per day)

You should ensure that the facility you choose can provide a service for the number of weeks your training is running.

## Can I use a childminder instead?

If you are participating in a two year course and have been approved a childcare allowance which you have been using to pay a childminder you can do so for the coming school year only (September 2010- June 2011)

## How much will it cost?

- Your provider will be paid directly by the Office of the Minister for Children & Youth Affairs. You should not be charged for the place.
- You may only be charged for additional hours provided and agreed by you.
- You should not be asked to pay extra for food.

## What about school collection services?

The childcare facility does not have to provide this service but if your child is picked up from or dropped to school by your childcare facility you may be charged extra.

# Community Childcare Subvention scheme (CCS)

The Community Childcare subvention scheme is a childcare subsidy scheme through which eligible parents can access childcare places in Community childcare facilities at reduced costs.

## Is my child eligible for a subsidised place?

It depends on your own circumstances and if you are receiving a social welfare payment.

## What will it cost?

- Your childcare service will receive a subsidy under this scheme that reduces the amount of childcare fees you pay
- The subsidy is deducted from the weekly cost of your childcare fees and you pay the balance

## Are there different subsidies available depending on my circumstances?

Yes, there are two bands of subsidies available depending on your entitlements and the type of childcare services you need - see table below.

## How do I get a place?

- Parents must sign up for the scheme before September of the year they wish their child to avail of the place.
- Parents are required to provide their PPS number as part of the application process. This is sent to the OMCYA to check your entitlement to a subsidy
- The scheme is widely available in community childcare services. Contact your City / County Childcare Committee for a list of services in your area
- Contact your local childcare facility to see if they have a place available and arrange to visit the service

## What happens if my status changes for example I get a job or lose my job?

Parents can sign up for the scheme in September each year. If your circumstances change you may have to provide proof to your childcare provider in order to access a different rate. If you have queries about this check with your City/County Childcare Committee.



# Subsidies Available

Who can get a CCS subsidy?	Full time rate (5hours +)	Part-time rate (3.30 - 5hours)	Sessional rate (2.15 - 3.30mins)	Half Session ((1.15-2.15mins)
<b>BAND A</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent is in receipt of a social welfare payment not including Job Seekers Benefit</li> <li>• Family income supplement</li> <li>• If your child has been referred by the HSE</li> </ul>	€100	€50	€33	€16
<b>BAND A Job Seekers</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where one parent is in receipt of a social welfare payment including Job Seekers Benefit</li> </ul>	€50	€50	€33	€16
<b>BAND B</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medical card</li> <li>• GP card</li> </ul>	€50	€25	€17	€8.50

## NEXT STEPS:

You should talk to the Manager/Pre-school leader of the service your child is attending to check:

- If you and/or your child meets the eligibility criteria for CCS and/or ECCE scheme?
- What scheme suits you best?

If you are eligible for CCS funding you will have to complete a Parent Declaration Form with your PPS details. This form is sent to the OMCYA it is not kept by the service. The OMCYA will then let your service know what band you are entitled to. If you are not entitled to a subsidy you will have to pay the full cost of the childcare place.

# Childcare Service Fee Policy

## Childcare Service Details

Service Name \_\_\_\_\_

Service Address \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Name \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

## In our childcare service we run the following schemes:

Yes

No

Early Childhood Care & Education scheme (ECCE) (page 5)

Childcare Education & Training Support scheme (CETS) (page 6)

Community Childcare Subvention scheme (CCS) (page 7)

## Our Fees for 2010-2011 are:

	ECCE (38 Weeks)	ECCE (50 Weeks)	CCS Band A	CCS Band B	CCS Band C	Full Price Cost
Full Time Place	€	€	€	€	€	€
Part Time Place	€	€	€	€	€	€
Sessional Place	€	€	€	€	€	€
Drop In	€	€	€	€	€	€

## Additional Information

Booking Deposits \_\_\_\_\_

Optional Extras \_\_\_\_\_

Voluntary Donations \_\_\_\_\_

Please note: All fees are guided by the Fees Policy & Procedure of the service which should include information about payments, arrears any other discounts available.

# City/County Committee Childcare in South & East

	Address	Phone	Email	Website
<b>Carlow</b>	Enterprise House, O'Brien Road, Carlow.	059 91 40244	info@carlowccc.ie	www.carlowchildcare.com
<b>Clare</b>	1 Kilrush Road, Ennis, Co. Clare.	065 68 64862	info@clarechildcare.ie	www.clarechildcare.ie
<b>Cork City</b>	29 Penrose Wharf, Cork.	021 45 07942	corkcitychildcare1@ eircom.net	www.corkcitychildcare.ie
<b>Cork County</b>	Main Office, Market House, Buttevant, Co. Cork	022 23880	info@corkchildcare.ie	www.corkchildcare.ie
<b>Dublin City</b>	Office 2.13, Distillers Building, Smithfield, Dublin 7.	01 8733696	info@dccc.ie	www.childcareonline.ie
<b>Dun Laoghaire / Rathdown</b>	5a Woodpark, Sallynoggin, Co. Dublin	01 23 68030	info@dlrcountychildcare.ie	www.dlrcountychildcare.ie
<b>Fingal</b>	ABCO Kovex Building, Swords Business Park, Swords, Co. Dublin.	01 80 77660	info@fingalcountychildcare.ie	www.fingalcountychildcare.ie
<b>Kerry</b>	2 James Street, Tralee, Co. Kerry.	066 71 81582	info@kerrycountychildcare.com	www.kerrycountychildcare.com
<b>Kildare</b>	The Woods, Clane, Co. Kildare	045 86 1307	info@kildarechildcare.ie	www.kildarechildcare.ie
<b>Kilkenny</b>	2nd Floor Desart House, Lower New Street, Kilkenny.	056 77 52865	kkccc@eircom.net	www.kkccc.ie
<b>Limerick City</b>	1st Floor, The Granary, Michael Street, Limerick.	061 40 7525 / 7527	childcare@limerickcity.ie	www.limerickcitychildcare.ie
<b>Limerick County</b>	Lower Ground Floor, Croom Mills, Croom, Co. Limerick	061 60 0918	margaret@clcc@clcc.ie	www.clcc.ie
<b>North Tipperary</b>	Civic Offices, Limerick Road, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary.	067 44888	childcare@northtippercoco.ie	www.northtipperarychildcare.ie
<b>South Dublin</b>	Civic Offices, Ninth Lock Road, Clondalkin, Dublin 22.	01 457 0122	info@southdublinchildcare.ie	www.southdublinchildcare.ie
<b>South Tipperary</b>	Unit 5, Ground Floor, Hughes Mill, Suir Island, Clonmel, Co. Tipperary.	052 6182274	info@southtippcchildcare.ie	www.southtippcchildcare.ie
<b>Waterford City</b>	4b, Manor Village, Cork Road, Waterford City.	051 860444	info@waterfordcitychildcare.com	www.waterfordcitychildcare.com
<b>Waterford County</b>	9 Emmet Street, Dungarvan, Co. Waterford	058 43601	waterfordcochildcare@ eircom.net	www.waterfordcoco.ie
<b>Wexford</b>	7 Castle Hill, Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford.	053 92 37156	info@wexfordchildcare.ie	www.wexfordchildcare.ie
<b>Wicklow</b>	Kilmantin Hill, Wicklow Town.	0404 64455	info@wccc.ie	www.wicklowcountychildcare.ie



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