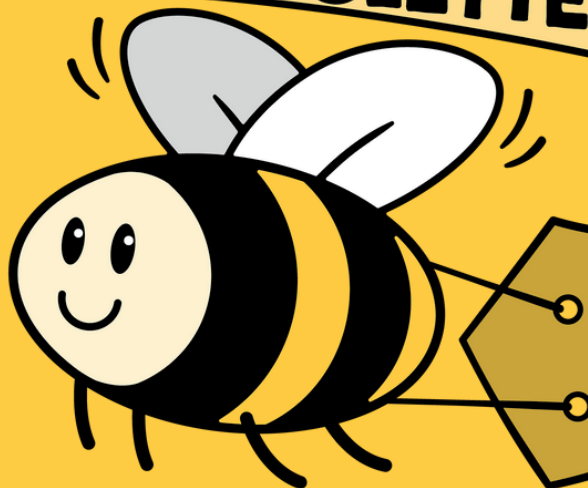


THE NATIONAL CHILDCARE SCHEME NEWSLETTER



MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER, DR. KATHERINE ZAPPONE, T.D.

The National Childcare Scheme is on its way!

The landmark new Scheme is set to open this October, providing the first ever statutory entitlement to childcare support for parents.

By making quality childcare accessible and affordable, the Scheme aims to improve children's outcomes, support lifelong learning, help parents to access education and employment, and reduce child poverty.

Without the National Childcare Scheme, we simply cannot move forward with delivering the quality, accessible, affordable childcare that Ireland needs and deserves. The Scheme provides a flexible, future-focused and sustainable platform to invest in quality Early Learning and Care and School Age Childcare. It is designed to grow and evolve in line with our nation's needs. It is our commitment to children. It is our investment in families.

Read on to find out more about your National Childcare Scheme!

Delivering quality, accessible, affordable childcare

Subsidies are available for families with children aged between 24 weeks and 15 years who are attending any participating Tusla registered service, including any Tusla registered Childminder and Tusla registered school age childcare service



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

APPLYING FOR THE SCHEME

The National Childcare Scheme can be accessed online or by post. To get the Scheme safely up and running, a phased launch is necessary.

Parents will be able to apply for the Scheme **online from October 2019 using a verified MyGovID**, with subsidy payments flowing from November. The innovative online application process has been designed to be as **safe, speedy and stress free for users** as possible. Parents can even apply on their mobile phone!

Alongside this, supports are in place to ensure that any parent who wishes to apply online but lacks IT access or knowledge can get practical help.

Postal applications will be available from January 2020.

BEE READY TO APPLY



Parents are encouraged to get their verified MyGovID now to ensure that they are ready to apply online from October. Visit our website to find out more or call the National Childcare Scheme Parent Support Centre on 01-9068530 from 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday.



Find us on  facebook.com/nationalchildcarescheme/

SUPPORTS FOR PARENTS



We have a number of supports in place for parents, including:

- Our website, **www.ncs.gov.ie**, which hosts a range of resources for parents and providers.
- A dedicated **Parent Support Centre, open from 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday. Parents can call 01-906 8530** to speak with a trained operator for guidance on the Scheme and the online application process.
- 30 local City and County Childcare Committees are fully trained on all aspects of the Scheme and are available to provide information and practical support to parents.
- We are working together over the coming months to ensure that staff in Intreo Offices, Libraries and Citizens Information Centres will also be able to provide community level information and support for parents who need it.
- There is ongoing work with key stakeholder groups to ensure that there is additional support available for particularly vulnerable families.
- Sponsored referrals will be in place for families with high levels of need, such as families who are experiencing homelessness or families for whom childcare is required on child welfare, child protection or family support grounds. Under a sponsored referral, the Government meets the full cost of a childcare place for a family.

Remember practical help is there for anyone who wishes to apply online from this October!

CONTINUITY OF CURRENT SUBSIDIES

The National Childcare Scheme will ultimately replace the current targeted childcare subsidy schemes which are no longer fit for purpose in the context of our current efforts to support access to education and employment, and to reduce poverty. However, these schemes remain open to parents until the end of October. Anyone availing of one of these schemes at that point can choose to either switch over to the National Childcare Scheme or can remain on their current subsidy payment until at least the end of August 2020. No-one will lose out in the initial transition to the new Scheme and many will be better off. Minister Zappone has also asked her officials to undertake further analysis to examine all options that may be available for the small number of cases where people could receive a smaller subsidy under the National Childcare Scheme than they currently receive under the existing schemes.

