

Meath County Childcare Committee

Getting Started



Steps to setting up a childcare service



Getting Started

An introductory Guide to Setting up A childcare service

Introduction

You have received this Information Pack because you are considering developing a childcare facility in your area. You may be planning to build new premises or to use, renovate or extend existing building. The County Childcare Committee can provide advice and guidance to you. You must ensure that the service being developed will comply with the legal requirements of the Child Care Act 1991 & the Child Care (Pre-School Services) Regulations 2006.

The County Childcare Committee provides ongoing support, advice, information and assistance to all new and existing childcare services in the county. These can be community or privately based childcare services. The county childcare committee also support childcare staff and management, advise parents and link with other childcare agencies.

Step 1:

Deciding on the Type of Service

There are two main ways of operating a childcare service

- ◆ One is privately owned and managed by individuals and
- ◆ The second is community run and managed by a voluntary committee made up of local representatives.

Decide on the type of service you plan to provide, (giving consideration to the need in the proposed area).

Definitions of Childcare Services

Pre-school children in Ireland are defined by law as “children under 6 years of age, who are not attending a national school or equivalent”. Pre-school services include preschools, day nurseries, crèches, full day care centre and childminding

Childminding

A childminder cares for a small group of children of mixed ages in a ‘home from home’ setting. A childminder should look after not more than five pre-school children including her/his own pre-school children. It can be an all year round service, offered in the Childminder’s own home. The hours of childminding may vary from fulltime, part-time or flexible.

Full Day Care:

A full day care facility may also be called a Nursery, or Crèche. A full day care service provides a structured service for more than 5 hours per day. The actual opening hours may vary from facility to facility. The age range for full Day Care varies from 3 months-14years. Full Day Care may incorporate Sessional and School Age Childcare services. A Full Day care facility must offer nutritious meals, rest periods, an appropriate sleep facility and an age appropriate Early Childhood Curriculum, to ensure compliance with the Child Care Pre-School Services Regulations 2006.

Part-Time Care

Some facilities also offer part time places. Part-Time Care is where a child care service offers structured day care for children for more than 3.5 hours and less than 5 hours per day. Ages range is from 6 months -6 yrs.

Pre-school/ Sessional Services

A Sessional pre-school service has a planned early childhood curriculum for a period of up to 3.5 hours. The age range of Sessional Services is usually 2 years 10 months to 5 years. This service can also be provided in a full day care service. Pre-school/Sessional Services may operate a Montessori, High\Scope, Naionrai, Froebal, or Seinear curriculum.

School Age Childcare

A School Aged Childcare service provides care for children when they are not in school setting e.g. before school, after school, mid-term and during school holidays. School Aged Childcare offers fun and age appropriate activities for the children.

School Aged Childcare Services occur in a variety of ways

- ◆ Within childcare services i.e. Crèche/ Full Day Care either privately owned or community based.
- ◆ A relative or childminder in their own home.
- ◆ Services that are extensions of playgroups or sessional services.
- ◆ Purpose built School Age Childcare Services, school based After School Care and community-based projects. School age childcare caters for children ages 4-14 years.

The Child Care (Pre-School Services) Regulations 2006 does not apply to school aged childcare services however work is ongoing and in the future specific regulations for school aged child care may apply.

Drop-in Centres

Drop-in Centre is a service where care is provided for pre-school children for not more than 2 hours while parent/guardian is availing of a service or attending an event for

example in shopping centres, leisure centres or other establishments, as part of customer service.

The Pre-School Regulations also make specific provisions for **overnight childcare services**, which are provided either by a crèche type service or a childminder. These are services that are provided for more than two hours between 7pm and 6am.

Pre-school care providers are required to notify the HSE that they are providing a child care service. When opening a childcare service you must provide at least 28 days notice in writing to the HSE Pre-School Inspection team. If you are offering a Montessori Curriculum you may want to register with the Irish Montessori Education Board (IMEB) www.imetrust.org

In addition, all Pre-school care providers are required to take all reasonable measures to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of pre-school children attending their service. Specifics about the regulation of pre-school child care services are set out in the Child Care (Pre-School Services) (No 2) Regulations 2006 and the Child Care (Pre-School Services) (No 2) (Amendment) Regulations 2006 (pdf). These Regulations came into effect on 3 September 2007.

For more information please refer to the 'Child Care (Pre-School Services) (No 2) Regulations 2006' and the Child Care (Pre-School Services) (No 2) (Amendment) Regulations 2006' www.doch.ie/publications or Barnardos 'A Parent's Guide to the Child Care (Pre-School) Regulations 2006' www.barnardos.ie >Training & Resources > Barnardos Publication Centre.

Step 2:

Market Research

Market Research is essential when considering the viability of your childcare business. It will not only form the basis of your business plan, but it will also have an impact on deciding what type of business you open and the range of childcare services you will offer. Good market research help a business remain sustainable into the future.

Have you identified your target market?

1. Contact your local Childcare Committee to establish if there is an identified need in your preferred area.
2. Consider existing childcare services already operating in your area in terms of their target market, their capacity for places and the service they offer.
3. Establish a need for the proposed childcare service by
 - A. Carry out a local needs analysis i.e. door to door questionnaires
 - B. Check parish register and with local primary schools for birth and enrolments.
 - C. Check with local authority or county council about new housing developments.
 - D. Contact the Central Statistics Office (CSO) for information regarding population, age, in your locality.
 - E. Consult with local development groups, parents' associations etc.
 - F. Consider any new developments planned locally such as factories, shopping centres and decentralisations of government departments etc. Have they a similar service to yours already included in their planning applications?

Are there existing childcare premises in your proposed area?

1. Contact the County Childcare Committee to find out about potential purpose built childcare facilities for sale or lease in the county.

2. Consider existing housing developments in you proposed area. Is there a purpose built childcare facility lying dormant? or Is there a site with planning permission granted for a purpose built childcare facility?.

Step 3:

Suitability of premises

In relation to the location and suitability of premises for a childcare facility a number of factors need to be considered.

Consider the following

- Build or buy a purpose built childcare service
- Adapt an existing privately owned or community building
- Extend an existing building

When considering the suitability of premises you should be looking for:

Proximity to local schools, housing developments and amenities.

Adequate space for

- The type of service you wish to provide (Please see Pre-School Regulations 2006).
- Outdoor play –which is an essential factor in the provision of quality childcare.
- The safe dropping off and collection of children.
- Staff parking

It is law that Planning Permission and a Fire Safety Certificate is sought & granted from your County Council when considering the following:

- building a new premises
- extending an existing premises or childcare facility
- renovating/converting a garage or any room of a dwelling
- changing the use of premises for example: from residential to a crèche/full day care, pre-school

When applying for planning include in the application

- nature of the facility
- number and ages of children to be enrolled
- number of staff to be employed
- hours and days of operation
- size of floor space available
- provision and management of outdoor play area
- parking, set-down and turning space available

The county council planning section strongly recommends that you contact them and request a pre-planning meeting. A planning officer will advise as to the suitability of the location for the building or opening a childcare facility.

It is also advisable at this point to contact the Chief Fire Officer or Building Control Officer in relation to your Fire Safety Certificate.

A member of your local HSE Pre-School inspection team maybe willing to offer advice on your chosen premises/design plans to ascertain its suitability as a childcare facility.

The contact numbers for your local HSE Pre-School Inspection team and the County Council Planning Department are available from your County Childcare Committee.

Step 4:

Costing Out your Childcare Facility

Expenditure

<u>Set up costs</u>	<u>Running Costs</u>
Site & Building Costs	Wages
Planning Application fees	Administration cost
County Council Contributions	
Architect fees	Rent/ Mortgage
Fire Safety Certificate Application fee	Loans
Commencement Notice fee	Bank Charges
Solicitor fee	Petty cash
Fixtures & Fittings	Light and Heat
Equipment for baby, toddler, preschool, school age childcare and sleep room.	Telephone
Flooring & Décor	Rates & Refuse
Outdoor Play Area	Water Rates
Office Equipment	Insurance
Security –Alarms, CCTV	Cleaning
Phone system	Postage
Kitchen Equipment & White Appliances	Office Consumables
Furniture	Equipment Maintenance
	Decorating
Office Resources i.e. Enrolment, Accident & Incident logbooks etc	Professional fees i.e. Accountant, Solicitor
	Consumables i.e. dinners, snacks
	Resources i.e. arts and crafts
Marketing Costs	Staffing
Staffing Adverts	Relief Staff
Training	Special events – class photo, Christmas

Please Note: This is a sample list of running costs and expenditure involved in setting up a childcare service. You may find a number of other costs to add to this list.

Sourcing Funding

Finance for your childcare service can come from a number of sources

	Privately Run	Community Run
Income from fees	√	√
ECCE Free pre-school year	√	√
NCIP community childcare subvention (CCS) scheme (Community Services only)	x	√
Partnership with Employer	√	√
Loans from Banks, Credit Unions or lending institutions	√	√

Applying for Funding:

Please contact the County Childcare Committee for funding updates, and information on the Free pre-school year in ECCE scheme, the NCIP community childcare subvention (CCS) scheme and the Childcare Employment and Training Support (CETS) Scheme.

If the service is operating the Free Pre-school Year in Early Childhood Care & Education (ECCE) scheme then the curriculum must reflect the principles of Siolta (the national quality framework). Aistear (the national early childhood curriculum) can be used to support the implementation of Siolta.

The Childcare Employment and Training Support (CETS) Scheme is open to commercial and community day-care services which are participating in the ECCE and/or the CCS, as well as after-school services for primary school children which are in the CCS.

Step 5:

Running a Business.

Management Responsibilities

- Ensuring compliance with all relevant legislation
- Ensuring that there is a clear management structure in place
- Establishing and maintaining
 - (a) Financial systems
 - (b) Administrative procedures
- Acting as an employer
- Devising and implementing policies and procedures
- Monitoring and evaluating the service on an ongoing basis

Legal Status

Depending on whether you are operating as a community based or privately run service, the legal status of the company will be different.

Community based: All community childcare groups who will be availing of funding under the Childcare Subvention Scheme 2008-2010 or in receipt of capitation under the Early Childhood Care & Education Scheme (ECCE) will be required to register as a limited company by guarantee. You can become a company limited by guarantee by registering your company with the Revenue Commissions as a Limited Company (TR2 form). Your solicitor should/will register the company with the Companies Registration Office.

Privately owned: Privately owned: There are three basic forms of legal structure for individually managed services:

- ◆ Sole Trader
- ◆ Partnership
- ◆ Limited Liability Company

Legal Obligations on Becoming an Employer.

Self Employed - You need to register as self employed with the Revenue Commissioners by completing a TR1 form available from your local tax office. This form is used to register persons for income tax, VAT, and as an employer for PAYE/PRSI.

Company Limited by Guarantee: Limited Companies need to register by completing a TR2 form available from your local tax office.

Health & Safety Statement: Every business is obliged to prepare and display a Health & Safety statement.

Employment Legislation:

All employers – committees and managers of private services must comply with all employment legislation. For a detailed list of legislation and obligations contact your local County Childcare Committee.

Employment & Staffing Requirements & Responsibilities

The management duties encountered in relation to employing staff include:

- ❖ Ensuring that an open and transparent recruitment process is in place
- ❖ Ensuring that all new staff engage in a full induction programme.
- ❖ Ensuring proper remuneration and deducting and submitting PAYE / PRSI to the revenue commissioners
- ❖ Ensuring compliance with employment legislation
- ❖ Ensuring that staff have access to ongoing training
- ❖ Establishing a system of staff support and supervision

Disclaimer

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