

Questions and Answers for DCYA page / PIP / CCC websites / VCO dissemination

For parents

How will childcare be more affordable?

If you have a child aged between 6 months old and 36 months old availing of childcare through a registered childcare provider, you could receive a childcare subsidy of up to €20 per week from September.

If you have a child aged between 6 months old and 15 years old who availing of childcare through a registered childcare provider AND you meet certain eligibility criteria, you could receive a childcare subsidy of up to €145 per week from September

Is this the Affordable Childcare Scheme?

No. These childcare subsidies will be provided through existing childcare support schemes.

When will these changes come into effect?

These changes to childcare supports will take effect from September 2017.

How do I find out if I am eligible for financial supports towards my childcare costs?

If you are already in receipt of childcare supports through an existing childcare scheme, these changes will happen automatically.

If you are not currently in receipt of childcare support, a public information campaign will commence in May to advise who qualifies of these childcare supports and the steps needed to take to avail of them.

From what age do children qualify for childcare supports?

The new universal childcare subsidy is available to all children aged from 6 months old through to 36 months old (or commencement on the free pre-school programme). The targeted childcare subsidies are available to eligible children aged from 6 months old through to 15 years old.

Will these announcements affect my child's participation in the ECCE (free pre-school programme)?

Not at all. The ECCE programme (sometimes referred to as the 'free pre-school programme') operates separately to these Schemes.

Where can I find out more information?

For more information please contact your local City/County Childcare Committee. You can find details of your local City/County Childcare Committee [by clicking here](#).

For Childcare Providers

Is the Affordable Childcare Scheme going ahead?

Yes. Massive work is underway developing the various technical, legal and IT elements of the Affordable Childcare Scheme. As part of the consultative process with stakeholders we received feedback from the childcare sector cautioning against launching the Scheme without all IT systems fully developed. With this in mind, we have decided to wait until we are satisfied that all of the above aspects are in place before launching the Scheme fully.

Why have changes been introduced in the interim?

The Government is committed to easing the financial burden of childcare on families in any way it can. It is imperative that these supports are not delayed to families. Therefore, it was decided to introduce changes to the rates of subsidy provided under the existing targeted childcare schemes, as well to introduce a new universal childcare subsidy through Community Childcare Subvention Plus (CCSP) Scheme.

Will there be any new IT systems related to the current changes?

No. The changes to childcare subsidies from this September will be administered as normal through the PIP system as is currently the case. Once the existing targeted childcare schemes are amalgamated and become the Affordable Childcare Scheme, a new IT system will be launched. Comprehensive consultation and supports will be put in place in the lead up to such changes.

Who can offer these childcare supports to parents?

Childcare providers (including childminders) that are registered with Tusla may go into contract to provide these childcare supports. The majority of these supports will be available through the recently announced CCSP Scheme and the Training and Education Childcare (TEC) Schemes. These childcare supports will be available from September 2017 onwards so entering into the contract for CCSP and TEC Scheme will happen through the normal cycle (i.e. when childcare providers are re-contracting for the ECCE programme etc).

Can private as well as community/ not-for-profit childcare providers offer these supports to parents?

Yes. Both private and community/ not-for-profit childcare provider may offer these childcare supports to eligible parents in their service.

Do I need a contract to do so?

If your childcare service is already contracted to offer the CCSP and TEC Schemes, then you will need to re-contract through the normal mechanisms. If you have not already joined the CCSP or TEC Schemes, you may join it at the same time as contracting will take place.

Where can I get support if I'd like further information on these changes?

There will be a public information campaign to inform parents of their eligibility for the new childcare supports available to them. Further details regarding the steps childcare services need to

take to join these Schemes will follow in May. If you have any queries regarding the changes announced please contact your local City/County Childcare Committee.