

PARENTS

Frequently Asked Questions on ECCE Scheme

Q. How do I apply?

A. Details of pre-school services which have entered the scheme will be available from Meath Childcare Committee in October 2009. You can contact a local service on the scheme to enrol your child. If you are using a service already you can ask your provider if they plan to enter the scheme.

Q. Is it only for community providers?

A. No, all pre-school services which are notified to the Health Service Executive or registered with the Irish Montessori Education Board can apply to participate.

Q. I am a parent. Can I get the money sent to me instead?

A. No. The capitation fee will be paid to the provider

Q. What age do children have to be to be eligible?

To avail of the scheme in Jan 2010 child is born between 2nd February 2005 and 30th June 2006.

To avail of the scheme in September 2010 child is born between 2nd Feb 2006 and 30th June 2007.

To avail of the scheme in September 2011 child is born between 2nd February 2007 and 30th June 2008

Q. What if my child is eligible in January 2010 and again in September 2010 can I send my child for January to June and then from September to December?

A. No, you must decide what is best for your child. If you apply for the scheme in January then you cannot apply again in September.

Q. What if my childcare provider is not taking part in the scheme?

A. The scheme is not obligatory so it is up to childcare providers to apply if they so wish. Details of participating services in your area will be available by October 2009.

Q. Do I have a right to free pre-school for my child? My local centre says it is booked out. Do they have to take my child?

A. The scheme is subject to availability and a free pre-school place cannot be guaranteed in every case. However, it is expected that almost all parents will be accommodated. If you have difficulty finding a place for your child you should contact Meath County Childcare Committee for advice.

Q. Will the scheme be means-tested?

A. No, it will not be means tested, and will be available to all parents based on local availability

Q. What happens if a child is not eligible but the parents wish to pay for the place?

A. Priority should be given to children who are eligible for the scheme as they will be attending national School the following year

Q Can my child start mid-term/mid year?

A. To avail of the ECCE children should be enrolled and commence their pre-school year in September of each year (and/or in January in the case of 2010). The capitation will be paid to services in respect of children enrolled, on a term basis. Where a parent needs to transfer a child to another service in the course of the year, this will be accommodated at the start of the next term (e.g. if a parent needs to transfer a child in October, he or she will be able to take up a free place from the following January). The childcare service at which the child originally attended will retain the capitation provided for that child until the end of the term.

Q. Do I have to leave my child for the five mornings?

A. The scheme is being offered for three hours over 5 days for 38 weeks of the year. Alternatively it may be offered over 3hrs 30 minutes for 4 days over 41 weeks of the year

Q. My child is in full day care and is the correct age, are they eligible for the scheme?

A. Yes, Full day care services that are participating on the scheme will be required to provide a pre-school service for 2hr 15 mins 5 days a week over 50 weeks

Q. The service I attend is offering additional hours for an additional cost am I obliged to send my child?

A. No, additional hours and cost are optional and can not be a condition of initial or continued enrolment.

Q. I have been asked for a booking deposit do I have to pay this?

A. A booking deposit may be required. However it cannot be more than twice the weekly caption fee applicable to the service. So for a sessional service operating 3 hours, 5 days over 38 weeks the deposit can not be more than €129.

The deposit must repaid by the end of January 2010.

Q. How much is the capitation Grant?

A. Playschools in the scheme - will receive a grant of €2,425 per annum per child who is eligible.

This equates to €64.50 for those doing 3 hours, 5 days for 38 weeks

Or

€48.50 for those doing 2 hours 15 minutes for 50 weeks

Q. If I have further questions who do I contact

A. Parents Information Officer

Meath County Childcare Committee, Commons Rd, Navan

046 9073010 or e-mail parentsinfo@mccc.ie