

## **Minister Reilly announces capital funding totalling €4 million for Early Years services in 2016**

**10th February, 2016**

Dr James Reilly, Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, has today announced the launch of capital funding totalling €4 million for Early Years services in 2016 (EYC2016).

Minister Reilly stated:

"In Budget 2016 we significantly expanded funding to make more affordable childcare more available to more people. A major initiative was the expansion of free pre-school (under the Early Childhood Care and Education programme) – increasing the number of children who benefit from free pre-school from around 67,000 to 127,000 each year, and reducing parents' childcare costs for young children by an average of nearly €1,500 (in addition to the savings from the existing pre-school year). We also provided significant funding for a suite of supports to enable children with disabilities fully participate in, and reap the benefits of, quality pre-school care and education.

This capital funding being announced today is specifically for pre-school providers – both community/not-for-profit and private providers – who want to expand their services to cater for more children from September 2016. It's one of a number of measures I am taking to increase the number of free pre-school places that will be available across the country over the next year."

Applications for funding through the EYC2016 will be taken from eligible childcare providers in respect of a contribution towards the total project cost, or the full cost (up to a maximum of €10,000), for the following:

- Build / fit out / refurbishment of an additional room /extension;
- Minor building alterations; and
- Costs for additional play equipment (to a maximum of €5,000) to facilitate an increase in childcare places.

Any funding received must be spent in 2016.

Minister Reilly said

"As Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, it's been a key priority to put in place a plan to build the kind of quality, accessible and affordable childcare that is key to keeping the recovery going. We've started this work in Budget 2016, because affordable childcare is important to making work pay for parents, and investment in quality early years services is one of the best investments we can make in our children. We also know from international evidence that high quality early years care and

education delivers better outcomes for children, especially for those most disadvantaged, and in turn for society.

This capital scheme is just one of the childcare measures currently being introduced as a result of Budget 2016 to enable more children and families access high quality, free or subsidised early years care and education. I am in no doubt that this investment by government will pay great dividends for parents and children over the coming years.”

From September of this year, children will be able to access free pre-school from the time they turn three until they start in primary school. They will be able to enter pre-school at three entry points after they turn three, September, January and April. Numbers of children attending free pre-school are expected to increase from 67,000 in 2015 to 127,000 by April 2017.

Further information on the EYC2016 programme and information on how to make an application will be available on the Pobal Website at [www.pobal.ie](http://www.pobal.ie) shortly.

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