

Important Notice from the OMCYA re Additional Needs & the ECCE scheme

The OMCYA is committed to supporting children with special needs within its early childcare and education programmes. For this reason the exemption from the upper age limit for children with developmental delay and the pro-rata option for parents of children with special needs was introduced.

As the scheme is a universal one year free pre-school year, there never was a second year entitlement for any child. However, given the need for a broader review of services, and having regard to the fact that the first free pre-school year was a "short year", in March 2010 the OMC YA undertook to consider, on a case by case basis, allowing a second pre-school year in September 2010, to children who had been assessed by the HSE or a treating consultant as having a significant disability and having the potential to benefit significantly from a second year in a mainstream setting. Some children were approved under this additional and discretionary measure. As ***this provision applied in 2010 only*** it will not be available to children in September 2011.

The options for children with special needs are, from September 2011

- 1 full year during the year the child qualifies by age or
- 1 full year if the child applies under the exemption from the upper age limit or pro rata i.e 1 full year spread over two years (e.g. 3/2 days first year and 2/3 days the 2nd year)

All applications for children with special needs must be approved by the OMCYA in advance so applications must be received prior to the commencement of the scheme in September 2011.

Applications should be addressed to the Childcare Directorate, Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, Hawkins House, Dublin 2.