

What is the ECCE scheme?

The Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme provides early childhood care and education for children of pre-school age, typically for 3 hours a day, 5 days a week, over the school year (38 weeks). If your child attends for more than 3 hours, you will be charged for the additional hours.

From September 2016, children can now participate in the ECCE scheme from the nearest starting point after the child's 3rd birthday and continue until they transfer to primary school (provided that they are not older than 5 years and 6 months at the end of the pre-school year).

The total number of ECCE weeks a child can avail of will depend on:



the child's birth date



the age at which the child begins primary school

Children can enrol in the ECCE scheme at 3 different points (September, January and April) during the school year. This is subject to there being

To avail of the ECCE Programme from:	Children must have been born between the following dates (inclusive):
April 2017 - June 2017	1 st January 2012 - 31 st March 2014
Sept 2017 - June 2018	1 st January 2013 - 31 st August 2014
Jan 2018 - June 2018	1 st January 2013 - 31 st December 2014

Exemptions from age limit

Children with additional needs may be able to get an exemption from the upper age limit for the ECCE Scheme. See the section below on children with additional needs.

There are no exemptions to the lower age limit.

Preschool Educational Programme

Childcare services taking part in the ECCE scheme must provide an appropriate pre-school educational programme which adheres to the principles of *Síolta*, the national framework for early years care and education, and *Aistear*, the early childhood curriculum framework.

For more information on what to look for when choosing an early years' service see our webpage:

<https://www.earlychildhoodireland.ie/work/information-parents/choosing-childcare/>

ECCE Guide for Parents



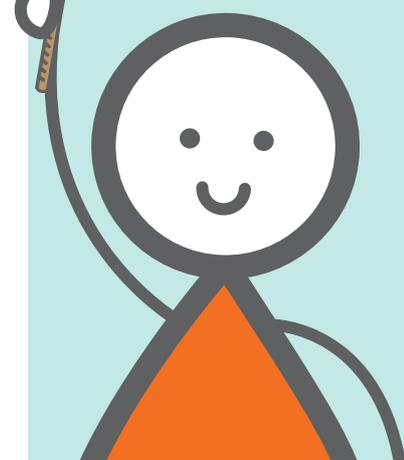
What should I look for when choosing an early years' service?



Go to ECI Website: <http://bit.ly/ChoosingChildcare>



Check out the ECI Childcare Search: <http://bit.ly/ChildcareSearch>



Children with Additional Needs

The new Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) was introduced on the 15 June 2016 to enable children with disabilities to access and fully participate in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme.

The Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) is a child-centred model, involving seven levels of progressive support, moving from universal to targeted, based on the needs of the child and the pre-school provider. Further information is available at the Access Inclusion Model website <http://aim.gov.ie/>

When you have identified a pre-school for your child, your service provider, in consultation with you, will consider what supports may be needed to ensure your child's participation in pre-school. Where it is considered that your child needs additional support, your pre-school service provider can apply, in partnership with you, for targeted supports under AIM.

Affordable Childcare Scheme

The Affordable Childcare Scheme is a new national scheme of financial support for parents towards the cost of their childcare. It will replace the existing targeted childcare subsidisation schemes (CETS, CEC, ASCC, CCS and CCSP) with a single, streamlined and more user-friendly scheme. The new scheme will provide a system from which both universal and targeted subsidies can be provided towards the cost of childcare. It will not affect the ECCE scheme as it is intended to provide 'wraparound' care for preschool children and in the targeted subsidies, for school age children also.

The **universal subsidy** is for children between the ages of 6 and 36 months (or until the child qualifies for the free pre-school programme if later) who are availing of childcare by a Tusla registered childcare service. The universal subsidy will not be means-tested and will be available for families at any income level.

In the case of **targeted subsidies**, these will be payable for children from 6 months of age up to 15 years of age. The level of subsidy will depend on the investment available and on a family's income.

It is intended that this new Affordable Childcare Scheme will be available from September 2017. For more information on the proposed Affordable Childcare Scheme see the Department of Children and Youth Affairs website : <http://www.dcy.gov.ie/>

For more information on choosing quality childcare see our website:
www.earlychildhoodireland.ie/work/information-parents/

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