



TERMS & CONDITIONS
for
FREE CHILDCARE SCHEME CHILDCARE SERVICE PROVIDERS

Updated Version: 21.10.2020

1. Government is willing to enter into Public-Private Partnerships with Child Day Care Facilities, thereby establishing the Free Childcare Scheme. Children whose parents are in work or in education can benefit from the scheme. 'Parents in work' is defined as both parents/guardians who are in work, or single mother/father/guardian who are in work and paying social security contributions. 'Parents in education' is defined as both parents/guardians who are in education leading to a recognised diploma or degree or single mother/father/guardian who are in education.
2. Government will pay the childcare centre a uniform rate of €3.95 per hour per child availing of the free childcare scheme in 2020.
3. The uniform rate being paid covers staff costs and consumables including stationery. It will not cover for costs that relate to individual child needs, such as food, nappies and wipes. Cost of outings is not included.
4. Government will settle the amounts due to the Centre for each month via direct credit within twenty (20) working days from receipt of the relevant documentation from the Centre, provided such documentation is approved and certified as correct by Government. Such documentation is to be submitted to Government by the fifth (5th) day from the end of the month for which payment is due.¹
5. An initial cash injection amounting to the booked hours of the first month of operation shall be granted upon signature of the Agreement. At the beginning of every financial year a cash injection amounting to the number of booked hours in November of the previous year shall be transferred to the Centre. The amount of the cash injection granted each year shall be set off against any amounts outstanding due to the Centre by the end of Government's financial year for that same year. If this agreement is terminated and the cash injection has not been set off in full, the balance shall be paid back to Government.²

¹ Added Article 4 to reflect Clause 3 of the Agreement.

² Article 5 of the Free Childcare Scheme Childcare Service Providers Terms and Conditions (version: 'TC – Update 15/02/2015') previously read as: "Government will settle the amounts due for the month via direct debit within 7 working days after the end of the month. A onetime initial cash injection will be made available for centres to avoid cash flow related problems." Updated on 20/03/17 to reflect Clause 4 of the Agreement.



6. Government will pay childcare facilities the full rate if attendance for the month is between 90% and 100% of booked hours. If attendance is less than 90%, the remaining balance will be deducted from the absence entitlement.
7. These absence days will apply pro-rata on a calendar basis and will be equivalent to 15% of the booked hours. The provision includes the allowance for absence for medical reasons. Parents are to pay Childcare centres for absence days in excess of the above.
8. Service providers will not be paid nor will be able to charge for days for which parents advise at least one (1) month in advance that they will not be making use of childcare.
9. The Government appreciates that the needs of the children and the parents may change from time to time. For this reason, the Government encourages flexibility on the part of the service provider. Parents have the right to change the number of hours and/or days or times according to their needs, provided that they give one month notice by not later than the last week of the month. This does not apply to parents who send their children to independent schools.
10. The Government understands the service providers' need to have occasional breaks in the service. However, the service provider will not be paid by the Government nor will be able to charge parents who avail themselves of the free childcare scheme fees for shut-down or closed days.
11. Legal procedures apply if providers are found guilty of fraud or attempt to fraud the Free Child Care system.