

When does the universal subsidy start?

Registrations for the universal subsidy start from August 21st.

Where do I apply? Is there an application form?

There is no application form for the new scheme. Some providers do have their own application form but this is solely for their own use.

Do parents have to provide any eligibility documentation for the universal subsidy?

No. The universal subsidy is non-means tested and therefore available to all children of the relevant age (i.e. from six months of age up until the time that the child qualifies for entry to the ECCE Programme) in registered childcare. Parents must supply only the name, PPSNs and date of birth of the parent and child.

Is the universal subsidy paid to the parent or the childcare provider?

The universal subsidy is paid to the childcare provider. It should be offset against the cost of childcare for that provider. If, for example, a childcare provider charges €170 per week for a full day care place, the amount charged to parents when the universal subsidy is applied should be €150 per week.

Who is eligible to receive the Universal Subsidy?

Every child in registered childcare from the age of 6 months until they are eligible to start the free pre-school programme (ECCE), is eligible for the universal subsidy. Some children may therefore be slightly older than three years of age.

What if my childcare provider puts their fees up?

Childcare fees are set by childcare providers and may be determined by many factors, such as rent, electricity, insurance etc. Childcare providers have been provided with an additional €3.5m 'non-contact payment' to administer these supports to families so any rise in childcare fees should not relate to availability of these supports to your family.

What does 'registered' childcare mean?

All childcare services in the Republic of Ireland are compelled to register with Túsła; the Child and Family Agency and are subject to regulation and inspection. Some childminders are also registered with Túsła and therefore may also participate in the scheme. Use the 'search for childcare' option on our website to find Túsła registered childcare services in Limerick.

Is the universal subsidy available all year round?

The universal subsidy is available for the full 2017/2018 programme year, starting from the 21st August 2017 (up to 52 weeks per year). Childcare provider calendars (weeks open) apply.

Are the subsidies available per child or per family?

The subsidies are available for each eligible child in your family. For instance if you have two children who are not yet old enough to avail of the ECCE (free pre school programme) then both will qualify to receive the universal subsidy of up to €20 per week. This adds up to €1,040 per year per child in full time childcare.

What are the Universal Subsidy Rates?

CCS Session Type	Universal Band (CCS Band U) (Weekly Subsidy)
Full-time (i.e. 5.01 or more hours)	€20
Part-time (i.e. 3.31 to 5 hours)	€10
Sessional (i.e. 2.16 to 3.30 hours)	€7
Half-sessional (i.e. 1 to 2.15 hours)	€3.50

What if my child is only availing of childcare for a couple of days per week?

The universal subsidy is available on a *pro-rata* basis. For example, if a child is availing childcare for two days per week, the amount of subsidy available would be €8 per week ($€20/5 = €4 \times 2 \text{ days} = €8$). The table below gives a breakdown of the daily and weekly universal subsidy rates:

CCS Session Type (Universal)	Weekly Subsidy	Daily Subsidy
Full-time (i.e. 5.01 or more hours)	€20	€4
Part-time (i.e. 3.31 to 5 hours)	€10	€2
Sessional (i.e. 2.16 to 3.30 hours)	€7	€1.40
Half-sessional (i.e. 1 to 2.15 hours)	€3.50	€0.70

If my child is eligible for the ECCE Programme, but can't find a place within a service, will my child be eligible to receive the universal subsidy until an ECCE place is available?

No. The universal subsidy is only available until the child becomes eligible for the ECCE Programme. However, children eligible for the ECCE Programme may still be eligible for the targeted subsidies provided under the CCS and TEC Programmes. Please see details of these programmes on our 'Schemes' page.