



OFFALY COUNTY CHILDCARE COMMITTEE



WEEKLY NEWS BULLETIN

24th April 2024



IMPORTANT DATES, DEADLINES AND DCEDIY PRESS RELEASE

Here you will find details and reminders of important upcoming deadlines along with DCEDIY current press releases.



OCCC UPCOMING EVENTS

Here you will find details of all our upcoming training events with links to bring you directly to Eventbrite.



HIVE NOTIFICATIONS

Here you will find the most recent Hive notifications and details on Compliance for ECCE and NCS.

CONTACT DETAILS



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IMPORTANT DATES AND DEADLINES

Nurturing Skills Learner Fund (NSLF) Registrations and Employment Record	25TH APRIL 2024
Increased Cost of Business Grant	DEADLINE 1ST MAY 2024
Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) targeted supports will open on the Early Years Hive	OPENS TUESDAY 7TH MAY AT 12 NOON
<u>CF Financial Reporting Information Session</u>	8TH MAY 2024
Nation Wide Vacant Capacity Survey	CLOSES 10TH MAY 2024
<u>AIM Information Talk for ECCE Service Providers</u>	21ST MAY 2024
Portal will open on or before for service providers to register nominated accountants for Core funding Income & Expenditure report	29TH APRIL 2024
Public Consultation closed at 5pm for Draft Childminding Regulations Submissions: https://www.gov.ie/en/consultation/2071d-public-consultation-on-the-draft-childminding-regulations/	2ND MAY 2024
<u>R&C for Core Funding opens</u>	<u>5TH MAY 2024</u>
<u>Always Children First Child Safeguarding Awareness Training</u>	<u>25TH MAY 2024</u>
<u>Portal will open on or before for submission of Core funding Income & Expenditure report</u>	<u>31ST MAY 2024</u>
<u>submission of Core Funding income & Expenditure report</u>	<u>CLOSING DATE: 26TH JUNE 2024</u>

Information note on Increased Cost of Business Grant

The Department is writing to remind you of a Government support package you may be eligible to apply for.

This Increased Cost of Business grant (ICOB) is a grant available through the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment to certain businesses eligible for commercial rates. •

- For qualifying businesses with a 2023 Commercial Rate bill of <€10,000, the ICOB grant will be paid at a rate of 50% of the business's Commercial Rate bill •
- For qualifying businesses with a 2023 Commercial Rate bill of between €10,000 and €30,000, the ICOB grant will be €5,000. •
- Businesses with a 2023 Commercial Rates bill greater than €30,000 are not eligible to receive an ICOB grant.

This once off ICOB grant is available to you, if you: • Have a commercially trading business •

- Operate your business from a commercially rateable property •
- Have paid up to €30,000 in rates during 2023 •
- Were trading on the 1 February this year •
- Intend to continue trading for three months after you make your application

This grant can be accessed through your Local Authority. Local Authorities are currently writing letters to rate payers in their remit with details.

The deadline for applications is 1 May 2024.

More details can be found on the [Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment's website](#)

Minister O’Gorman publishes the Participation of Children and Young People in Decision-making: Action Plan 2024-2028

Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, Roderic O’Gorman, today published the Participation of Children and Young People in Decision-making Action Plan 2024-2028 .

This Action Plan builds on the ambition and achievements of the first National Strategy on Children and Young People’s Participation in Decision-Making and aims to further promote the inclusion of children and young people in decision making at all levels – in the home, in school, in their communities and at national level.

The successful implementation of this Action Plan will, in the short term, result in the views of children and young people being harnessed to inform policy, services, legislation and research that is relevant to their lives. Their views will also be sought in evaluation and monitoring of relevant services and policies.

This Participation Action Plan will drive continued development of participation structures and practice, at local, national and international level, among organisations, sectors, practitioners and government departments and agencies. Through the implementation of these actions, and by using and enhancing existing resources and supports, DCEDIY will continue to innovate and lead the participation of children and young people in decision making across government and internationally.

Welcoming the announcement, Minister O’Gorman said:

“Ireland is a world leader in participation practices, being the first country in Europe to have a dedicated Participation Strategy for Children and Young People. I am pleased to be able to further progress this important focus with the publication of this Participation of Children and Young People in Decision-making: Action Plan 2024-2028.

The ambitions of this Action Plan will see the voices of children and young people embedded in decisions made across more Government Departments and Agencies than ever before. Public policy can only be improved in the recognition of children and young people as citizens of today, not just adults of the future.”

The Participation of Children and Young People in Decision-making: Action Plan 2024-2028 is available in both English and Irish, and is supported by the publication of a Report on the Public Consultation on the next Government Policy Framework for the Participation of Children and Young People in Decision-making .

<https://www.gov.ie/en/press-release/d6997-minister-ogorman-publishes-the-participation-of-children-and-young-people-in-decision-making-action-plan-2024-2028/>

Update on extension of AIM to ECCE aged children outside of ECCE rules

Following queries being raised on the implementation of changes to AIM announced in Budget 2024, the DCEDIY can confirm that details of the changes will be made available in the coming weeks.

Providers will have the key information to inform programme readiness for the programme year 2024/2025 which is due to open on 7 May.

In summary, the expansion of AIM will support services in the provision of quality inclusive early learning and childcare to ECCE-age children with disabilities attending the ECCE programme beyond the current three hour programme during term time and outside of term time.

The AIM rules for programme year 2023/2024 are currently available on the AIM website [here](#)





SEMINAR 2024

NURTURING SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL GROWTH IN CHILDREN & SUPPORTING POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR

Saturday 27th April 2024

Venue: Bridge House, Tullamore **Time:** 9.30am - 4.00pm **Cost:** €10 (Includes Lunch)

This promises to be an engaging and informative day with Nicola Erasmus returning to Offaly to share her expertise and practical strategies that will support educators to enhance their professional development.

We are also delighted to have Zarah Doyle from AsIAm who will focus on Autism and Play Environments.

NURTURING SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL GROWTH IN CHILDREN THROUGH

- Positive Relationships and Interactions:
- Building secure attachments:
- Emotional Literacy:
- Empathy and Understanding:
- Problem-Solving and Conflict Resolution:
- Play-Based Learning:
- Emotional Regulation:
- Consistent Routine and Boundaries:
- Emotional Expression through Art and Music:

SUPPORTING POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR THROUGH

- Positive Reinforcement:
- Clear and Consistent Expectations:
- Modelling Behaviour:
- Effective Communication:
- Use of Positive Language:
- Teaching Self-Regulation:
- Social Skills Development:
- Individualized Support:

AUTISM AND PLAY ENVIRONMENTS

- Explore the intersection of autism and play environments.
- Learn evidence-based strategies to create inclusive environments.
- Support play environments that foster engagement, communication and well-being of Autistic children.
- Gain practical insights, tools and techniques to enhance play experiences and promote positive outcomes for Autistic children.

Contact us at
085 228 4121

More information at
www.offalychildcare.com

REGISTER NOW!



OFFALY COUNTY CHILDCARE COMMITTEE CLG.



CORE FUNDING FINANCIAL REPORTING INFORMATION SESSIONS

<http://www.offalychildcare.com>

057 9135878



1

What is tCore Funding Financial Reporting Requirements during the Transitional Phase Year 1 & Year 2

2

Overview of the Income and Expenditure Template

3

Overview of the steps involved in submitting the Income and Expenditure Template

Where: OCCC Training room, O'Connor Square, Tullamore

When: Wednesday 8th May 2024

Session 1: Time 2.00pm - 3.00pm

Session 2: Time 3.30pm - 4.30pm

Session 3: Time 5.30pm - 6.30pm

session 4: Time 7.00pm - 8.00pm

AIM INFORMATION SESSION FOR ELC EDUCATORS



21ST MAY 2024



VIRTUAL MEETING @ 7PM



Offaly County Childcare along with Better Start AIM Specialists will deliver an information session for Parents on the levels of support available to ensure that all children can participate and access the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme. AIM specialists will be happy to answer any questions that parents may have on the night relating to AIM.

Targeted Supports

AIM targeted supports cater to a wide range of abilities and are focused on the needs of the child and do not need a diagnosis of disability. However, some children may require one or more further supports to ensure that they can participate meaningfully in the ECCE programme.



Universal Supports

AIM universal supports benefit the whole pre-school environment through empowering pre-school providers to create a more inclusive culture in their settings.



AIM Inclusive Play

AIM Inclusive Play was introduced in 2018 as a set of sensory and educational play resources to support inclusive practice within Early Learning and Care settings.



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eventbrite.ie

An Roinn Leanaí, Comhionannais,
Míchumais, Lánpháirtíochta agus O
Department of Children, Equality,
Disability, Integration and Youth



Children First



ALWAYS CHILDREN FIRST: CHILD SAFEGUARDING AWARENESS TRAINING

This accredited training course will enable participants to

- **Gain a deeper knowledge and understanding of how to recognise and respond to child protection and welfare concerns.**
- **Consider child-centred practice as a key part of child safeguarding and how you might implement child centred practice.**
- **Gain a clear understanding of your role and responsibilities in relation to keeping children safe and promoting their welfare to enable them to achieve their full potential**

Booking Conditions

- ✓ Training participants must complete the Tusla eLearning programme prior to attendance of this course.
- ✓ Open to all early years practitioners working in a childcare service in County Offaly, including those in DLP or Mandated Person roles
- ✓ Maximum booking of 2 people per service, service must be based in Offaly
- ✓ Cost per participant: €10

Date:

- **Saturday 25th May 2024**

Venue:

- **O'Connor Square, Tullamore,
Co. Offaly, R35 Y2T5**

Time:

- **9.30am - 4.00pm**

Register Now on Eventbrite



www.offalychildcare.com

AIM INFORMATION SESSION FOR PARENTS

IS YOUR CHILD IN PRESCHOOL OR DUE TO START PRESCHOOL IN SEPTEMBER 2024?

 **28TH MAY 2024**

 **VIRTUAL MEETING @ 7PM**



Offaly County Childcare along with Better Start AIM Specialists will deliver an information session for Parents on the levels of support available to ensure that all children can participate and access the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme. AIM specialists will be happy to answer any questions that parents may have on the night relating to AIM.

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Hive Notifications

Nurturing Skills Learner Fund Registration and Employment Record

Dear Service Providers,

You and your staff are invited to attend sector training on the Nurturing Skills Learner Fund (NSLF) Registrations and Employment record.

N.B. It is very important for staff to be made aware of this training as the new **Fund** aims to assist early years educators to pursue early learning and care (ELC) qualifications.

The training has been scheduled for **Thursday 25/04/2024**. Please see below the links to register with Go To Webinar.

Nurturing skills Learner Fund Registrations SP1

Thursday 25/04/2024 @ 2:30pm – 4:00pm

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/8555610476648473436>

Nurturing skills Learner Fund Registrations SP2

Thursday 25/04/2024 @ 6:30pm – 8:00pm

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/5903674192359759966>

As part of this training, we will be demonstrating the following:

- What is the Nurturing Skills Learner Fund (NSLF)
- Registering for the NSLF portal
- Completing your Employment Record
-

A recording of one of the webinars will be made available on the HIVE along with the PowerPoint slides once the training has been complete.

We kindly ask that questions asked on the day are kept to the topic of the NSLF.

Please ensure all staff are made aware of this training and the relevant times and dates.

Thank you.

Kind Regards
Pobal Training team

Hive Notifications

AIM Programme Readiness and the Removal of 2nd Year Extension functionality

Dear Service Provider,

The application process for Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) targeted supports will open on the Early Years Hive in **early May**. Go live dates will be confirmed shortly. Please refer to Hive guides for support with the submission of your AIM applications.

AIM Level 4, 5 & 7

The application process for AIM Level 5 applications, AIM Level 4 applications (expert early years educational advice and support) and AIM Level 7 (additional assistance in the pre-school room) initial applications for the 2024/25 pre-school year will open on the Early Years Hive in **early May**.

Please note, where previously an extension application would be submitted for a child who is remaining in the same service and requires a second year of AIM Level 7 support, an AIM Review & Confirm form will now be submitted instead.

AIM Level 7 Review & Confirm

At the beginning of each programme call, where a child is availing of a second year of AIM Level 7 support, service providers must review the support awarded in the first year and confirm where no changes are expected for the next programme call.

Where any of the changes below are expected, a service provider must inform Pobal during the review and confirm the process.

- Changes to a child's session(s) including moving to a different session and/or a reduction or increase in days.
- Changes to children availing of support in the same session (shared support) or another session within the service i.e. a child leaving the service or session.
- Changes in the adult to child ratio in a session.
- Changes in additional assistance awarded from other sources i.e. Enable Ireland, Home Tuition or attendance at a specialised pre-school.

Where any of the above changes occur throughout the year, after you have reviewed and confirmed, you must inform Pobal by submitting a review within 10 working days advising of the change(s) that have occurred, through the Early Years Hive. Certain changes may affect the child's AIM Level 7 funding.

Important Information

Services are reminded to submit AIM Level 4, 5 & 7 applications at least **three months** prior to a child's planned start date on the ECCE Programme.

Please note that training sessions will be provided, and a further announcement will be issued with links to register for those training sessions.

Help & Support

Should you have any queries in relation to the AIM programme, please contact the Early Years Provider Centre (EYPC) by raising a Request on Hive using the following categories:

- Programme: (select the AIM level)
- Request type: Application.
- Request type detail: How To

Yours Sincerely,
Early Years Team

Hive Notifications

ECCE compliance

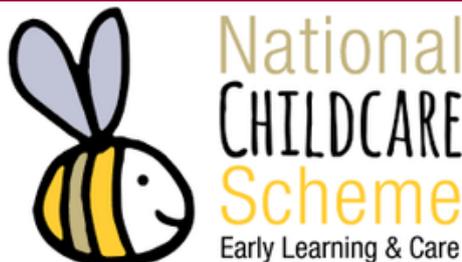
It is the responsibility of the Service Provider to ensure compliance with their contractual requirements. Service providers should ensure that they understand and adhere to the ECCE Funding Agreement. Failure to do so will result in non-compliance and will require corrective action.

In order to make compliance visits as efficient as possible for both providers and visit officers, service providers should ensure that their compliance file is kept up to date and contains:

- Attendance records
- Enrolment details (including minimum enrolment exemption where relevant);
- Parental declaration forms
- Parent letters
- Fee records
- Staff qualifications
- Higher capitation forms

The below documents offers guidance for service providers on ECCE compliance:

- [ECCE Compliance Checklist 23-24](#)
- [ECCE Compliance Approved Provider Guide 23-24](#)
- [ECCE Post-Inspection Rectification Actions 23-24](#)
- [ECCE Good Practice Guide for Attendance Records](#)



National Childcare Compliance visits

Authorised officers will make on-site visits to childcare facilities to confirm that certain key NCS rules are being complied with. Under the Childcare Support Act 2018, these officers are allowed to enter childcare premises, inspect any books, records or other documents relating to the operation of the service.

It is important that services facilitate the compliance visit and provide the requisite records/information to the authorised officer during the course of the unannounced visits.

Hive Notifications

CCSP Saver Programme compliance

It is the responsibility of the Service Provider to ensure compliance with their Funding Agreement requirements. Failure to comply with any of the terms of the Funding Agreement may result in the suspension of CCSP Saver Programme Funding and/or DCEDIY funding or part thereof may be withdrawn and/or a termination of this Funding Agreement.

In order to make compliance visits as efficient as possible for both providers and visit officers, providers should ensure that their compliance file is kept up to date and contains:

- Attendance Records
- Service Fee Information Letters
- Parental declaration forms;
- Parent/guardian letters;
- Fee records;
- Staff qualifications and letters of qualifications;
- Grandfathering declarations as applicable;
- Evidence of Tusla registration(s).

The compliance file must be kept on site and available for inspection at all times.

Services should also ensure that:

- Registrations are correct,
- Fees list and calendar, for all approved funding programmes, are clearly displayed for parents and,
- **There is a staff member on site at all times who has access to the compliance file and can facilitate the visit. Failure to do same could result in a service being found non-compliant.**

Please note that if the records are readily available for review any interruption to the service will be minimal, other than seeking clarifications when required.

To assist services to comply with the CCSP Saver Programme requirements, the Department and the Scheme Administrator provide a range of training and supports.

These include:

- [CCSP Compliance Checklist 23-24](#)
- [CCSP Compliance Approved Provider Guide 23-24](#)
- [CCSP Post-Inspection Rectification Actions 23-24](#)

Providers are strongly encouraged to engage with these supports, both before and after compliance visits, to ensure that they maintain compliance with scheme rules.

Hive Notifications



AIM Level 7 Compliance

AIM Level 7 compliance checks will be commencing on AIM Level 7 payments from the week beginning 22 April 2024. This will involve a series of standardised checks on AIM Level 7 approved capitations relating to additional assistance in the pre-school room and the maintenance of reduced ratios.

The compliance checks are aimed at confirming adherence with AIM Level 7 rules and contract conditions as set out by the Department of Children Equality Disability Integration & Youth (DCEDIY).

To ensure the compliance checks can be conducted at unannounced inspections, please ensure that the person in charge on-site has access to the following records to present to the Visit Officer for review:

- The child attendance records for each of the ECCE sessions attended by child/ren benefitting from AIM Level 7
- The Staff Qualifications for staff working in these ECCE session/s

The Pobal compliance team have uploaded additional compliance support documents to the Hive in order to assist services in preparing for a compliance inspection. The documents, which are listed below, are available under the Resources section and can also be accessed through this link

- [AIM Level 7 Compliance Guide for Approved Providers 2023 - 2024](#)
- [AIM Level 7 Compliance Checklist for Approved Providers 2023 - 2024](#)
- [AIM Level 7 Rectification Actions Guide 2023 - 2024](#)

Please note - these documents are only supports, intended to assist you. There is an onus on each provider to familiarise themselves with their responsibilities under the AIM Rules (AIM Level 7 included) and contractual conditions.