



Tackling educational disadvantage

As part of the National Childcare Strategy, the Department of Education and Science (DES) will work with the OMC in tackling educational disadvantage. The DES will work in partnership with OMC in delivering a new Social Inclusion Programme, Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS). DEIS will complement and add value to existing childcare programmes in disadvantaged communities, with a view to ensuring that the care and education of children are delivered in an integrated manner.

The key objective of DEIS is to meet the educational needs of children and young people in disadvantaged communities, from pre-school (including Early Start) to second-level education (3-18 years). It also includes second-chance education, training and access measures for adults and provision for students with special needs.

In administering the capital investment under the Childcare Programme, the OMC will further support early childhood care and education through a focus on additional places for pre-school children aged 3-4 years.



Pre-School Regulations

The Child Care Act 1991 provides for the notification and inspection of, pre-school services (for children under the age of 6 years), by the Health Service Executive.

The Regulations apply to pre-schools, playgroups, day nurseries, crèches, childminders and other similar services, looking after more than three pre-school children.

The purpose of the Regulations is to build on and improve childcare standards to ensure the health, safety and welfare of pre-school children and promote the development of children attending pre-school services.

Enquiries about the notification and inspection of pre-school services can be made to the local Pre-School Service offices of the Health Service Executive.



Contact Details:

Office of the Minister for Children:
Lo-Call: 1890 20 90 30
Pobal: 01 240 2090 / www.pobal.ie

national childcare strategy 2006-2010

A GUIDE FOR PROVIDERS



OFFICE OF THE MINISTER FOR CHILDREN
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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND CHILDREN
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the office of the minister for children (omc) is responsible for implementing the national childcare strategy 2006 – 2010

What is the National Childcare Strategy?

The key objective of the National Childcare Strategy is to further develop the childcare infrastructure to meet the needs of children and their parents for quality early childhood care.

National Childcare Investment Programme (2006 – 2010)

The Government's National Childcare Investment Programme is a major programme of investment in childcare infrastructure. €575 million has been allocated to the five-year Programme, including €358 million for capital investment.

It is anticipated that the Programme will create up to 50,000 new childcare places, with the objective of assisting parents to access affordable, quality childcare.

The Programme will seek to:

- create 5,000 after-school and 10,000 pre-school education places;
- support childcare facilities for disadvantaged parents and their children;
- support quality measures for Childminders and Parent and Toddler Groups;
- education measures for children and adults in areas of disadvantage.

The Childcare Programme will develop quality childcare supports and services, which will be delivered at local level, through the City and County Childcare Committees, under the co-ordination of Pobal. Those wishing to apply should contact their local City or County Childcare Committee.



Capital grants to develop childcare facilities are available to both private and community sector childcare providers.

- **Private sector applicants** may apply for grant assistance of up to €100,000 towards the capital cost of developing a childcare facility, in a catchment area where there is a demonstrated childcare need. An applicant may apply for more than one grant, provided the subsequent childcare facilities are in different catchment areas and subject to an overall ceiling of €500,000. In each case, an applicant must provide at least 25% of the total funding required for the project.
- **Community/not for profit sector applicants** may apply for grant assistance towards the capital cost of developing a childcare facility, based on a demonstrated childcare need in the area. The level of funding will be determined by the number of places the group proposes to provide and a number of criteria based on specific local need. A maximum grant, subject to a cost per place of €20,000 and an overall maximum per project of €1 million, are available under the programme. Applications will also be assessed based on the sustainability of a project.
- **Capital grants** are also being made available to assist Childminders and Parent and Toddler Groups. Conditions and application criteria can be obtained from the City and County Childcare Committees, Pobal and the OMC.

Staffing grants towards the staffing costs of childcare services are available to community sector childcare providers.

- **Staffing supports** may be applied for where a level of disadvantage and the need for support during the initial start-up/support phase are demonstrated. Applicants will be expected to demonstrate an ability to become sustainable over the short to medium term.
- Where a deeper level of disadvantage is demonstrated, **longer-term staffing supports** may be applied for.
- **All services will be required to operate a tiered system of charges**, based on parents' ability to pay. The level of disadvantage will be determined by a number of factors including, the geographic location (e.g. RAPID and CLAR areas).

Strategic programme for training in childcare

The OMC will develop a strategic programme for standards and training in childcare, as part of the **National Childcare Strategy**. The new training programme will support the childcare infrastructure as it continues to grow and develop.

A significant factor in the expansion of the childcare infrastructure is the additional childcare places expected to be created by the capital investment in the Childcare Programme. It is estimated that approximately 10,000 additional childcare workers will be needed to staff these new places. The new Training Programme aims to increase the number of trained childcare personnel by 17,000, by the end of 2010.

The OMC will work with FÁS, the VECs and the National Voluntary Childcare Organisations and the Centre for Early Childhood Care and Education (CECDE), to deliver an appropriate and effective training programme.