

Children with Special Needs and the ECCE.

The ECCE makes a number of provisions to facilitate children with disabilities and special needs:

- The upper age limit is waived where children have been assessed as being developmentally delayed or where they have a physical, sensory or mental condition which will result in them starting school at a later than normal age.
- Provision is also made to enable children who have been assessed as having a disability, and who would benefit from attending pre-school for 2/3 days rather than 5 days each week, to be eligible over 2 years e.g. 2 days in year 1 and 3 days in year 2.
- To avoid delays for parents; in addition to HSE assessments for children with special needs and/or disabilities, assessments provided by the treating consultant can be accepted as evidence of developmental delay and/or disability.
- Where children have been assessed as having a disability which will result in them starting school at a later than normal age, the provision of a 2nd free pre-school year, on a non pro-rata basis, will be considered where this will be of particular benefit to the child.
- Parents of children who have availed of the free pre-school year in January 2010 and have an assessed disability which will result in them starting school at a later than normal age, should apply to the OMCYA where they wish their child to be considered for a 2nd pre-school year in September 2010. Applications will be considered on a case by case basis.
- The OMCYA is seeking the views of the Working Group established by the Office of Disabilities and Mental Health to examine the co-ordination of State supports for children with special needs/disabilities.



ECCE & CCS Supplement

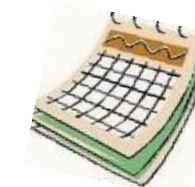
Kilkenny County Childcare Committee



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ECCE/CCS Schemes

Timeline for Childcare Providers March 2010 to October 2010



March

By the end of March, the Office of the Minister for Children & Youth Affairs (OMCYA) will issue info packs to all notified pre-school services inviting them to apply for the ECCE scheme in Sept 2010. Existing Community Childcare Subvention Scheme (CCSS) services will also be invited to apply for the Community Childcare Subvention (CCS)/ Early Childhood Care & Education (ECCE) schemes as part of the process. Services already in the ECCE scheme will be required to confirm qualifications of staff and bank details and provide a current tax clearance certificate. The HSE will be asked to confirm where the status of any service has changed for the purpose of allowing entry to the scheme(s).

April

The closing date for services to return ECCE/CCS applications to the City/County Childcare Committees will be **Friday 30th April 2010**.

May

The OMCYA will issue contracts to services for signature & return. Services will receive an ECCE only contract or a CCS/ECCE contract as appropriate. The contracts will apply for 1 year with a roll-over clause for a 2nd year.

June

An information leaflet for parents of children qualifying in Sept 2010 will be issued by the OMCYA. Services take enrolments for the 2010-2011 preschool year.

July

Information Packs re September 2010 ECCE/CCS Electronic returns will be issued by OMCYA to all participating services.

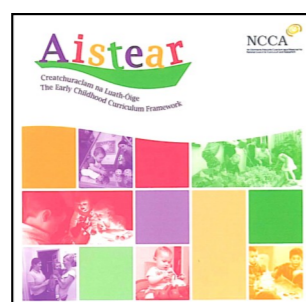
September

Services disseminate parent declaration forms for completion and return the first week in September. Reference week for services to complete ECCE/CCS electronic returns is expected to be **6th/10th Sept**.

October

Services should advise parents who wish to enrol their children for the scheme in January 2011 to complete a parent declaration for return to OMCYA no later than **12th November 2010** (e.g. children transferring

Aistear: The Early Childhood Curriculum Framework



The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) have launched an online **Aistear Toolkit** which contains a number of resources to help you to begin to use **Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework** in your work with children.

The Toolkit is a work in progress with items being added on an ongoing basis over the coming weeks and months

Practitioners can access these resources online at www.ncca.ie

ECCE & CCS Scheme Update for Childcare Providers 2010

In January the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme commenced. The Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (OMCYA) has responsibility for implementing this scheme which will bring together a number of elements for participating ECCE services as follows:

- The implementation of Siolta - The National Quality Framework
- The assessment tool for Regulation 5 of the Pre School Regulations (2006)
- Publication of Aistear the National Curriculum Framework

There will be two phases:

Phase 1

Jan 2010 - Sept 2012

This is an introductory period for all new requirements.

Pre-school Inspectors, City & County Childcare Committees & those involved in Siolta will support pre-school providers in becoming familiar and competent in the new requirements.

OMCYA will disseminate information on Siolta, Aistear & Regulation 5 and how they interact with each other.

Information on how early years learning programmes are accommodated within Siolta & Aistear will also be circulated

Phase 2

Sept 2012 - Sept 2014

During this phase the level of required competence and familiarity with the new requirements will increase.

Minimum qualification levels required will be announced with two years notice to facilitate services to adjust.

More stringent requirements regarding the standard of implementation of Siolta and compliance for the purposes of Regulation 5 will be appropriate.

The introduction of a follow on scheme to the Community Childcare Subvention Scheme (CCSS) with effect from 1 Sept 2010 was announced in the budget in Dec 2009. The new **Community Childcare Subvention (CCS) scheme** will continue to be available to community not for profit childcare services only and will also be implemented by the OMCYA. From Sept 2010 the CCS scheme will contain the following provisions:

Band A

Subvention rate maintained at €100 (full daycare)

Parents will continue to qualify for band A subvention where they are in receipt of a social welfare payment

Parents in receipt of Family Income Supplement will also qualify for Band A subvention

In the case of a child referred by the HSE, subvention will be increased to the Band A rate

Band A parents in receipt of Job Seekers Benefit will qualify for subvented childcare on a part time basis only.

Band B

Subvention rate of €50 will apply to low income working parents e.g. holders of a medical or GP visit card.

Parents verified by OMCYA as Band A in the previous year's return but who would no longer be eligible for subvention may also attract subvention at this rate

Band C

Negotiations are underway with the relevant Departments to provide ring fenced free childcare places in participating services for qualifying parents attending FAS or VEC courses.

It is hoped to finalise this proposal in the coming months subject to further discussion with the relevant Departments

Additional features to the CCS Scheme include;

- Sessional places provided for exactly 3hrs 30mins per day will attract the sessional rate of subvention rather than the part time rate
- No additional payment will be provided to services where children being cared for are aged less than 1 year
- A minimum grant will continue to be provided in the case of services in isolated rural locations
- The transitional funding arrangements allowed for the interim CCSS will cease with the commencement of the CCS on 1st Sept 2010
- The CCS will be aligned with the ECCE scheme. Both will operate on an annual basis from Sept to Aug each year

Considerations for Implementation of ECCE in September 2010

Services should clarify if they will provide a 38 week or 50 week option or both.

Participating Services must be trading as a sole trader, partnership, limited company or school Board of Management, and must provide a current Tax Clearance Certificate.

Participating services must agree to provide an appropriate educational programme for children in their pre-school which adheres to the principles of Siolta.

Participating services must have a minimum enrolment of 8 children in their pre-school year. Subject to compliance with all other contractual requirements, exceptions will be considered in the case of:

- Services which have an enrolment of at least 8 children but, for good reason, only 3 or more are in their pre-school year while the remainder will be eligible for a pre-school year in the following year, or
- Smaller services which are considered appropriate settings for delivery of the pre-school year but, for good reason, have an enrolment of not fewer than 5 children in their pre-school year.

Each provider must record all monies received and monies spent relating directly or indirectly to the operation of the Pre-school Service, including any grant monies e.g. CCSS, HSE etc. Kilkenny County Childcare Committee will provide workshop supports in this area as necessary.

Annual accounts should be prepared and be available to the OMCYA on request within four months of the end of the financial year.

All reports, records, accounts and other documentation relating to the operation of the Pre-school Service must be maintained and available for inspection on request for a minimum of 7yrs after the termination or expiry date of contract.

Reasonable and appropriate checks (Garda vetting) on individuals employed within childcare services must be carried out by providers to ensure the Pre-school service complies with the principles and guidelines within 'Children First' and all other regulatory requirements.

Fees Payment Policies must be verified by the County Childcare Committee in order for payment of grant monies.

Rates exemptions are applicable to ECCE sessional services only; these premises must be exclusively used for educational purposes, and not also used for rateable, commercial services (e.g. a commercial crèche funded by parental fees).

The OMCYA has requested that all childcare services participating in the ECCE scheme will be subject to an on-site visit to ensure that the conditions of the Scheme are being complied with as detailed in your grant funding agreement.



Providing Clarity for Parents

We suggest that in the case of a 38 week option services draft up a calendar to circulate to parents outlining the specific weeks you will be closed for midterms/annual holidays throughout the year. These weeks should coincide with your local primary schools closing dates.

If you choose to operate a non-ECCE programme throughout mid-term/annual holidays, parents should be notified of this arrangement at the start of the year and understand that this is an optional extra.

All costs associated with your Childcare Service must be outlined on your Fees Payment Policy

To enter the ECCE scheme for **September 2010** children must be born between **2nd February 2006 - 30th June 2007**. To enter the ECCE scheme for **September 2011** children must be born between **2nd February 2007 - 30th June 2008**.

Services should advise parents who wish to enrol or transfer their child for the scheme in January 2011 to complete a parental declaration form for return to OMCYA, no later than **12th November 2010**.

Funding for transfer children will only be given to services at the beginning of each payment term once required details are provided to OMCYA in timeframe given.

Parents should be made aware of the early educational focus of the ECCE scheme and the specific care and education programme your service has in place. This can be done through information evenings, parent's handbook & notice boards.

Services are advised to record children's attendance on a daily basis and deal promptly and appropriately with regular absenteeism for compliance purposes.