



**Early
Childhood
Ireland**

Employment Regulation Order for the Early Years and School Age Care Sector

Early Childhood Ireland Explainers

What is an Employment Regulation Order?

An Employment Regulation Order (ERO) sets minimum rates of pay and employment conditions for workers in a particular sector. It is drawn up by a Joint Labour Committee (JLC), which is set up by the Labour Court to provide a process for fixing statutory minimum rates of pay and conditions of employment for workers in a particular sector.

A JLC may be set up upon application from the Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment, a trade union, or any organisation claiming to be representative of the workers or employers involved. The Labour Court appoints an equal number of employer and worker representatives to the Committee, and the Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment appoints a Chairperson and substitute Chairperson.

After being agreed by the JLC, the ERO is adopted by the Labour Court. It is then sent to be signed by the Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment, thus giving it statutory effect.

There are currently EROs operating for three sectors: contract cleaning workers, the security industry and the Early Years and School Age Care (EY and SAC) sector.

History of EY and SAC ERO

The **Partnership for the Public Good report** was published in November 2021 and set out a new funding stream called Core Funding. Core Funding is partly directed to staff pay and conditions, and its coming into effect in September 2022 was contingent on the agreement of an Employment Regulation Order. A 'pre-JLC process' was established by Roderic O'Gorman, the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, in December 2020. This process was chaired by Kevin Duffy and involved considering whether a JLC was suitable for the EY and SAC sector. The resulting report from this process was delivered in February 2021 and recommended that a JLC be established.

The order to establish a JLC for the sector was signed by Damien English, Minister of State at the Department of Enterprise, Trade, and Employment, in June 2021. 12 members were appointed to the JLC: six on the employer's side and six on the employee's side. A Chairperson and Vice-chairperson were also appointed. The deliberations began in December 2021 and were completed in August 2022. Two EROS were agreed upon and

were signed into law on 15 September 2022.

The new EROs apply to roles including Early Years educators, SAC practitioners, Lead Educators and Managers. The EROs do not impact already existing contracts or agreements, if they are equal to what is set in the EROs or better. Existing employment contracts remain valid, except where the remunerations or terms and conditions are below what is set out in the EROs. In short, any staff member who is on a higher level of pay than the ERO rates, remains on their existing wage.

Early Years educators and SAC practitioners

The first ERO applies to Early Years educators and SAC practitioners. These are staff who are entirely or mainly in contact with children and are involved in their care and/or education.

Age of Employee	Hourly Rate of pay
Under 18 years old	€9.10
18 years old	€10.40
19 years old	€11.70
20 years and older	€13.00

Lead Educators (Room Leaders) and SAC coordinators

These workers also are entirely or mainly in contact with children and are involved in their care and/or education. They are also responsible for the care and/or education of a group of children.

Age of Employee	Hourly Rate of pay
Under 18 years old	€9.80
18 years old	€11.20
19 years old	€12.60
20 years and older	€14.00

Graduate Lead Educators (Room Leaders) and Graduate SAC coordinators

The role these staff members play in a setting is explained in the previous section. However, to qualify for this pay scale, they must also hold at least a QQI Level 7 qualification or equivalent approved by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY). They must also have at least three years of paid experience working full-time or part-time with children in one or more EY and SAC service.

Age of Employee	Hourly Rate of pay
Under 18 years old	€10.85
18 years old	€12.40
19 years old	€13.95
20 years and older	€15.50

Deputy/Assistant Manager

This role involves supporting the Manager. The Deputy/Assistant Manager may also work directly with children along with their day-to-day managerial duties and responsibilities. As well as that, they can stand in as the 'Person in Charge' when the Manager is absent.

Age of Employee	Hourly Rate of pay
Under 18 years old	€10.99
18 years old	€12.56
19 years old	€14.13
20 years and older	€15.70

Centre Manager

A Centre Manager is the primary designated person in charge of a setting and carries out the day-to-day management of the setting. They may also work directly with children.

Age of Employee	Hourly Rate of pay
Under 18 years old	€11.55
18 years old	€13.20
19 years old	€14.85
20 years and older	€16.50

Graduate Centre Manager

The Graduate Centre Manager carries out the same role as the Centre Manager. They also hold at least a QQI Level 7 qualification or equivalent approved by DCEDIY. They must also have at least three years of paid experience working full-time or part-time with children in one or more EY and SAC service.

Age of Employee	Hourly Rate of pay
Under 18 years old	€12.075
18 years old	€13.80
19 years old	€15.25
20 years and older	€17.25

