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Free Pre-School year in Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme

The Early Childhood Care and Education Programme (ECCE) provides a *free* year of early childhood care and education for children of pre-school age which can help prepare your child for starting primary school.

Children are eligible for the ECCE scheme if they are aged over 3 years 2 months and less than 4 years 7 months on 1st September of the year that they will be starting.

Children born between 2 February 2011 and 30 June 2012 (including these dates) will be eligible to start in September 2015.

The scheme means that those childcare providers, which offer the ECCE scheme, are funded by the State to provide free childcare and education for certain number of hours over a set number of weeks

The usual amount of hours provided in a participating pre-school or day-care centre amounts to 3 hours a day over a 38 week period. If a child attends for a longer day, then the cost must be met by the parent.

Childcare services taking part in the ECCE scheme must provide an appropriate pre-school educational programme which adheres to the principles of the national framework for early years care and education, known as Síolta.

For information on childcare providers in your area and information on finding an ECCE place for your child then contact your local City or County Childcare Committee.