

Volume 1 issue 8

Welcome to our weekly bulletin.

These are the deadlines, important dates, and announcements and new resources for the week 26th – 1st March 2024.

FCCC staff are available via phone & email (Please see below).

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Fingal CCC have set up a network group (community of professionals)

We had our first face to face meeting in the Fingal office and it went very well.

The goal of this network is to offer support to each other and share ideas. It will be the role of Fingal CCC to facitiliate this group in the beginning. The vision is down the line to hand it over to the network group.

To begin with we hope to be meeting once a month or as the group requests. These meetings can be online, face to face or in each others serivces.

You all have a wealth of knowledge when it comes to ELC and SAC but it can often be isolating or lonely if you are on your own. This group creates a support network for all who join it.

The topics will vary and will be driven by what the group want to discuss or would like more knowledge on.

We have set up a whatsapp group and plan to meet again in March.

We have planted the seed and would love your help in making this grow



For more information please email: karen@fingalcountychildcare.ie or call: 0874705806





Note from FCCC

The FCCC team will be visiting P&T groups, Libraries and Shopping centres in the Fingal area to provide information, advice and support to Parents and Childminders in relation to all areas of childcare. Keep an eye on our FB page for upcoming dates.





DEADLINES / IMPORTANT DATES:

Monday 11th March 2024

National Síolta Aistear Initiative: Aistear and Play 2024 - Better Start course application deadline

Thursday 21st March 2024

Playing Outside Grant Verification Checks

Friday 22nd March 2024

Financial reporting deadline for Core Funding

Wednesday 3rd April 2024

Building Blocks Expansion Grant 2024

For your information



NCS subsidy increase

From 2 September 2024, the minimum rate for the National Childcare Scheme (NCS) subsidies will increase from €1.40 to €2.14. The increase, introduced by Minister Roderic O'Gorman as part of Budget 2024 measures, means that if parents receive a subsidy less than the new maximum (table below), they will receive a higher subsidy towards their childcare fees.

There will be no change to the NCS sponsor referral rate for children aged 0-52 weeks.

The remaining sponsor rates will have the max rate increased to €5.30 as demonstrated below.

	Current Max Rate	New Max Rate
1 to 2 years	€5.00	€5.30
3+ years	€4.54	€5.30
School Age	€4.31	€5.30



How will this affect awards and claims?

Universal Awards and income assessed as over the 60 000 threshold – these will be updated with the increased universal rate for the remainder of the award.

Income Assessed Awards – where the income was assessed within the income thresholds and an award was generated, these will be recalculated, and an increased rate may be applied for the remainder of the award.

Those at €26,000 and below are already on the highest levels of subsidy and therefore no further increase will apply to their subsidy.

Sponsor Awards – awards for sponsor children aged 1 or over will have their award updated with an increased max rate for the remainder of the award. There is no change to sponsor awards for children under 1 year of age.

Claims will **automatically be updated** with the new rate for these applicants. There will be no need for parents to confirm these claims again, however if parents have not yet confirmed their claims, they will still be required to do so.

Claims must be confirmed by the applicant before payments can flow to the provider.

Important: It should be noted that where rates change, the parents' co-payment must be updated, and the parent informed.

A tool highlighting the affected claims will be available on the Hive. More information on this tool will be made available closer to the time.

Support

If you need further support, please raise a on the Hive using the following dropdown options:

Request program type: NCS.

Request type: Registrations.

Request type detail: Claim.

Playing Outside Grants 2021

Pobal will be performing **verification checks** on all Playing Outside Grants 2021. From 21 February 2024, services are being asked via a targeted HIVE notification to submit returns for the Playing Outside Grant 2021. This notification is to advise that your service is subject to a verification check. Relevant documentation (such as supporting invoices and bank statements) are required to be submitted on the Hive return portal which will be open from 21/02/24 to 21/03/24 for completion by your registered PAU.

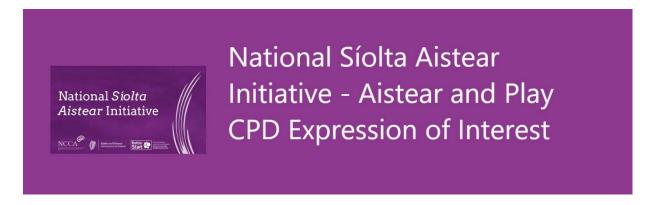
Please note that the checks will be performed remotely and no visit to your facility will be required.

In advance of uploading any information to the Hive return portal, please consult the relevant documents in the <u>Hive Resources</u> Section:



- 1. Refer to the Verification Check System Use Guidance and note the specific verification requirements (pages 2-3).
- 2. Refer to the Application Guidelines noting the examples of eligible and ineligible expenses for the Playing Outside Grant 2021 (pages 6-8).

The services will have until 21/03/24 to submit returns.



Hive Announcement - Aistear and Play 2024

The purpose of the NSAI is to support the implementation of the two National Frameworks-Síolta, the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood and Education and Aistear, The Early Childhood Curriculum Framework.

Aistear and Play is delivered by Better Start Early Years Specialists. This continuous professional development (CPD) can be a part of your Core Funding Quality Action Plan.

The training will take place over five, 2.5 hour in-person sessions. The course includes two on-site mentoring visits by a Better Start Early Years Specialist, one after session three and another after session five.

If your setting is interested in taking part in Aistear and Play, <u>CLICK HERE</u> and complete your expression of interest. For further information you can visit the Better Start website <u>National Síolta Aistear Initiative</u>: <u>Aistear and Play - Better Start</u>

Building Blocks Expansion Grant

The Department of Children, Equality, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) circulated a <u>press release</u> today (Thursday 22 February 2024), in relation to Building Blocks – Expansion Grant Scheme. Applications are now available on the Early Years Hive by navigating to Programmes – Building Blocks Application. Applications will close on April 3rd, 2024.

Detailed information regarding Building Blocks - Expansion Grant, is available in the <u>Application Guidelines</u>. Applicants can contact the Early Years Provider Centre (EYPC) with any queries by raising a service request on the Early Years Hive under the programme: 'Building Blocks - Expansion Grant' and selecting the relevant sub-category.





Building blocks application demonstration Training video

NCS changes

As of 17/02/2024 there is going to be a significant change to HIVE.

Now, when parents end the award (CHICK) it will make the current claim invalid and service providers will have to end the claim before they can create a new one.

From 17/02/2024, a parent ending their award on NCS will automatically end the claim too. Therefore, service providers will not have to end the claim and if child is still in the service, they can create a new claim with the new CHICK without ending the current claim.

To help understand this new process, please see some FAQs -

NCS changes in ending claims with FAQ.

Will the parents know they're ending the claim when ending the award?

Yes, there will be a warning message when the parents applies for the new award informing them that this action will end the existing claim. Parents will also receive a notification with the new end date for the claim.

How can parents end the award?

Parents can end the award by simply applying for the new award when the old one has not expired yet.

What will be the new end date for the claim if the award has been ended?

It will always be the Sunday of the week in which the award has ended. For example, if parents applied for a new CHICK and cancelled the existing one on Friday 16/02/2024, the new end date for the claim will be Sunday 18/02/2024.



How do I know which claims have been ended?

Service Providers will receive a notification with the CHICK number every time an applicant ends their award, so it is important to regularly check your notification on the Early Years Hive. Also, on Hive under NCS registrations, there is a view called "Claims Ended by Applicant." In that view, service providers will be able to see all these claims.

The child has already left the service and the award was ended by the applicant; do I have to do anything else?

No, if child already left the service you don't need to do anything.

The child is still attending the service, what do I need to do?

You need to ask the parents for a new CHICK and then create a new claim. You won't need to end the old claim as it will be cancelled automatically.

I have a sponsored child who attends the service. When the sponsor ends the award, what should I do?

If the child has left the service, then you don't need to do anything as the claim has already ended. If the child is still in the service, then you can ask the parents if they received the new CHICK or contact sponsor line at **01 906 8535.**



Notice for services located in schools - closure day due to referendums (8 March)

Early Learning and Care/School Age Childcare Providers located within a school premises or on the school grounds, and where the school is used as a polling station for elections/referendums on a day which the ELC/SAC service is scheduled to be open are not required:

to amend their calendars

or

apply for force majeure.

Services providing the ECCE programme are **not** required to make up that day for the purposes of meeting the 182-day rule in the programme year.



Seachtain na Gaeilge

Seachtain na Gaeilge 2024 is running from the 1-17 March. This is a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the Irish language. The Seachtain na Gaeilge website has resources that may be used to promote and increase the use of Irish https://snag.ie/en/games/

Some useful links are also available on the Aistear/Síolta Practice Guide

For Irish medium settings in the Interactions/ resources for sharing section you'll find useful tip-sheets

For English medium settings Introducing Irish to preschool children in English medium settings



The February Review & Confirm window is now open and will close on Monday 12th February 2024. Prior to completing the Review & Confirm, you must ensure that all data on the Service Profile is up to date. Secondly, the Core Funding Application Module must be at status 'Approved'. If the Application Module is at a 'Referred Back' status, the issue must be rectified prior to completing the Review & Confirm. Support documents can be located on HIVE>Resources>Help & Support>Core Funding>Core Funding Application.



Core Funding Reporting Requirement Year 1

The DCEDIY have agreed a transitional arrangement for financial reporting to cover year 1 and year 2 of the Core Funding scheme. Financial reporting requirements in this transitional phase have been significantly simplified and streamlined and the material now available on the Early Years Hive reflects those changes.



It should be noted that the Financial Management Tool is optional. The financial reporting deadline for Core Funding is 22nd March 2024. The revised reporting requirement during the transitional phase will consist of a sector specific Income and Expenditure Report. This Income and Expenditure Report will significantly reduce the reporting requirement on partner services.

Relevant documents can be located on Hive> Resources>Programme Documents>Core Funding documents> Core Funding Reporting Requirement Year 1 (2022/23)

FCCC Core funding support

If you have any question or need support please contact: Karen Comiskey, Development Officer – Core Funding: Mobile: 0874705806 | Email: karen@fingalcountychildcare.ie

Measles outbreak

In recent months there has been a rise in cases of measles in parts of the UK and Europe. On 7th February the HSE reported the death of an adult with confirmed measles. This is the first confirmed measles case notified in Ireland in 2024. The HSE is writing to ask for your support in raising awareness among parents, guardians and staff about:

- Watching out for the symptoms of measles
- The importance of the MMR vaccine in protecting children.

https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/healthwellbeing/our-priority-programmes/child-health-and-wellbeing/hse-measles-a4-poster.pdf



Access to Better Start training through Continuous Professional Development

Each member of staff must have their own active directory account to take part in training. When staff self-enrol for training through the LMS365 course catalogue they must self-enrol using their own accounts.

Enrolling under a different account may result in certificates of completion issued under a different username and the course not being recorded on the individual's learning transcript.

To access the support guides, please see Help & Support > Better Start L&D Guides.

For further support with any queries, please contact:

Professionaldevelopment@betterstart.ie



Barnardos – new publication

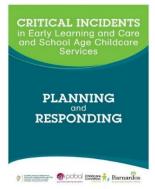
Guidance on how early years educators can help children learn how to manage and express their feelings and help them learn how to behave in situations of stress and conflict.

https://knowledge.barnardos.ie/.../99bf80c8-4037.../content





Critical Incidents in Early Learning and Care and School Age Childcare Services: Planning and Responding



All Early Learning and Care (ELC) and school Age Childcare (SAC) services are required to have a service level Critical Incident Plan as outlined in the Tusla Quality and Regulatory Framework (QRF) and the National Quality Guidelines for School Age Childcare Services. A guide has been developed from previous guidance on critical incidents plan ning, including the Critical Incident Plan Toolkit and the extensive work of the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS), to support ELC and SAC services to think about and plan for critical incidents and to have practical supports in place should it be necessary to respond to a critical incident. Please see guidance below.



First5 Little Library

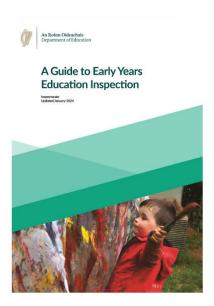
Below you will find a copy of the First5 Little Library at your Local Library eBulletin. It includes information on the supports available from the local library to ELC & SAC services as well as details on the Little Library Evaluation.



Little Book at Bedtime:

A free bedtime storybook and library card wallet is available at the library for all children of 4 years and under, to pick up and keep. This exciting initiative aims to engage all parents of young children to read stories with them at bedtime. Parents and their children can pop into their local library to pick up their free bedtime story book and join the library. Bedtime story books are available in English and Irish.





Updated January 2024 - how the Department of Education Inspectorate conducts an early years education inspection.

https://www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/233708/a923cf1c-6565-48d8-a96b-2b1330e70b14.pdf



All LINC graduates can register for LINC's online CPD programme. You do not need to be the Inclusion Coordinator in your setting to participate.

This CPD can be included in Quality Action Plans under option 5.

FAQs and how to apply: https://lincprogramme.ie/cpd-for-incos





New from TU Dublin: Together Old and Young (TOY) handbook.

Intergenerational learning focuses on bringing older adults and young children together to share knowledge, skills and values.

http://www.toyproject.net/.../Generations-growing...



First 5 Implementation Plan

The DCEDIY published the implementation plan for 'First 5', the ten-year whole of government strategy for babies, young children and their families which describes the ambitious steps that will be taken over the period 2023 to 2025 to ensure children get the best start in life.

Click on the below link for full press release.

http://westmeathchildcare.ie/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/24.11-PRESS-RELEASE New-First-5-implementation-plan.pdf





Environmental labels are signs used to identify learning and play areas, equipment and resources in an early year setting. They support children to effectively use and learn about their preschool environment and to identify the different play and learning areas available for them to explore and play in.

See Better Start's tip sheet: Environmental labels



Betterstart is delighted to launch the new AIM information video. This video was designed to tell the story about the role of the Early Years Specialist when delivering Expert Educational Advice and Support. It provides details about how to access AIM supports as well as what can be expected from the mentoring journey. Have a look here https://www.betterstart.ie/access-and-inclusion-model/



Viral Infections: HSE Guidance for the ELC Sector

Dear provider,

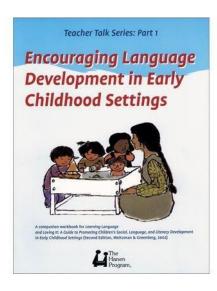
We are writing to you today (17/11/23) with a memo from the HSE and supporting poster which provide advice for ELC settings on Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV).

Regards,

Early Years Division, DCEDIY

Guidance





Better Start's Hanen Teacher Talk training - practical, interactive strategies for early years educators to help children interact and communicate. New dates added for February and March: https://www.betterstart.ie/.../hanen-teacher-talk.../



As advised at the end of January, the current inspection Disputed Findings process has been extensively reviewed and enhanced. The process is now called Inspection Findings Review (IFR) process and will be implemented for inspections which are carried out on or after 12th February 2024. The process for Inspection Findings Review and for Factual Accuracy have been separated into two distinct clear processes.

The Inspection Findings Review provides a clear and robust process for when a registered provider disagrees with inspection findings in the inspection report.

You can access all the relevant documents, along with several guidance documents to support you with the process on the Tusla Inspection Tools and Templates webpage. https://www.tusla.ie/services/preschool-ser-vices/early-years-inspections-2/inspection-tools-and-templates-2/

A webinar was held to outline the new process on 29th January 2024 which has been recorded and made available on the Tusla website. You can access the session, along with the presentations now, https://www.tusla.ie/ser-vices/preschool-services/elearning-webinars-and-resources/webinars/

Following on from the Tusla Webinar - Inspection Findings Review and Multiple Provider Overview on Monday 29th January for providers, if you didn't get the opportunity to attend, a recording is available on the Tusla website, https://www.tusla.ie/services/preschool-services/elearning-webinars-and-resources/webinars/

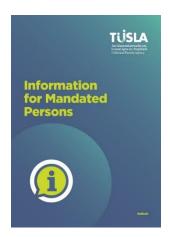


Renewal of garda vetting



This new leaflet provides information for parents on the different types of inspections and other work carried out by Tusla and the Department of Education inspectorates. <u>Leaflet</u>

Link to vetting booklet



First Aid Responder (FAR) requirement

Due to recent Tusla inspections outcome we would like to remind Providers that:

- At least one person trained in first aid (FAR) is available to the children while the service is in operation.
- At least one person trained in first aid (FAR) is available to the children when on outings.
- A list of people trained in first aid (FAR) is available.
- In-date certification for each trained FAR is available.

The number of people trained in first aid for children (FAR) and available for first aid response is based on the service's risk assessments, including the size of the service and the hazards identified.





Guidance for the Early Learning and Care sector on sleep provision for children under 24 months



Tusla has introduced a new guidance document, which sets out the revised position of Tulsa's Early Years Inspectorate on sleep provision for children under 24 months in early learning and care services.

There is also a webinar available for your convenience using the following link: https://www.tusla.ie/services/preschool-services/preschool-services/elearning-webinars-and-resources/webinars/



What to do if worried about a child



For Childminders



Attention All Childminders

Your Voice Counts....

Join one of FCCC focus group meetings either in person or online and learn more about the proposed draft childminding regulations and have the opportunity to provide invaluable feedback which will help shape the new regulations.

To book a place click the link or scan the QR codes from one of the 3 sessions that follow





Details of focus group





Online Focus group Wednesday 27th March 7-9pm

To book a place click on the link in the post or scan the QR code



Details of focus group





In person Focus group Wednesday 10th April 7-9pm

Tyrrelstown Community
Centre
Hollywood Rath
Holbstown Road
Tyrrelstown
Dublin 15

To book a place click on the link in the post or scan the QR code









For Parents



- · Are you concerned about your child's eating habits?
- · Are mealtimes a battle?
- · Is your child refusing to eat?

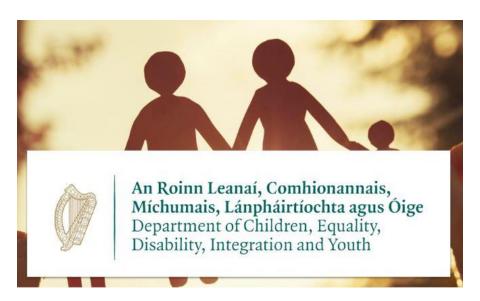
Learn how to manage your child's fussy eating at a FREE online webinar. Suitable for parents or guardians of children aged 1-12. The webinar runs every month. Delivered by HSE dietitians.

Register on bit.ly/fussyeatingDNCC

This webinar looks at potential causes of fussy eating, common strategies which can make fussy eating worse and practical tips on how to encourage children to accept a wider variety of foods.

The next one is taking place on Thursday, 7 March - register here: Register

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FCCC Jobs Board

Fingal CCC have updated their website to include an interactive Jobs Board. This Jobs Board will support early childcare providers to advertise their recruitment needs and to provide parents with the opportunity to advertise needs with the aim of linking, early years, childminders, and parents in the Fingal area. The new FCCC Jobs Board facilitates the recruitment of staff into the ELC Sector in Fingal. To advertise a job simply go to our website and click on the jobs board tab. Employers with job vacancies can post a job by clicking on the link above and fill in the required fields. The jobs posted will go live immediately and will be visible on the site for 30 days and will then be archived. **Note - you don't need to set up a log in, just complete the form and click submit.**

Service Closures

We have been asked what the process is for services, if for whatever reason, you have decided not to reopen or closed within the current programme year. The steps are as follows:

- Inform FCCC via email to info@fingalcountychildcare.ie
- Complete the Cessation of Services form for Tusla click on the link below.
 http://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/Cessation_of_Service.pdf
- Inform Pobal & make any necessary changes to registrations on the HIVE. Service Closure If an Approved
 Provider closes its ELC service, or ceases to provide a DCEDIY childcare programme, notice must be submitted in
 writing immediately to the local City/County Childcare Committee and the Data Management Team in the
 Scheme Administrator by raising a service request on the EY HIVE and selecting the Request Programme Type
 "User Account Management", then selecting the Category "How to" and the Sub-Category "Closures. FCCC will
 link in with individual services once the notification has been received.

Facebook

If you are a Facebook user, or would like to set up a Facebook account, we would be most grateful if you could please 'Like' our Fingal County Childcare Committee Facebook page, and please feel free to 'Share' it too. We will post regular updates for ELC/ SAC services and Childminders.

Our Facebook page can be found at the following link: https://www.facebook.com/fingalcountychildcare/

Covid Case Advice

Covid case advice *new information*

Please find below links to information from the HPSC in relation to Covid-19 and information from the HSE for ELC and SAC providers on preventing the spread of Covid-19 and children returning to ELC and SAC settings.

We would be grateful if you can share this information with parents, guardians, and staff.

https://www.hpsc.ie/news/title-23357-en.html (updated 11th August 2023)

https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/covid19/preventing-the-spread/

https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/covid19/preventing-the-spread/child-returning-to-school-or-childcare/



In addition, please find link below to the Management of Infectious Diseases in Childcare Facilities guidance resource.

https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/lifestages/childcare/File,13444,en.pdf Management of Infectious Disease in Childcare Facilities and Other Childcare Settings (2012)

For general Covid-19 queries you can contact HSE on 1800 700 700 between 8am and 8pm Monday to Friday and 9am – 5pm Saturday and Sunday or visit the HSE website https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/covid19/

Should you have any queries on the above, our contact details are 01- 4851727 or info@fingalcountychildcare.ie
Kind Regards, Fingal County Childcare Committee