



OFFALY COUNTY CHILDCARE COMMITTEE



WEEKLY NEWS BULLETIN

28th April 2025



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



frances@offalychildcare.com



085 228 4121



www.offalychildcare.com



IMPORTANT DATES AND DEADLINES

<u>NCS Compliance Inspections – 2024/2025</u>	On-going
NCS Weekly Returns to be completed between Monday morning and Tuesday afternoon	Weekly
AIM non-term application for Summer 2025	Now Open
Nurturing Skills Learner Fund	1st May 2025
Core Funding Review & Confirm	2nd May - 14th May 2025
AIM Programme Readiness training	7th May 2025
Pre-Registration Training for Childminders	10th May 2025
Always Children First Safeguarding Awareness Training	28th June 2025

Get Sun Smart Competition

The Get SunSmart! Art Competition is a great chance for children to get creative and learn about the importance of protecting their skin while enjoying the outdoors. This is open to preschool children also.

The competition closes at 5pm 9th May 2025.

For more information and to enter the competition, visit:
<http://gov.ie/getsunsmart>

Get SunSmart! Children's Art Competition

Prizes: Overall winners will have their artwork featured as part of the 2025 SunSmart Campaign and also win an OPW Family Heritage Card, a Family Day Pass to Dublin Zoo and a National Book Token

Runner up prizes also up for grabs



More info at www.gov.ie/getsunsmart



Closing date extended to 9th May 2025

Annual Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Literacy Forum held at Dublin Castle



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

Minister for Children, Disability and Equality, Norma Foley TD, and Bernie McNally, Secretary General, Department of Education today (Wednesday, 30 April) addressed the annual Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Literacy Forum which took place in Dublin Castle.

This is the first forum to be held since the launch in May 2024 of Ireland's Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Literacy Strategy 2024-2033: Every Learner from Birth to Young Adulthood and supporting five-year implementation plan. The strategy's vision is that: 'Every learner, from birth to young adulthood, develops the necessary literacy, numeracy, and digital literacy skills to thrive and flourish as an individual, to engage and contribute fully as an ethical, active member of society and to live a satisfying and rewarding life.'

Minister for Education, Helen McEntee said:

"Forums like this are not just about the strategy, they are about listening, learning, and ensuring our actions match the needs of the learners we serve.

"The way our learners engage with literacy, numeracy and digital literacy is evolving rapidly. It is essential we evolve with them not only in policy, but in practice. That means asking critical questions, being open to innovation, and recognising that no one-size-fits-all. "My department is focused on ensuring that our strategies for literacy, numeracy, and digital literacy remain responsive to the evolving needs of learners, educators, and communities. Together, we can create an environment where every learner is empowered to thrive, both now and in the future."

Speakers at the event included: Dr Sandra O'Neill, Institute of Education, Dublin City University and Dr Niamh O'Meara, EPI-STEM School of Education, University of Limerick, Áine Lynch and René O'Malley, National Parents Council. Workshops on the day focused on a range of topics including storytelling, outdoor learning, numeracy and mis/disinformation. There were also presentations and video contributions from early learning and care settings and schools which showcased inspiring literacy, numeracy and digital literacy practice.

Minister Foley said:

"Significantly the Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Literacy Strategy highlights early childhood as the fundamental first stage on a child's educational journey and the importance of children's earliest experiences in language, literacy, and numeracy.

"This forum provides a valuable opportunity for us to come together with our colleagues across the primary and post-primary sectors, to share inspiring practice and explore innovative, evidence-based approaches to play-based learning.

"It is wonderful to see such strong participation from the early learning and care sector here today, and I look forward to hearing the insights and observations gathered in areas such as early mathematical thinking, story-telling traditions and the importance of language-rich environments for babies, toddlers and young children"

Secretary General, Department of Education, Bernie McNally said: "It was a real pleasure to meet the children and young people this morning. They are, after all, at the centre of everything we do in education. Seeing their energy and potential was a powerful reminder of why our work to support their learning and development is so important.

"Building strong literacy, numeracy, and digital skills is essential not just for academic success, but for full participation in an increasingly digital and global society. These skills form the foundation of opportunity, equality, and lifelong learning.

"Alongside the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, we are driving the Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Literacy Strategy forward with energy, ambition, and collaboration. Together, we can build the core skills every learner needs to succeed in education, in the workforce, and in life".

Minister Foley and Bernie McNally also acknowledged all who participated in the forum today and committed to continue to foster ongoing dialogue and action to support every learner's success.

Pre-Registration Training for Childminders



The Pre-Registration Training is mandatory training for childminders and is the first step in registering with Tusla.

It will give you all the information you need to be a childminder, understand the new Childminding Regulations and documents required to register with Tusla.

This training:

- is FREE
- delivered in person over one day
- has no assessment
- will provide you with a certificate of completion



Saturday 10th May 2025- In Person @ OFFALY CCC

Time: 9.30am- 5.00pm

Offaly County Childcare Committee CLG.

8 O'Connor Square, Tullamore, Co. Offaly

Contact Gillian on 085-1703772

or

Email: gillian@offalychildcare.com



**National Action Plan
for Childminding
2021-2028**

**Childcare
Committees
Ireland**



**An Roinn Leanaí, Comhionannais,
Míchumais, Lámháirtíochta agus Óige
Department of Children, Equality,
Disability, Integration and Youth**

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)



NATIONAL CHILD SAFEGUARDING PROGRAMME

for Early Learning & Childcare Services



ALWAYS CHILDREN FIRST: CHILD SAFEGUARDING AWARENESS TRAINING

This accredited training course will enable participants to

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



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An Roinn Leanaí, Comhionannais,
Míchumais, Láimhdeiríochta agus Oige
Department of Children, Equality,
Disability, Integration and Youth



- 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



Date:
Saturday 28th June 2025



Venue:
O'Connor Square, Tullamore, Co. Offaly, R35 Y7P0



Time:
9.30am - 4.30pm

CLICK HERE TO REGISTER

Hive Notifications

AIM Programme Readiness 2025 Training Invite

Dear Service Provider,

Access & Inclusion Model (AIM) Level 4, Level 5 and Level 7 standard applications for the 2025/2026 programme year will open on the Early Years Hive on Tuesday 6 May 2025.

Training

You are invited to attend AIM Programme Readiness training 2025. The training sessions will be held at 10am and 2.30pm on Wednesday 7 May 2025.

Both sessions will include:

- Intro to AIM Programme Readiness 2025
- Key points: Service Profile / Sessions / Dates
- AIM Level 5 FAQ & resource location
- AIM Level 4
- AIM Level 7 Standard
- AIM Level 7 Plus & Non-Term
- AIM Level 7 Standard Review & Confirm
- Questions & answers

Please see below the links to register with Microsoft Teams:

Session 1: Wednesday 07 May from 10:00 am to 11:00 am
<https://events.teams.microsoft.com/event/e1e6b4d4-48cd-492d-a779-3bd9a813615d@aeae5436-a997-489f-b0e1-ae283ced47f7>

Session 2: Wednesday 07 May from 2:30 pm to 3:30 pm
<https://events.teams.microsoft.com/event/37376507-8155-4e9f-927f-21280057ba38@aeae5436-a997-489f-b0e1-ae283ced47f7>

Please note: Each session will cover the same training content.

A recording of one of the webinars will be made available on the Early Years Hive along with the PowerPoint slides once the training has been completed.

We kindly ask that questions asked on the day are kept to the topic of AIM Programme Readiness.

Regards,
The Early Years Team

Hive Notifications

Submit AIM non-term application for Summer 2025

Dear Service Provider,

Please make sure you have submitted your AIM Non-term 2024/2025 applications for the summer months on the Early Years Hive as soon as possible.

AIM Non-term applications may take up to 12 weeks to process.

When submitting an AIM Non-term application, we recommend you submit all dates in which AIM Non-term support is required over the summer period.

Change of circumstance

If you have already submitted your AIM Non-term applications and did not include the required summer dates, please submit a 'change of circumstance' review to add the relevant dates. Please note, AIM Non-term reviews may take up to 6 weeks to process.

A guide on how to submit a change of circumstances review can be found [here](#).

Regards,
The Early Years Team

Hive Notifications

Checks to ensure that hours of school and ECCE attendance are not included in NCS registered hours

Dear Service Provider,

Checks to ensure that hours of school and ECCE attendance are not included in NCS registered hours.

As you are aware, the purpose of the National Childcare Scheme (NCS) is to provide financial support for parents towards the cost of their childcare with a service provider. The hours of care required are agreed between the parent and the service provider. Once agreed, then the hours claimed under NCS should reflect this arrangement.

It is important to note that the child should only be registered on NCS for hours that they require and intend to be present in the service. In particular, NCS subsidised hours cannot be claimed for hours that the child is in education (i.e. ECCE or school).

For ECCE and school-age children, NCS subsidised hours can only be claimed in the following scenarios during term time:

- childcare used before preschool or school starts in the morning (e.g. a breakfast club)
- after-school childcare

Children may attend for additional hours on school closure days. Confirmation of your compliance with the rules above can be reviewed as part of compliance inspections. Services are therefore advised to have details of school calendars and school opening/closing times on file for school-age children who attend their facility.

We want to take this opportunity to thank services in advance for your continued co-operation with compliance checks.

Kind regards,
Pobal & DCEDIY Compliance Teams

Hive Notifications

Nurturing Skills Learner Fund (NSLF) reminder for the academic year 2025/2026

Dear Service Provider,

Please note the following regarding the Nurturing Skills Learner Fund (NSLF).

NSLF applications for the academic year 2025/2026

NSLF applications for the academic year 2025/2026 are now open and will close on 1 May 2025 at 5pm.

Please advise your staff to contact NSLF@pobal.ie to request a link to the NSLF Student Portal to register on the NSLF Student Portal, upload employment details and complete the new application process.

There are two steps in the application process and, in some instances, the employment record step could take several working days to complete. The numbers applying may also impact.

All applications must be submitted prior to the deadline of 1 May 2025. Late and incomplete applications will not be accepted after the deadline.

NSLF students continuing from the academic year 2024/2025

Pobal will contact continuing students directly in early summer asking individuals to verify their continuing eligibility for NSLF. Once eligibility is confirmed, a new letter of Conditional Funding will issue to the student for the academic year 2025/2026. Training for continuing students will happen at a later stage and you will be notified.

Note: Continuing Students are existing students who successfully received NSLF funding for the academic year 2024/2025 and wish to continue to receive funding for NSLF for Academic Year 2025/2026.

Regards,
The Early Years Team

Hive Notifications

ECCE compliance

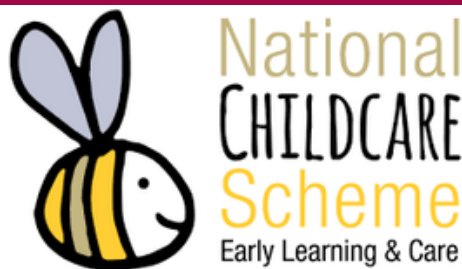
It is the responsibility of the Service Provider to ensure compliance with their contractual requirements. Service providers should ensure that they understand and adhere to the ECCE Funding Agreement. Failure to do so will result in non-compliance and will require corrective action.

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

- [Accessing the NCS Compliance Report on Hive](#)
- [NCS Compliance Checklist](#)
- [NCS Compliance Service Provider Guide](#)
- [NCS Post Inspection Rectification Actions](#)

Hive Notifications

ECCE compliance

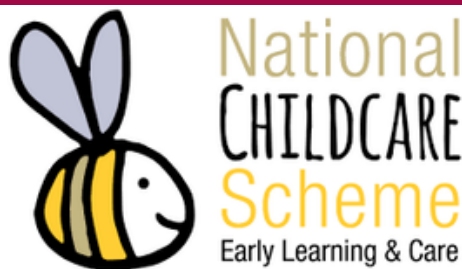
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- [NCS Post Inspection Rectification Actions](#)

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.