

## How will services offering the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme be structured and operated?

Services must be trading as a sole trader, partnership, limited liability company or school Board of Management. Community based services depend on parents using the service to get involved in the management of the service and can only establish a limited liability company where parents and the wider community are willing to be involved by becoming a director and/or member of the company.

## How will services offering the ECCE Scheme be regulated?

Services offering the ECCE Scheme must be notified to the HSE as a pre-school service and have a satisfactory level of compliance with the Child Care (Pre-School Services) (No. 2) Regulations 2006 and Explanatory Guide to Requirements and Procedures for Notification and Inspection.

## Will childcare staff be experienced and suitably qualified?

The preschool leader must hold a major award in childcare/early education at a minimum of level 5 on the National Framework of Qualifications of Ireland (NFQ) or an equivalent recognised qualification in the above fields.

During the period Sept 2010 to August 2012 the qualification requirement will be considered to be met where a childcare worker can show that he/she has obtained a certification for an award in ECCE that includes the areas of child development, early learning, health and welfare and has a minimum of two years experience in a childcare setting catering for 0–6 year olds.

Where a child who was included in the ECCE programme return takes up a new place under the CETS programme, either within the same childcare service or in a different service, his or her entitlement to ECCE should immediately be transferred to CETS by completing and returning [ECCE Form 4 - Transfer from ECCE to CETS Form](#) to the Childcare Directorate. If the CETS placement ceases, and the child is to be transferred back to the ECCE programme, [ECCE Form 5 - ECCE/CETS/ECCE](#) must be completed and returned to the Childcare Directorate.

### ECCE to CCS and vice versa.

There is no entitlement to transfer from the ECCE programme to the CCS, or vice versa in the course of the September to August period. However, exceptional circumstances may arise where a request from a service to transfer a child from the ECCE programme to the CCS programme, or from the CCS programme to the ECCE programme, will be considered. Applications for such transfers must be made in writing to the Childcare Directorate, giving details of the exceptional circumstances which apply.

### CONTACT RCCC AT:

Roscommon County Childcare Committee

Knock Road

Castlerea

Co. Roscommon

Tel: 094 9622540

Email: [info@roscommonchildcare.ie](mailto:info@roscommonchildcare.ie)

Website: [www.roscommonchildcare.ie](http://www.roscommonchildcare.ie)

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# Free Pre-school Year Early Childhood Care & Education (ECCE) Scheme



## Information for Parents provided by:



**Roscommon County  
Childcare Committee.**



## Free Pre-school Year in Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme

The objective of the ECCE programme, which is open to both community and commercial service providers, is to benefit children in the key developmental period prior to starting school. The programme is administered by the Childcare Directorate of the Department of Children and Youth Affairs, with the local operation of the programme managed by the City and County Childcare Committees (CCCs).

## What age must my child be to avail of a free preschool place?

Children who enter the ECCE scheme in September 2012, must be born between 2nd February 2008 and 30th June 2009, both dates inclusive.

There are 2 circumstances in which older children may avail of the ECCE scheme:

1. Parents who wish to apply for a waiver of the upper age limit or to avail of the pre-school year on a pro-rata basis over two years (e.g. 2 days per week in year 1 and 3 days per week in year 2) on the grounds that their children have special needs, must apply in writing to the Childcare Directorate.
2. Parents may also apply for a waiver of the upper age limit where their child will not be able to commence primary school until they are aged at least 5 years and 7 months, due to the local schools' admissions policies, on condition that the child has not already availed of the ECCE Programme.

Applications should be made to the Childcare Directorate not later than 1st July each year. Contact RCCC for further information on the documentation that will be required to apply for these exemptions.

## How many hours /days/ weeks can my child avail of the free preschool year?

If your child is attending a sessional service she/he may attend for 3 hours per day, five days a week for 38 weeks per year. Where the service operates for 4 days per week your child may attend for 3 hours 30 minutes per day for 41 weeks of the year.

A Sessional service can also participate in the Scheme by providing 2 hours 15 minutes per day, five days a week for 50 weeks per year.

If your child is attending a full or part-time day care service, she/he has the opportunity to attend for 2 hours 15 minutes per day, five days a week for 50 weeks per year.

A full or part-time service may also choose to provide a sessional service (3 hours per day/5 days per week) over 38 weeks of the year.

It is not mandatory for children to attend 5 days per week but services are advised by the DCYA to prioritise places for children where parents indicate that they intend to avail of the place for at least 4 days each week.

## Will I have to pay any additional fees?

Services may charge parents for any additional services provided, including additional hours and additional activities, provided that these are optional to parents and that appropriate programme-based activities are available to children not participating in the additional activities.

## How do I know which pre-schools are on the scheme?

An up-to-date list is available on the Roscommon County Childcare Committee website:  
[http://www.roscommonchildcare.ie/ecce\\_services.html](http://www.roscommonchildcare.ie/ecce_services.html)

## When can I enrol my child?

Roscommon County Childcare Committee would like to encourage parents to support their childcare service with the introduction of the ECCE Scheme. Priority will be given to parent's seeking full time places. Services may require booking deposits and, provided that this is not more than twice the weekly capitation fee and, provided it is repaid to parents by the end of September 2012, this is acceptable.

## Will I have to complete any paperwork?

At the beginning of Sept, childcare services will distribute parent declaration forms to parents.

## Can I transfer my child from one service to another?

Yes. However, in order to do so, a transfer form must be completed by you, the parent, the new childcare service, and the current service. This form must be sent to the Dept. of Children and Youth Affairs, at least, 4 weeks before the beginning of the new term.

## Can I defer an ECCE place to the following year?

Yes. If a parent, who enrolled a child in the ECCE scheme in Sept, decides that it would be more beneficial for the child to defer the pre-school year until the following year, s/he may apply for a deferral. However, this within the first term of the pre-school year and where the child will still fulfil the eligibility criteria for admission to the programme in September of the following year.



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