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Míchumais, Lánpháirtíochta agus Óige
Department of Children, Equality,
Disability, Integration and Youth

Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth

RULES FOR ECCE PROGRAMME

Valid for the 2022/23 Programme Year

Please note that information contained in these Rules are subject to change

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Glossary of Terms

“AIM” means the Access and Inclusion Model which supports children with a disability to access and meaningfully participate in the ECCE Programme. (See Appendix 2: General Terms and Conditions Governing Participation in the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM)) available at www.aim.gov.ie.

“Agreement” means the ECCE Funding Agreement which includes Appendix 1 (General Terms and Conditions governing participation in the ECCE Programme), Appendix 2 (General Terms and Conditions governing participation in the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM)), Appendix 3 (Framework Agreement for the Sharing of Personal Data) and DCEDIY Rules for ECCE Programme 2022/2023 available at www.gov.ie.

“Approved Provider” means a Tusla registered provider of an Early Learning and Care Service (ELC) or a combined ELC and School Age Childcare (SAC) Service in accordance with the ECCE Programme who has entered into the ECCE Funding Agreement with the Minister.

“Capitation” means the weekly amount paid by the Scheme Administrator to a childcare Approved Provider on behalf of Minister for the provision of ECCE.

“CCC” means the City/County Childcare Committee. The CCCs are funded by the DCEDIY to act as the local agent in the delivery of ELC and SAC.

“Department” means the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth.

“Early years’ service” as defined in the Child and Family Agency Act 2013, means a service providing a pre-school service and /or a school age service.

“Early Start” is a one-year preventative intervention scheme offered in selected schools in designated disadvantaged areas. The objective of the pre-school programme is to tackle educational disadvantage by targeting children who are at risk of not reaching their potential within the school system. The programme is managed, funded and evaluated by the Department of Education.

“The Early Years Platform (EYP)” means an all service system that service providers can use to manage the administration of their facility or facilities, including organisation details, funding agreements, registrations and funding related to all DCEDIY schemes. The platform can also be used to submit queries and receive responses and information from the Early Years Provider Centre.

“Early Years HIVE (EY HIVE)” is the name for the service provider portal for the Early Years Programmes.

“Educator” means an Early Year’s qualified staff member with a minimum level 5 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ).

“Fee” means the sum of money that a provider charges a parent for childcare services before discount of any subsidy. The fee must be agreed between the parent and the Approved Provider before the parent signs off on the Service Fees Information Letter.

“Lead Educator” means an Early Year’s qualified staff member with a minimum level 6 (or Level 7 for AIM) on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ).

“Minister” means the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth.

“NCS” means the National Childcare Scheme.

“On-boarding process” involves the Scheme Administrator gathering and approving details of the Approved Providers’ legal structure and approving the Primary Authorised User (PAU).

“Optional Extra” means additional chargeable services that may only be selected from the approved DCEDIY Optional Extras list and shall not include activities which are considered key parts of the ECCE curriculum e.g. general arts and crafts activities.

“Pre-school service” means any pre-school, play group, day nursery, crèche, day-care or other similar service which caters for pre-school children.

“Primary Authorised User” means a person nominated by a childcare Approved Provider to manage all interaction between the Scheme Administrator and a childcare Approved Provider. This person also has the authority to sign contracts on behalf of their organisation.

“Registration” means the point at which the childcare Approved Provider adds a child to the Scheme system (via the provider portal).

“Scheme Administrator” means the organisation appointed to administer the Scheme. The Minister for Children and Youth Affairs has appointed Pobal as the Scheme Administrator.

“Service” means a Tusla registered Early Learning and Care (ELC) and/or School Aged Childcare (SAC) service which is registered with Tusla on the register of childcare Approved Providers maintained by Tusla under section 58C of the Child Care Act 1991.

“Subsidy” means the weekly amount paid by the Scheme Administrator to a childcare Approved Provider on behalf of a successful applicant as financial support for childcare services for a child.

“School age service (SAC)” means a service which caters for children under the age of 15 years enrolled in a school providing primary or post primary education and provides a range of activities that are developmental, educational and recreational in manner and which take place outside of school hours, but excludes those services solely providing activities relating to— (i) the arts, (ii) youth work, (iii) competitive or recreational sport, (iv) tuition or (v) religious teaching.

Please note that if a service solely provides support for the provision of homework, this type of service is not deemed as providing childcare and currently does not need to be Tusla registered.

“Term-time week” means a week agreed between a parent and an Approved Provider as a term-time week during which a child is eligible to participate in the ECCE programme.

“Tusla” refers to the Child and Family Agency.

“Working Day” means a day which is not a Saturday, Sunday or public holiday.

Introduction

The ECCE programme is a universal free programme available to all children within the eligible age range. It provides children with their first formal experience of early learning prior to commencing primary school.

The Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) is a model of supports designed to ensure that children with disabilities can access the ECCE programme. AIM is a child-centred model, involving seven levels of support, moving from the universal to the targeted, based on the needs of the child and the pre-school service. For further information on the AIM programme see <https://aim.gov.ie/>.

This document sets out the rules governing the ECCE Programme and should be read in conjunction with a suite of how to guides available on the EY HIVE which provide information on the operation of ECCE.

Failure to comply with any of the ECCE Rules may result in the suspension of ECCE Funding and/or DCEDIY Funding or part thereof may be withdrawn and/or a termination of the ECCE Funding Agreement.

Pobal administer ECCE on the EY HIVE on behalf of the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth.

Any queries in relation to the ECCE Programme and the rules of the programme should be directed to the local City/County Childcare Committee (CCC). Please see the EY HIVE Homepage on <https://earlyyearshive.ncs.gov.ie/> or <https://myccc.ie/> for CCC contact details. CCCs are funded by the DCEDIY and act as local agents in the administration of aspects of national early education and childcare programmes.

Approved Providers can raise a service request through the EY HIVE at <https://earlyyearshive.ncs.gov.ie/>. For assistance in administering the rules of the Programmes, payments queries or any technical issues with the EY HIVE, Approved Providers can contact the Early Year Providers Centre on eypc@pobal.ie or 01-5117222.

Note: Information in this Guide is subject to change. Please check the EY HIVE Homepage regularly for updates.

Chapter 1 Obligations of an Approved Provider

1.1 Obligations of an Approved Provider

There is an obligation on those in receipt of public funding to strictly adhere to all the rules contained in this entire document as set out by the Minister.

The Approved Provider must be aware of and comply with all relevant legal and regulatory obligations.

Failure to comply with any of these Rules and/or terms of the ECCE Funding Agreement may result in a suspension of ECCE Funding and/or DCEDIY funding or part thereof may be withdrawn and/or a termination of the ECCE Funding Agreement.

The Approved Provider must take all measures to safeguard the Health, Safety and Welfare of the children attending the ELC Service and to comply with the “Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 (as amended) and the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) (Registrations of School Age Services) Regulations 2018 (as amended).”

1.2 Tusla Registration

A service must be registered with Tusla to receive funding from DCEDIY. Tusla registered services who provide both an ELC and an SAC service must be registered with Tusla for both services. All facilities/locations operated by a service must be registered with Tusla, have an individual Service Reference number and children must attend the facility/location in which they are registered. Proof of Tusla registration must be available on the premises for inspection if required.

Approved Providers must be registered with Tusla for the places being provided:

- Full day-care places (more than 5 hours per day),
- Part-time places (between 3 hours 31 minutes and 5 hours per day),
- Sessional places (between 2 hours 16 minutes and 3 hours 30 minutes per day),
- Half-session places (between 1 hour and 2 hours 15 minutes per day).

E.g. Services cannot be funded for part-time places when registered with Tusla as a sessional service. It is compulsory for all services providing childcare to register with Tusla. Full details on how to register a service can be found on the Tusla website www.tusla.ie or alternatively you can contact your local CCC www.myccc.ie

1.3 Tusla Deregistration

As the Independent Regulator, Tusla’s role is to monitor the safety and quality of care and support of children in early years’ provision to ensure compliance with regulations. Where there are consistent and serious breaches, Tusla may take action up to and including prosecution and removal from the register of early years’ services.

In circumstances where Tusla issue a service with notice of removal from the register, a parent is entitled to remove their child from the service and re-register the child in a new service during the notice period without being required to serve the normal four week notice period to the service as per the rules for attendance in Chapter 7 of this document. When the Department is notified by

Tusla that a service has been deregistered, funding is stopped with effect from the date of deregistration.

A parent is entitled to remove their child from the ELC Service and re-register the child in a new service during the 21 days Tusla deregistration notice period without being required to serve the normal notice period to the Approved Provider, as per the rules for attendance.

1.4 Service Reference Number

All facilities/locations operated by a service must have an individual Service Reference Number and children must attend the facility/location in which they are registered. An Approved Provider must log onto the EY HIVE with all the relevant details in order to request a new or additional Service Reference Number.

To get a Service Reference Number services need to be registered with Tusla, and start the onboarding process on the EY HIVE. For further assistance please contact the Early Years Provider Centre on 01 5117222 or at eypc@pobal.ie.

1.5 Change of Circumstances for an ELC Service

In the following circumstances an existing service must request a new Service Reference number:

- i. In the case of a transfer of ownership of an ELC Service, the Approved Provider must log onto the EY HIVE with all relevant details in order to request a new Service Reference number. The service must ensure the new ownership is registered with Tusla.
- ii. In the case of a change of legal status of an ELC Service, the Approved Provider must log onto the EY HIVE with all relevant details in order to request a new Service Reference number. The service must ensure the new legal status is registered with Tusla.
- iii. In the case of a change of address of an ELC Service, the Approved Provider must ensure the new address/premises is registered with Tusla and then the Approved Provider must log onto the EY HIVE with all relevant details in order to request a new Service Reference number.
- iv. In the case of expansion of a service to additional Tusla registered premises, the Approved Provider must log onto the EY HIVE with all relevant details in order to request a new Service Reference Number. Please note that the children in attendance at the new/additional premises must be registered under the new Service Reference number. The Approved Provider must ensure the new expansion to their premises is registered with Tusla.

1.6 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."

1.7 Staff Qualifications

Under the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) (Amendment) Regulations 2021 all staff working directly with children in a pre-school service must hold at least a Level 5 major award in childcare on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ), or equivalent as deemed by DCEDIY.

The DCEDIY has published a list of qualifications that meet the regulatory requirements for working in the ELC sector in Ireland. This list can be found on the DCEDIY webpage:

<https://www.gov.ie/en/service/000073-recognition-of-an-early-years-qualification/>.

If a person does not hold a qualification on the DCEDIY's recognised qualifications list, the individual is required to apply for the recognition of their qualifications at eyqualifications@equality.gov.ie. For further information on requirements and the application process please refer to the DCEDIY webpage: <https://www.gov.ie/en/service/000073-recognition-of-an-early-years-qualification/>.

Due to GDPR, applications must be made by the individual themselves as the Department cannot accept applications and/or queries from third parties such as employers.

A derogation to the above requirement is in place for 2022/23 programme year for those practitioners in possession of a signed Grandfathering Declaration extension.

1.8 Contact Information

An Approved Provider must provide an e-mail address to be used for communications in relation to the service and the Department reserve the right to communicate important information, including information relating to payments, electronically. A postal address must also be provided. Where the home address is different to the facility address, both addresses must be provided (this does not apply to a limited company). A contact telephone number, at which the Primary Authorised User (PAU)/Approved Provider can be contacted during work hours, must also be provided.

The Approved Provider must have access to facilities that enable them to conduct business online and have an EY HIVE user account in order to participate in the ECCE Programme. The Approved Provider must administer the ECCE Programme on the EY HIVE. They must access the Scheme Administrator's website (<https://www.pobal.ie/>) to ensure that they are familiar with the most up to date online programme administration procedures.

1.9 Funding Agreement

The Approved Provider must have a Funding Agreement in place with the Department 2 weeks before the service commences the ECCE programme. A later date may be permitted where the Minister deems it appropriate.

1.10 Registration of Fees List and Service Calendar

The Approved Provider must submit a fees list and a service calendar to the EY HIVE a minimum of 2 weeks' prior to the ELC Service opening for the new programme year. The fees lists will demonstrate that the appropriate reductions in childcare fees for qualifying parents will be applied. This fees list and service calendar will be subject to review by the relevant CCC. For more information please refer to the How to Guides (<https://earlyyearshive.ncs.gov.ie/how-to-guides/how-to-guides-ecce/fees-ecce/>).

1.11 Availing of more than one Early Childcare Programme

Children may be enrolled in either Early Start administered by the Department of Education or in the ECCE Programme. Children are not eligible to be enrolled in both programmes at the same time.

Chapter 2 Fees List

2.1 Fees List Requirement

Approved Providers must complete a Fees List at the beginning of each programme year. A service's fees list must show details of all the fees charged to parents, ECCE fees must be reflected on a weekly basis over the ECCE Programme year, as well as details of any additional charges, optional extras (as approved by the local CCC), or any discounts applied by the service.

The fees list shall display fees inclusive and exclusive of ECCE hours, including: fees payable with regard to childcare provision outside of ECCE for children taking part in ECCE within full-time or part-time provision; and fees ordinarily payable with regard to a child of the same age attending for the same hours attending full-time or part-time but not participating in the ECCE scheme.

Services opening later than the 22nd August 2022 must have their fees lists on the EY HIVE a minimum of 2 weeks prior to their opening for the 2022/2023 programme year.

If an Approved Provider does not collect any deposits, offer discounts or optional extras this must also be reflected on the fees list.

2.2 Requirement to provide ECCE Free of Charge

ECCE must be provided free of charge to parents/guardians for 3 hours a day, 5 days per week for 182 days in return for the capitation Approved Providers receive from the DCEDIY. Services may not extract ECCE fees from parents, including any type of deposits related to optional extras, on any basis whatsoever or under any circumstances.

2.3 Optional Additional 30 Minutes in Sessional Only Services

An Approved Provider who provides a **sessional only service** and does not offer any other category of childcare (part-time, full time, etc.) may offer an option of a maximum additional 30 minutes per day. This 30 minutes must be listed as an optional extra on the fees list.

2.4 Displacing Registered Children

At the point of programme registration, an Approved Provider may prioritise registrations for those availing of a five day week of ECCE over those registering for fewer days. An Approved Provider may not displace a child availing of a shorter week in favour of a child applying for five days of ECCE after the child's ECCE registration is complete.

2.5 ECCE Booking Deposits

2.5.1 Maximum ECCE Deposit

An Approved Provider may charge a refundable booking deposit to hold an ECCE place for a child. The maximum deposit a provider may charge is equivalent to four weeks ECCE payment. This must appear on the fees list.

2.5.2 Return of ECCE Deposit

The totality of the ECCE deposit must be returned to the parent/guardian once the child's registration **is approved on the EY HIVE**. If a service is holding a legacy deposit that exceeds four times the weekly ECCE capitation amount for a child that has been attending that service prior to their commencement on ECCE, and has not collected a separate ECCE deposit, then depending on the level of ECCE service, the Approved Provider must return up to €258 of that deposit to the

parent/guardian once the child's ECCE registration has been approved on the EY HIVE, regardless of when that deposit was collected.

Failure to comply with any of the ECCE Rules may result in the suspension of ECCE Funding and/or DCEDIY Funding or part thereof may be withdrawn and/or a termination of the ECCE Funding Agreement.

2.6 Optional Extras

Approved Providers cannot charge for any activities which are considered key parts of the ECCE curriculum.

Approved Providers may charge for optional extras selected from the ECCE Optional Extras document (see Appendix 1), but where a parent/guardian does not choose any of the optional extras, their child must be provided with the full ECCE programme based service provision.

Each optional extra must be identified individually on the fees list. Approved Providers cannot prioritise ECCE places on the basis of uptake of optional extras otherwise they will be found in breach of their funding agreement/rules for the ECCE programme

Refusal of an Approved Provider to follow the direction of the local CCC in relation to fees lists or to alter a fees list after the CCC approval may result in sanctions being applied.

2.6.1 ECCE Optional Extras Approved List

Optional extras must be from the ECCE Optional Extras approved list (Appendix 1). An Approved Provider must give an accurate description, the total cost and frequency with which they may occur, of any optional extra requested on its' fees list.

It is imperative that no child should feel excluded if they are not participating in the optional extra. Approved Providers must take this into account and should consult Appendix 1 for further information.

2.7 Voluntary Donations

Parents should not pay for any other type of donation additional to what is in the service's fees list. There are no voluntary donations permitted for the ECCE Programme.

2.8 Service Fees Information Letter

Parents/guardians must sign the EY HIVE Service Fees Information Letter to indicate that they understand the charges that the service will apply. Fees lists are subject to review by the Department/Scheme Administrator/CCC.

The DCEDIY will accept a signed copy of the Service Fees Information letter form by the relevant parent/guardian by e-mail or by hard copy, whichever best suits the parent/guardian. However, parent/guardian should be given the option of e-mail. Parents who wish to avail of the e-mail option should be advised that in regard to data protection, the e-mail is a less secure option. Parents/guardians should be asked to reconfirm the appropriate e-mail to use and the Approved Provider should ensure that only specific individual e-mails issue to the appropriate address for the appropriate family.

Approved Providers must keep copies of the Service Fees Information Letter form on email for compliance purposes on site in order to be available for inspection.

2.9 Fee Changes

Any changes to Fees Lists must first be approved by the CCC. Parents must be given 20 working days' written notice of any change to the Fees List. Where the Fees List has been revised, amended Service Fees Information letters must then issue and be signed by the parents/guardians for the service's files. Copies of Service Fees Information letters subsequently issued and signed must be retained on file on the premises.

An updated copy of Fees Lists must be published in an area of the service accessible to parents, as well as on any online platform maintained by the Approved Provider for the purpose of advertising its services.

2.10 Document Display Requirement

A copy of the Fees List, together with copies of any standard letters (to include Service Fees Information letters) that relate to DCEDIY funded programmes issued to parents, must be published in an area of the service accessible and visible to parents, as well as being clearly displayed on any online platform maintained by the Approved Provider which is for the purpose of advertising its services.

As a condition of the ECCE programme funding agreement for the 2022/2023 programme year, Approved Providers agree to allow the Minister/Scheme Administrator to publish their fees online and in any form. The Minister/Scheme Administrator also reserves the right to publish this data and use the data in aggregate form for the purpose of reporting on fees.

2.11 Document Filing Requirement

Approved Providers must have a signed copy of the Service Fees Information letter on file in respect of each parent/guardian of a child on the ECCE Programme, showing the fees that have been approved. These fees must match those shown on the Fees List.

2.12 CCC Checks

It should be noted that the CCC's will be checking all Fees Lists to ensure that they comply with the terms of the signed funding agreement and the rules for the ECCE Programme. In cases of non-compliance Approved Providers will be given 4 weeks to rectify their fees list(s). If after this time the Fees Lists have not been updated as per the CCC's direction, the Scheme Administrator will be notified for further follow up. Sanctions may be applied if Fees Lists are found to contravene any rules/the policy of the ECCE programme.

Chapter 3 Service Calendar

3.1 Service Calendar Requirement

Approved Providers must submit a service calendar to the EY HIVE prior to the signing of the funding agreement but no later than two weeks prior to the new programme year 2022/23. The calendar is subject to review by the Department/Scheme Administrator/CCC.

Services opening later than the 22nd August 2022 must have their calendars on EY HIVE a minimum of 2 weeks prior to their opening for the 2022/2023 programme year.

3.1.1 Calendar for Parents

A service calendar should be attached to the Service Fees Information letter but must be distributed to all parents/guardians showing the days the service is due to be open under the ECCE Programme year 2022/2023.

3.1.2 Calendar Minimum Opening Weeks/Days per Programme Year

Services in contract for the ECCE Programme must be open for a minimum of 38 weeks (or 182 days) over the programme year unless otherwise determined by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth.

3.1.3 Minimum Opening Weeks per Term

Approved Providers are required to open for a minimum number of weeks per ECCE term, details of which can be found in the ECCE 'How to Guide' available on the EY HIVE at (<https://earlyyearshive.ncs.gov.ie/how-to-guides/how-to-guides-ecce/service-calendar-ecce/>).

3.2 Non Payment Week

If a service is closed for 3 days or more in a single week this is regarded as a non-payment week.

3.3 Document Display Requirement

A copy of the service calendar, together with copies of any standard letters that relate to DCEDIY funded programmes issued to parents, must be published in an area of the service accessible and visible to parents as well as on any online platform maintained by the Approved Provider for the purpose of advertising its services.

As a condition of the ECCE programme funding agreement for the 2022/2023 programme year, Service Providers agree to allow the Minister/Scheme Administrator to publish their calendars online and in any form.

3.4 Changes to Service Calendars

3.4.1 Approval of Calendar Changes

Any changes to a service calendar must first be approved by the CCCs.

3.4.2 Notice of Calendar Change

Parents must be given 20 working days' notice in writing of any change to the service's calendar once the calendar has been approved by the CCCs and copies of such notices must be kept on file.

3.4.3 Displaying of Revised Calendar

Where the calendar has been revised, an amended copy of the calendar must be published in an area of the service visible and accessible to parents/guardians, as well as on any online platform maintained by the Approved Provider for the purpose of advertising its services. The Department will also accept confirmation of receipt of the updated calendar by the relevant parent/guardian by e-mail or by hard copy, whichever best suits the Approved Provider. However, parents/guardians should be given the option of e-mail.

Parents/guardians who wish to avail of the e-mail option should be advised that in regard to data protection, the e-mail is a less secure option. Parents/guardians should be asked to reconfirm the appropriate e-mail to use and the Approved Provider should ensure that only specific individual e-mails issue to the appropriate address for the appropriate family. Approved Providers must keep copies of all emails for compliance purposes on site and available for inspection.

For further information on service calendars please contact your local CCC or refer to the Scheme Administrator's 'How to Guide-ECCE Programme Fees List and Service Calendar' on the EY HIVE (<https://earlyyearshive.ncs.gov.ie/how-to-guides/how-to-guides-ecce/service-calendar-ecce/>)

Chapter 4 Overview of ECCE

The ECCE programme is a universal free programme available to all children within the eligible age range. It provides children with their first formal experience of early learning prior to commencing primary school. The programme is provided for three hours per day, five days per week over 38 weeks¹ per year and the programme year runs from August end to June.

4.1 Early Years Education Standard

Childcare services taking part in the ECCE scheme must provide an appropriate pre-school educational programme which adheres to the principles and standards of Síolta and Aistear, the national frameworks for early learning and care. Local City/County Childcare Committees (CCCs) staff are on hand to support participating services with assistance visits and advice. ECCE is only available through participating early year’s services. A list of these services is available through the relevant local CCC.

4.2 Eligibility for ECCE

The programme is available to all children from the September after they have turned 2 years and 8 months.

4.3 ECCE Programme Rules

4.3.1 Age of Eligible Child

A child must have turned 2 years and 8 months on or before 31st August 2022, and not be older than 5 years and 6 months on or before 30th June 2023, to be eligible for the 2022/23 programme year.

Table 1 below sets out relevant eligibility dates by year of birth.

Table 1: Eligibility for ECCE by Month of Birth		
Birth date between	ECCE Start Date	ECCE end date
1 st January 2018 - 31 st December 2018	1 st September 2021 + 1 st September 2022	June 2023
1 st January 2019 - 31 st December 2019	1 st September 2022 + 1 st September 2023	June 2024
1 st January 2020 - 31 st December 2020	1 st September 2023 + 1 st September 2024	June 2025
1 st January 2021 - 31 st December 2021	1 st September 2024 + 1 st September 2025	June 2026
1 st January 2022 - 31 st December 2022	1 st September 2025 + 1 st September 2026	June 2027

¹

A small number of services are permitted to run over 41 weeks in exceptional circumstances. These existing arrangements will continue for these registered services only, and are subject to all rules contained herein except that they can deliver the ECCE Programme for 4 days per week for 3.5 hours per day. No other service can avail of the 41 week option. Once a service relinquishes their 41 week option/does not register children for 41 weeks in a programme year they may not revert to it in the future.

4.3.2 Exceptions to Upper Age Limit

The provision of an exception to the upper age limit (overage exemption) where a child has special/additional needs is under review in the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth in conjunction with the Department of Education.

Applicants for an exemption to the upper age limit will be required to explain why an ECCE service would meet their child's specific needs in a more appropriate way than a primary school. Applications for such exemptions must be submitted in writing to EYQueries@equality.gov.ie. **Please note, applications will only be accepted from a child's parent(s)/guardian(s) and not from an Approved Provider.**

4.3.3 Required Documents/Information

Parent(s) must provide the Approved Provider with child's full name as per birth certificate or passport, child's date of birth and child's PPSN in order to register their child on the ECCE programme.

Documentation containing PPSN and any other personal information must be destroyed by the Approved Provider once no longer required for the registration.

4.3.4 Adult to Child Ratio

The adult to child ratio for ECCE session is 1:11 (all children in the room must be aged between 2.8 and 6 years).

4.3.5 Minimum Enrolment

- I. An Approved Provider must have a minimum enrolment number of eight ECCE eligible children per session.
- II. Exceptions to the minimum enrolment number may be granted in some circumstances. Applications must be submitted to the City/County Childcare Committee (CCC), for review and approval. See FAQ for details on how to submit on the EY HIVE.

4.3.6 Leaving With Notice

If a parent/guardian wishes to move their child to another ELC Service, parents/guardians must give 4 weeks' notice of a departure from a service (excluding holidays/closed weeks) to the current Approved Provider.

4.3.7 Leaving Without Notice

If a parent/guardian removes their child from an ELC Service without providing four weeks' written notice, the Approved Provider may claim up to four weeks of ECCE subvention for that child. However, if an Approved Provider requests that a child is removed from their service without giving the parent/guardian four weeks' notice, the Approved Provider must register that child as a leaver from the date they were removed from the service.

4.3.8 Notice When Moving a Child to an Alternative ECCE Timeslot

If an Approved Provider wishes to move a child to a different ECCE timeslot after a child has been previously registered on a particular ECCE session, e.g. from the morning to the afternoon, they may only do so with the parents' permission.

4.3.10 Provision of ECCE Programme

An Approved Provider is required to provide three hours per day, five days per week for 38 weeks/182 days per programme year.²

4.3.11 ECCE Rate/s

The standard weekly ECCE capitation is €69.00 for the 2022/2023 programme year. Where a child is attending a part-time or full time service the Approved Provider must reduce the fees paid by the parent/guardian by ECCE Subsidy €64.50.

4.3.12 Provision of ECCE Programme by more than one ELC Service (Split Place)

For continuity of the care, education and socialisation needs of the child, the DCEDIY strongly recommends that children attend only one service wherever possible. However, a child's ECCE place can be split between two services in the following exceptional cases:

- Where there is a joint custody arrangement and, because of this, it is not possible for the child to attend the same service every day;
- Where a child has an additional need and it has been recommended by the specialist preschool that the ECCE place be split between a specialist and mainstream pre-school on the grounds that this is in the interest of the child; and
- Where the working arrangements of the parent/s necessitate a split placement.

Requests for split place exemptions should be submitted in writing to the Early Years Schemes Oversight Unit of the DCEDIY at EYQueries@equality.gov.ie.

² A small number of services are permitted to run over 41 weeks in exceptional circumstances. These existing arrangements will continue for these registered services only, and are subject to all rules contained herein except that they can deliver the ECCE Programme for 4 days per week for 3.5 hours per day. No other service can avail of the 41 week option. Once a service relinquishes their 41 week option/does not register children for 41 weeks in a programme year they may not revert to it in the future.

Chapter 5 Staff Qualifications

5.1 Obligations of an Approved Provider

An Approved Provider must ensure all staff working with children hold, at a minimum, a level 5 qualification that meets the requirements of the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

5.2 Recognition of Qualifications for ECCE

The levels of approval are also set out by the DCEIDY on the approved list of qualifications, and on Letters of Eligibility awarded to those who are successful in their applications.

- **Educator** - meets regulatory requirements (applicant must have a minimum level 5 NFQ)
- **Lead Educator** - standard capitation (applicant must have a minimum Level 6 NFQ)

5.3 Minimum qualifications to deliver ECCE

Each ECCE room/session must have a Lead Educator holding a minimum of a level 6 qualification which meets the ECCE funding agreement requirements for ECCE Lead Educator as set out on the published list of DCEDIY 'Early Years Recognised Qualifications' or, hold a Letter of Eligibility to Practice at this level issued by the DCEDIY (see more information relating to qualifications, including the published list on (<https://www.gov.ie/en/service/000073-recognition-of-an-early-years-qualification/>)).

A derogation to the above requirement is in place for 2022/23 programme year for those practitioners in possession of a signed Grandfathering Declaration extension.

Chapter 6 Entering a Child on the ECCE Programme

6.1 Agree Attendance and Service Offer

The ELC Service Manager must confirm and agree with parents/guardians the number of days, session type (if applicable) and pattern of attendance that the child is being registered for prior to registering the child for the ECCE Programme.

6.1.1 Parental Declaration Form

Approved Providers must ensure that parents/guardians sign a Parent Declaration Form to indicate that they understand the terms of the programme and that all child registration details are accurate. A record of each agreement must be maintained on site by the Approved Provider.

6.1.2 Checking Attendance Patterns

Each child's registration must reflect the actual attendance pattern of the child. Where there is a discrepancy between attendance and registration, the Approved Provider must amend the registration on the EY HIVE. Failure to update registrations to reflect the actual attendance pattern may result in an over-claim due to the Department. Over-claims will be recouped in accordance with the ECCE Funding Agreement (Instructions on Child Registration are available on the EY HIVE).

6.2 When to register a child

Approved Providers can begin to register a child up to 7 weeks in advance of the programme year start date, registrations will open on Monday 4th July 2022.

6.3 Latest Date for Registration

The latest an Approved Provider can register a child is eight weeks after the child's start date.

6.4 Late Registrations

- I. DCEDIY reserves the right to decline or not back-date funding on any "late registrations" (i.e. more than eight weeks after child's start date).
- II. DCEDIY reserves the right to review the ECCE funding agreement of services who consistently submit late registrations.

6.5 Child Non-Attendance from Start Date

If a child does not attend within four weeks of the start date, the registration must be cancelled immediately and any payment received for that child will be recovered.

Chapter 7 Attendance

7.1 Non Attendance

If a child has not attended, the Approved Provider should contact the parent/guardian to establish the cause of the child's absence within the first week of the absence commencing. Where a child has not attended the service for 4 consecutive weeks, the service must enter the leaver on the EY HIVE stating the date the child last attended the service.

7.2 Special Circumstances

In certain special circumstances, an ELC service may apply to the Scheme Administrator to retain the registration beyond 4 weeks to 6/12weeks. (Please see Table 3 for situations which qualify for 'special circumstances'). The Scheme Administrator may seek supporting proof of special circumstances. Acceptable proofs may include a letter or medical certificate which can be uploaded onto the system by the Approved Provider (as provided by and with the agreement of the parent).

Where possible Approved Providers should apply to the Scheme Administrator for special circumstances prior to the end of the 4th week of absence.

Table 2 Qualifying Special Circumstances

Qualifying Circumstances	Maximum Absence for which Subsidy is payable
Immediate family bereavement.	6 weeks
Extended travel once a year to the birthplace of the child or either of the child's parents.	6 weeks
Prolonged illness (more than four weeks), of either the child, the parent or a sibling.	12 weeks

Where an application for special circumstances is submitted and special circumstances do not apply, the Approved Provider must end date the registration and payment will cease with effect from that end date (which can be no later than the end of the 4 weeks of continuous absence).

Where no letter is submitted by the end of 6 weeks of continuous absence and, the child has not returned to the ELC service within that time, the Approved Provider must end date the registration with the end date of the fourth week and payment will cease with effect from that end date.

Where a letter is submitted after 4 weeks but no later than 6 weeks from the original absence and the registration has been end dated, the registration may be restored.

7.3 Reduction in Attendance and EY HIVE Updating

Where attendance differs from registration in a consistent pattern over a 4 week period, registrations must be updated to reflect the actual pattern of attendance. An update on the EY HIVE must occur immediately after the 4 weeks of the reduced attendance pattern commencing. Failure to update registrations to reflect the actual attendance pattern will result in an over-claim due to the Department. Over-claims will be recouped in accordance with the terms of the ECCE funding agreement.

7.4 Persistent Under-attendance

Where attendance has been less than the registered hours in each of the previous 4 weeks the Approved Provider may apply to the Scheme Administrator to retain the registration beyond 4 weeks up to 12 weeks.

Please see Table 3: Qualifying Special Circumstances in section 7.2 for further information.

Where possible Approved Providers should notify the Scheme Administrator in advance of a forthcoming continuous absence where they believe special circumstances will apply.

7.5 Departure from Service

If a child leaves the service, the Approved Provider must update the EY HIVE immediately stating the date the child last attended the service. Parents/Guardians must give providers 4 weeks' notice of a departure from a service. This will allow the Approved Providers to update the EY HIVE with payment ceasing on the actual date of departure. In cases where no notice of departure is given to the Approved Provider, they may claim 4 weeks subsidy in lieu of notice.

While a parent/guardian is free to remove their child from a service at any point, they will not be allowed to avail of further childcare funding while the approved funding is committed to the service during this 4 weeks' notice period.

7.6 Exception to the Four Weeks'-Notice Period Rule

A parent/guardian can remove their child from a service and re-register them in a new service without being required to serve the 4 weeks'-notice period where a service has been given notice by Tusla that they are to be removed from the Tusla register.

Chapter 8 Record Keeping

8.1 Obligation of an Approved Provider

Approved Providers must keep an accurate record of each child's **actual attendance** to include daily arrival and departure times for each child. The ELC services' registrations on the EY HIVE must match actual attendance (actual child attendance and not opening times of session/service) as recorded in the attendance records. A copy of a good practice attendance records can be found at Appendix 2 of this document.

8.2 Requirement to Maintain Attendance Records

The Approved Provider must maintain attendance records of registered children that records the daily hours of attendance, showing the child's full name, date of attendance, time of child's arrival and time of child's departure and the name of the person responsible (employee, volunteer or person on work experience) for recording each arrival and departure. The record of attendance for each room must accurately reflect the children in the room, and must be updated when a child leaves or enters.

The arrival and departure of each child must be recorded in real time by the Approved Provider. Attendance records must be kept in an appropriate manner that is sufficient to establish actual duration of attendance of each named child in terms of hours. The child's name must be recorded in a consistent manner in order to facilitate identification of patterns of attendance (i.e. if the attendance records are weekly sheets, the child's name should be recorded in the same order. Weekly attendance formats are highly recommended (as opposed to separately kept daily formats) as they facilitate establishing patterns of attendance. In addition the following points should be noted:

1. Maintain separate attendance records /roll books for each session/room.
2. Where source records are used to transcribe attendance to a secondary record, the source records must be retained and made available for review.
3. If a child moves to another room during the day, then this should be identifiable through the attendance records.
4. State Child's full name (as per EY HIVE records).
5. Keep names of children in a consistent sequence throughout the cycle. Retain records of children who have left the ELC service i.e. do not delete or overwrite.
6. All absences must be recorded.
7. Ensure attendance records /roll books are filled out by staff member working in the room.
8. Keep parent's sign in and out book separate to Attendance records /roll books.
9. Input time of arrival and departure for all children within the service including Afterschool and Breakfast clubs. Don't use ticks.
10. Where paper records are maintained they should record the attendance in real time of each child in a weekly format for example as shown in figure 1 below.
11. Where electronic records are maintained, the ELC service must record the attendance in real time and be able to show weekly/monthly reports for individual children which show their level of attendance for the cycle to date. **Reports should also be specific to rooms and sessions as they would be when kept in paper form.**

Attendance records will be reviewed during compliance visits. Please see Appendix 2 for further information.

8.3 Failure to Maintain Appropriate Attendance Records

Failure to maintain attendance records may result in an assumption of zero hour's attendance. The DCEDIY may withdraw future payments from the Approved Provider and/or require repayment of over-claimed monies already paid for the period concerned.

Failure to maintain sufficient attendance records (e.g. where attendance records are kept, but in a format which does not allow a compliance visit officer to determine the hours which a child has attended, such as through use of "ticks") may result in an assumption of minimal hour's attendance (i.e. sessional/half sessional service). The DCEDIY can withdraw future payments from the Approved Provider and/or require repayment of over-claimed monies already paid for the period concerned.

Failure to maintain records in the required format may result in a finding of non-compliance. For further information please see Appendix 2.

Chapter 9 Compliance

9.1 Responsibility of an Approved Provider

It is the responsibility of the Approved Provider to ensure compliance with their Funding Agreement requirements, which includes adherence to this rules document. Approved Providers should ensure that they understand and adhere to the contents of this document, as well as with the ECCE Funding Agreement and 'How To' guides available on the EY HIVE.

Failure to comply with any of the ECCE Rules may result in the suspension of ECCE Funding and/or DCEDIY Funding or part thereof may be withdrawn and/or a termination of the ECCE Funding Agreement.

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

- Attendance records;
- Service fee information letters;
- Enrolment details (including minimum enrolment exemption where relevant);
- Parent/guardian letters;
- Fee records;
- Staff qualifications; and letter of qualification;
- Grandfathering declaration extension letter as applicable;
- Evidence of Tusla registration.

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

Services should also ensure that:

- The EY HIVE registrations are correct,
- The EY HIVE Fees list and Service 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. Please note that if the records are readily available for review any interruption to the ELC Service will be minimal, other than seeking clarifications when required.

9.2 Compliance Visits

- i. Services must facilitate compliance visits which will be made without notice, to include access to the premises, personnel and relevant records.
- ii. All documentation related to the financial affairs of the service, accounts, fees records, staff qualifications, fees lists, registers and attendance records must be on-site at all times. These records must be kept for a minimum period of 6 years from expiry of the Funding Agreement.
- iii. Compliance visit officers may inspect and take copies of, any books, records or other documents (including books, records or documents stored in non-legible form), or extracts therefrom, that he or she finds in the course of his or her inspection.

Chapter 10 Force Majeure

10.1 Force Majeure and Funding

Force Majeure allows a party to suspend or terminate the performance of its obligations when certain circumstances beyond their control arise. The Department is under no obligation to fund 'force majeure' days and does so at its own discretion.

10.2 Force Majeure Clause ECCE Funding Agreement

If and to the extent that either party (the "Affected Party") is hindered or prevented by circumstances not within its reasonable ability to control, including but not limited to, acts of God, inclement weather, flood, lightning, fire, acts or omissions of third parties for whom the Affected Party is not responsible ("Force Majeure") from performing any of its obligations under this Agreement, the Affected Party shall be relieved of liability for failure to perform such obligations.

Ref: ECCE Funding Agreement 2022-2023, Clause 11.1

10.3 Force Majeure Claim Process

Approved Providers should formally claim force majeure with the Scheme Administrator no later than **5** days after the incident, even if the incident is ongoing, giving a brief outline of the issue and their estimated number of days' closure.

In the event Force Majeure continues for more than 45 days then either party shall have the right to terminate this Agreement on written notice to the other party.

Force Majeure cannot be paid in conjunction with any insurance or compensation received by the Approved Provider from a third party for the same purpose.

To raise a service request on the EY HIVE with:

- the Programme Type "User Account Management",
- the category "Force Majeure" and
- then selecting the relevant subcategory.

If for any reason a service is unable to access their EY Hive account in order to apply for Force Majeure, the EYPC team can be contacted by phone and requested to raise a case with the Data Management team on the Approved Provider's behalf. EYPC can be contacted Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm (10am to 5pm on Wednesday) at 01 511 7222.

Chapter 11 Childminders

11.1 Definition of a Childminder

A childminder is defined as a self-employed person who minds other people's children in their own home. They offer a flexible service, tailored to each child, thereby helping parents and guardians to balance their work and family commitments.

11.2 Childminders and Tusla Registration

Childminders who are in contract for the ECCE Programme must be registered with Tusla. To be registered with Tusla a childminder must comply with the requirements for childminders as outlined in the [Child Care Regulations \(The Child Care Act 1991 \(Early Years Services\) \(Amendments\) Regulations 2016](#) and the [Childcare Act 1991\(Registration of School Age Services\) Regulations 2018](#).

A child-minder must have five ECCE eligible children in order to provide the ECCE programme and must be registered with Tusla.

A childminder who is required to register should apply to register as a pre-school childminder if they care for more pre-school children than school age children, and as a school age childminder if they care for more school age children than pre-school children. Childminders must be registered with Tusla to provide ECCE.

For further information on the regulatory requirements for childminders please see the [Quality and Regulatory Framework for Childminders \(QRF\)](#) on the Tusla website and the Minimum ECCE Enrolment Exemption Guidelines available on EY HIVE.

Chapter 12 Financial Requirements

It is an essential requirement that all public monies are appropriately accounted for and used for their intended purpose.

The Approved Provider will maintain up-to-date child registration information on the EY HIVE. Failure to comply may result in suspension of funding and/or termination of the ECCE Funding Agreement.

The Approved Provider must maintain appropriate records to enable verification by the Department or agents acting on its behalf (including the Scheme Administrator) that the general terms of the ECCE Funding Agreement are complied with. In particular, such records **will include an attendance register which clearly shows the dates, times and durations of attendance for each individually identified child for every day that the child is in attendance.** Please see Appendix 2, Figure 1 of the Rules for ECCE Programme 'Sample Child Attendance Record' for the preferred format of attendance records. Records of income and expenditure should be kept up to date and available for verification purposes.

Failure by the Approved Provider to maintain accurate attendance records and/or accurate updated child registration details, as required in clause 7.1 of the ECCE Funding Agreement 2022/2032 may result in an immediate suspension of ECCE funding and/or a requirement to repay over-claimed monies already paid and may result in a termination of the ECCE Funding Agreement.

The Approved Provider must maintain appropriate annual accounts for each financial year in accordance with the timescales set out by the Companies Registration Office (for limited companies) or by the Revenue Commissioners (for unincorporated entities). Copies of such accounts must be provided to the Scheme Administrator on request.

The Approved Provider must separately account for public funds received and ensure that appropriate financial records are maintained.

The Approved Provider must respect and comply with the statutory role and regulatory and public accountability responsibilities of the Department, its agents and other relevant statutory bodies and at all times co-operate fully with the Department, its agents and all other statutory bodies in this regard.

Chapter 13 FAQs for ECCE Programme

13.1 Can a child transfer from one ELC Service to another?

Yes. A parent/guardian must give the Approved Provider four ECCE weeks’ written notice of their intention to transfer their child to another service or to leave the current service. (Please note ECCE weeks do not include weeks a service is closed for holidays).

13.2 What is a pattern of attendance?

Approved Providers are required to ensure that the EY HIVE registrations match actual attendance patterns. An Approved Provider must monitor attendance over a four week period to ascertain that the registration for each child is correct based on actual attendance. Where a child consistently, over a four week period, fails to attend for an identified level of service as agreed (for example – attending four days instead of five), then the Approved Provider must update the EY HIVE registration to reflect this.

13.3 Can a parent/guardian alter the number of days of attendance?

Yes, if the Approved Provider can cater for the request.

13.4 Can a childminder provide ECCE?

Yes. A childminder must have 5 ECCE eligible children in order to provide the ECCE programme and must be registered with Tusla.

13.5 What if I want to expand my ELC Service and open another room?

If the new room is located in the same facility you should ensure relevant notification/registration is sent to Tusla and details of the proposed expansion are sent to your local CCC.
If the new room is at another location this is considered a new facility and will require a new Service Reference Number and a separate ECCE funding agreement. Provision of an ECCE funding agreement is dependent on the new facility being appropriately registered with Tusla. You should contact the Scheme Administrator and apply for a new Service Reference Number.

13.6 What are payable and non payable weeks?

Please see the full ECCE payable/non-payable week information below:

Payable Week	Non Payable week
3 open days	Less than 3 open days
Bank holiday and 2 open days	Bank holiday and only 1 open day
2 x Bank holidays and 2 open days	2 x Bank holidays and 1 open day

13.7 When are payments made?

Payment schedules, for Childcare Funding Programmes can be downloaded from the EY HIVE home-page at www.earlyyearshive.ncs.gov.ie. Payments include Standard and AIM Level 1 where appropriate. Non Payable weeks are determined by the ELC Service Calendar input by the Approved Provider at the start of the Programme Call.

13.8 How do you upload the Minimum Enrolment Exemption form to EY HIVE

The steps for the Approved Providers to upload minimum number exemptions forms on the EY HIVE:

- Click in Requests -> click in New Request -> User Account Management
- Request type: Programme Readiness
- Request type detail: ECCE Minimum Exemption.

13.9 My local CCC has reviewed my fees lists and I've been requested to amend same. What should I do?

The CCCs, on the Department's behalf, check that all fees lists and calendars conform to the rules of the ECCE Programme. All amendments must be made within a 4 week period or the Scheme Administrator will be informed, and funding may be put on hold until all requirements from the CCC have been confirmed as completed.

13.10 I intend putting a claim in with my insurance company and I have claimed Force Majeure. What should I do?

Services who have claimed both Force Majeure and have been successfully awarded a claim from their insurance company must inform the Scheme Administrator so that Exchequer Funding can be recouped.

Appendix 1 Optional Extras Document

22/23 ECCE Optional Extras Guide

ECCE Optional Extras Overview:

One of the core principles of ECCE is that it is free of charge to all parents. Therefore the Department would prefer that services keep optional extras items for children attending ECCE to an absolute minimum and recommend that Approved Providers arrange for charged activities to occur outside the 3 hours of the ECCE programme.

With the exception of 'sessional only' services, **no additional time may be included as an optional extra**. It is imperative that no child should ever feel excluded if they are not participating in an optional extra activity. No additional activity should be held in a manner that would leave non-participating children feeling excluded. **Charging for items which would be expected to be part of a pre-school service (e.g. arts and craft materials) is not permitted.** Similarly, it is not permitted for services to make payment of optional extras a criterion for admission to the service, or to combine a list of additional services into a single option on the fees list. Any optional extras must be individually optional, and this requires an individualised charge for each optional extra.

Where an optional extra happens during an ECCE session, **children not attending the optional activity must have a full content-based session**, and the required **child to adult ratio must be maintained** for children taking part in the optional extra as well as those not participating.

If a family no longer want an optional extra previously agreed to, they must be allowed withdraw from it. While notice may be required for such withdrawal, it must not exceed four weeks.

The Department reserves the right to add to both the allowable and disallowable lists below. For further information on optional extras Approved Providers should contact the CCCs.

Allowable optional extras:

(Many of these will be provided by services free of charge)

- **Food** (children must also have the option of bringing their own snack/lunch instead),
- **'Gymboree'** type events (where outside providers deliver an educational or entertainment based activity),
- **Nappies/pull-ups** (where applicable),
- **Baking** (where this is a regular part of the programme),
- **One** paid school trip (entry fees, cost of transportation).

Disallowed optional extras:

- Additional minutes/hours (excluding sessional only services who may offer an optional 30 minutes only),
- Arts & Crafts materials,
- Booking Fees (a refundable booking deposit may be taken, but it must not exceed four weeks capitation, and must be refunded once the child is successfully registered on the EY HIVE),

- Claims to have higher quality, or to have lower staff ratios than other participating services,
- Different curriculum,
- Graduation diploma/gowns,
- Insurance,
- Report cards,
- School plays/concerts,
- Unspecified “flexibility” (in drop-off and collection times),
- Voluntary Donations,
- Worksheets and,
- **Anything** which is required for effective participation in ECCE.

Appendix 2

Good Practice Guide - Attendance Records

The maintenance of good attendance records is a requirement for both compliance with **the DCEDIY Rules for ECCE Programme** and the [Child Care Act 1991 \(Early Years Services\) Regulations 2016](#). Attendance records can be maintained in a variety of formats e.g. roll books, weekly sheet formats or electronic formats. Pobal/the DCEDIY don't direct any specific format be used however from a good practice perspective we have collated some tips on how attendance can be consistently recorded to meet the DCEDIY Funded Programme requirements. For more support please contact your local City/County Childcare Committee.

From the Start

- Ensure there are attendance records /roll books for each session/room including Breakfast clubs.
- State Child's full name (as per EY HIVE records) - Don't use nicknames.
- Keep names of children in a consistent sequence throughout the cycle (facilitates attendance tracking). If a new child starts with the ELC Service, add their name to the bottom of the list.
- Use a ball point pen not pencil.
- Ensure attendance records/ roll books are accessible from beginning of cycle (including where a child's registration period has expired).
- Ensure attendance records /roll books are filled out by staff member working in the room.
- Keep Parent's Sign in and out book separate to Attendance records /roll books (if necessary).
- Don't use individual daily sheets/diaries.
- Date the week of attendance.

Each Day

- Input time of arrival and departure for all children within the ELC Service including Afterschool. (Where a service collects children from a school for an afterschool service, please record attendance from the time the children are under the ELC Service's responsibility.) Don't use ticks. Record attendance in real-time, as arrival and/or departures occur.
- Ensure Staff attendance is recorded daily on each room/session attendance records/roll book.

Absences/ Leavers/ Movers

- Be consistent in documenting non-attendance e.g. always use an X for absent.
- If a child leaves the ELC Service, leave name on roll book and put a line through the remaining days of programme cycle to show as a leaver.
- If a child moves session/room within the ELC Service during the cycle – enter a note to reflect this on attendance records/roll books.
- If child shares their day/week on an ongoing basis between different sessions/rooms – enter a note to reflect this on attendance records/ roll books.
- A Child should be recorded in record of attendance for each room they attend if moving rooms during day/week.

- Don't use Tippex on the attendance sheet/roll book.
- Keep the information visible if a child has left.

Weekly Sheets

If using weekly sheets, keep in date order and secure in a folder.

Electronic Records

- Make sure they are consistent and show attendance of child for full cycle.
- Where electronic records are maintained, the Approved Provider **must** be able to produce weekly/monthly reports for individual children which show their level of attendance for the cycle to date. It is recommended that these reports are regularly produced and made available for compliance purposes.
- Make sure that the password is to hand and that a staff member understands how to retrieve the information from the system.

Archiving

Attendance records/ roll books must be kept as outlined in this DCEDIY Rules for ECCE Programme document i.e. a minimum period of 6 years from the expiry date of ECCE 2022/23 Funding Agreement.

