



# Getting Started

An Introductory Guide  
to Setting up a Childcare Service

*p.t.o.*

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# 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 an existing building. The Pre-School Inspection Team of the Health Service Executive will provide advice and guidance to you, to ensure that the service being developed will comply with the legal requirements of the Child Care Act 1991.

## Supports available from your County Childcare Committee

### Coordinator:

#### Role:

To plan and manage all activities of the offices and implement the strategic plan.

### Administrator:

#### Role:

To carry out all administration of the offices.

## Childcare Support and Development Worker:

#### Role:

To support all existing and developing childcare providers in the county.

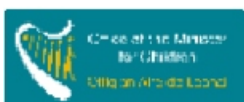
## Childminding Advisory Officer:

#### Role:

To support childminders caring for children in their own home.



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## 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.

### Childminding:

A person who single handedly cares for a maximum of six pre-school children including her/his own is considered to be offering a Childminding Service. 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. A childminder provides a safe, caring, stimulating environment for children of all ages.

### Full Day Care:

A full day care facility may also be called a Nursery, or Crèche. Legally a full day care service is one that is available continuously for more than 5 hrs per day although the actual opening hours may vary from facility to facility.

### Part Time:

Some facilities also offer part time places. A place should be counted as part time if it is

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available for more than 3.5 hrs and up to and including 5 hrs. The operating hours are usually 9 to 11 hrs a day. These hours are usually based on a five day week. The age range for Full Day Care varies from 3 months to 14 years. Some services do not take in children who are under 12 months. Full Day Care may incorporate Sessional and School Age Children. A Full Day Care facility should offer nutritious meals, rest periods, an appropriate sleep facility and an educational care programme of well thought out activities.

#### **Sessional Services:**

Sessional Services comprise playschools or preschools. They may also operate as Montessori, High/Scope, Naíonraí, Froebel or Steiner Schools. A Sessional Preschool Service means that a planned programme of activities for a period of up to 3.5 hrs is provided. The age range of Sessional Services is usually 2 yrs 10 months to 5 years.

#### **School Age Childcare:**

A School Age Childcare service takes responsibility for children when they are not in the school setting e.g. before school, after school and during school holidays. School Age Childcare Services should operate on the

Services should operate on the basis of an agreement between parents / carers and staff with on-going structured links with local schools.

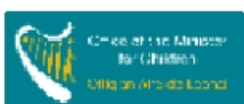
School Age Childcare Services occur in a variety of ways.

- 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 to 14 years.

#### **Drop in Centres:**

Drop in Centres provide short-term care on an hourly basis. These centres are generally operated in local shopping centres, hotels, holiday's homes etc. to enable parents to shop or use their facilities. Drop in Centres cater for children age 3 months to 12 years.

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# 2

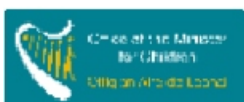
## Step 2: Market Research

Market Research is essential when considering the viability of your childcare business. It will not only form the basis of your grants and funding and your business plan, but it will also be important in deciding the type of business you open and what childcare service you are going to provide.

### Have you identified your target market?

- Who are they and where are they located?
  - Are you aware of your customers' needs?
  - Is it likely that your proposed new development will displace any existing service in the area? Talk to other local childcare providers.
  - Consider any new developments planned locally such as factories, shopping centres, etc. Have they a similar service to yours already included in their planning applications?
- Check parish register and with local primary schools for births and enrolments.
  - Check with local authority or county council about new housing developments.
  - Carry out a local needs analysis by doing door to door questionnaires.
  - Contact the Central Statistics Office (CSO) for information regarding population, age, gender in your locality.
  - Consult with local development groups, parents' associations etc...

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# 3

## 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 facility.
- Adapt an existing privately owned or community building.
- Extend an existing building.

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

- adequate space for the safe dropping off and collection of children and for staff parking
- sufficient space for outdoor play - which is an essential factor in the provision of quality childcare
- proximity to local schools, housing developments and amenities

It is a requirement of law that you need planning permission.

**Planning Permission is required for any of 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

**Ensure the premises has all relevant planning permissions.**

**When applying for planning include in the application:**

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

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The County Council Planning Section strongly recommends that you contact them regarding a pre-planning consultation. A planning officer will advise as to the suitability of the location for building or opening a childcare facility.

A member of the local Pre-School Inspectorate may be willing to carry out an inspection of a premises to ascertain its suitability as a location for a new Childcare facility. The contact number for the inspectorate is available from your County Childcare Committee or the Health Service Executive.

#### Contact Details:

**Cavan County Council**  
Court House  
Cavan  
Co. Cavan

tel: 049 - 4378300  
fax: 049 - 4361565  
web: [www.cavancoco.ie](http://www.cavancoco.ie)

**Longford County Council**  
Great Water Street  
Longford  
Co. Longford

tel: 043 - 46231  
fax: 043 - 41233  
web: [www.longfordcoco.ie](http://www.longfordcoco.ie)

**Louth County Council**  
Millennium Building  
County office  
Dundalk  
Co. Louth

tel: 042 - 9335457  
fax: 042 - 9334549  
web: [www.louthcoco.ie](http://www.louthcoco.ie)

**Meath County Council**  
County Hall  
Navan  
Co. Meath

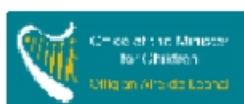
tel: 046 - 9021581  
fax: 046 - 9021463  
web: [www.meathcoco.ie](http://www.meathcoco.ie)

**Monaghan County Council**  
Glen Road  
Monaghan  
Co. Monaghan

tel: 047 - 30500  
fax: 047 - 82739

web: [www.monaghancoco.ie](http://www.monaghancoco.ie)

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# Step 4

## Costing Out Your Childcare Facility

# 4



### EXPENDITURE (Items which may be considered)

Set up costs	Running costs
Architect and related building costs	<b>Salaries</b> You need to take into consideration the recommended ratio / age and include employer's PRSI contributions <b>Adult/Child Ratio</b> 0-1 years 1:3 1-3 years 1:6 3-6 years 1:8 6-14 years 1:8 - best practice guidelines for School Age Children
Children's Equipment (indoor) Baby, Toddler, Preschool and School Age Childcare rooms	Heat & Light
Outdoor play area-	
Administration Equipment (Computers, Photocopier etc)	Administration Costs
Security (CCTV alarms etc) lighting	Maintenance of building
Kitchen equipment (Dishwasher etc.)	Repairs and Replacements
Furniture	Consumable goods

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# Sourcing Funding

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

	Privately run	Community run
Income from fees	✓	✓
NCIP capital grant	✓	✓
NCIP staffing grant	X	✓
Loans from financial institutions	✓	✓
HSE sponsored places	✓	✓
Fundraising	✓	✓
Partnerships with local employers	✓	✓
Charitable foundations and trusts e.g. AIB Better Ireland Awards, Katherine Howard Foundation, People in Need	X	✓

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# 5

## Step 5 Applying for Grants

All applications for grant assistance for childcare facilities must be made under the new **National Childcare Investment Programme (NCIP)**.

### Community:

Capital Grants for Community (not-for-profit) groups will continue to receive grants to a maximum of €1 million which may be used to establish, extend or upgrade facilities. A benchmark of €20,000 per childcare place will normally apply.

### Private:

Private providers can receive a maximum of €100,000 - subject to 25% minimum contribution by the provider - to establish, extend or upgrade facilities.

An applicant may apply for more than one grant under this scheme provided the subsequent childcare facilities are in different catchment areas and subject to an overall ceiling of €500,000 per applicant.

A minimum of 5 additional

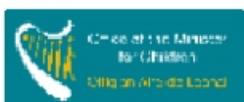
childcare places need to be created to apply for funding. A benchmark of €15,000 per childcare place will normally apply.

### A Capital Grant can cover:

- purchasing a site / premises
- building a premises (An independent evaluator will be sent to value the property)
- extending a premises
- furnishing a premises
- fixtures and fittings
- toys for the facility
- equipment e.g. cots, tables and chairs etc.
- professional fees

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## Expression of Interest Forms

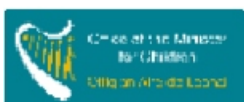
If you wish to apply for Capital Funding please complete the enclosed *Expression of Interest Form* and return to your Local County Childcare Committee.

When completing the Expression of Interest Form please refer to the *Guide To Expression of Interest Form* and the *Summary of the Application Process* which has also been enclosed.

Following receipt of your completed *Expression of Interest Form* you will be contacted by your local County Childcare Committee.

We look forward to working with you in the future.

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