

IPPA is calling on the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs to:

- 1. Provide Paid Non-Contact or PPA Time (Planning, Preparation and Assessment) as part of the ECCE scheme (3 hours per staff member involved in ECCE scheme per week)***

Rationale

Staff members undertake a range of tasks outside of their direct work with children which are core to the provision of a quality service. To achieve the demands of the Pre-School Regulations, Aistear and Siolta pre-school staff require time to plan, prepare and assess learning. This work must be completed through a combination of individual and collaborative professional activity as part of the daily work.

In addition to contact time directly with the children staff in the service require time to:

Plan – develop curriculum and curriculum plans, identify and gather resources,

Liase with parents – listening to parents and feeding back / making notes for parents/ meeting with parents

Prepare the daily environment – maintaining equipment and materials, organising layout, ensuring supplies are available

Ensuring children's safety and health – check equipment, water temperature, review daily outdoor area

Complete records and observations (assessment of learning)

Managers in addition must:

Maintain financial information and systems and make returns

Maintain all records required under Pre-School Regulations

Ensure all Health, Safety and Fire procedures and checks are implemented and recorded

Manage and supervise staff

Prepare staff rotas and manage absences

Contact parents and hold meetings/information sessions

Liase with outside bodies (HSE, Pobal, OMCYA, CCCs, Partnerships)

Keep up to date with new developments and requirements

- 2. Change enrolment/registration timeframe for parents - Ensure that parents can enrol/register with ECCE services from 2nd quarter***

Rationale

Services need to enrol children/families now. If the timeframe remains as is, services will spend September following up on administration rather than supporting children effectively make the transition from home to pre-school.

Services are meeting and greeting new parents from April onwards. This is an ideal opportunity to register children in the scheme and to finalise paperwork.

Having access to application forms in a variety of language will assist parents and families to avail of the scheme.

3. *Introduce a higher rate of capitation for services where pre-school leaders have a FETAC Level 6 (€70)*

Rationale:

Recognise achievement at each level of qualifications (Level 5, 6, 7/8)

This will encourage practitioners to access Level 6 particularly as many have difficulty in accessing Level 7/8.

OMCYA 2007 Survey indicates that while over 50% of practitioners have FETAC Level 5 only 11% of have Level 6. IPPA believes increasing capitation linked to Level 6 attainment will have minimal cost implications and will provide a more stepped approach in professionalising the sector.

4. *Recognise the lack of clarity around children with additional needs to access and participate in the ECCE scheme*

Rationale:

Aim of IPPA members is to include children with additional needs in the service. This requires one-to-one support for the child to participate and gain from the pre-school experience. Children with additional needs are currently unable to take full advantage of the free pre-school due to long waiting list for consultants and lack of resources both physical and personnel.

Preschool is the first port of call outside the home that children's needs are recognised and supported. The environment in preschool is an ideal setting for inclusion and participation.

5. *Provide a dedicated Training Fund for the Sector*

Rationale:

The linking of qualifications with levels of capitation in the ECCE scheme has spurred further interest in training. Demand for accredited training at FETAC Levels 5 and 6 as well as part time Degree programmes at Levels 7 and 8 has increased significantly over the past year. At the same time traditional funding supports (FAS) are no longer available to the sector and training remains expensive to access. ECCE services have an ongoing challenge to support staff with time and finance to engage in training.

The provision of a 'Training & Professional Development Fund' is vital to supporting the upskilling and professionalisation of the sector. A fund of this type would support practitioners access training and support employers access replacement staff. Without such a fund the high cost of training will lie almost exclusively with practitioners, whose low wage base mitigate against investment in professional development.

LET'S TALK EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE & EDUCATION (ECCE) SCHEME

In advance of our conference "Rearing To Go" on Saturday 17th April, IPPA surveyed members around the country regarding the ECCE scheme, now that we have one full term completed, and the results are just in. We are presenting these findings along with our key recommendations regarding the ECCE scheme to the Minister for Children & Youth Affairs, Barry Andrews T.D. for discussion and development.

We will keep you informed.

LATEST SURVEY RESULTS APRIL 2010

To the question have you had transfer requests for next term:

85% of members said no

14% said yes

1% left blank

Are you charging a voluntary contribution?

73% said No

25% said Yes

2% left Blank

Do you have children with special needs who comply with ECCE requirements?

79% said No

21% said Yes

Does the ECCE capitation enable you to fund staff training?

90% said No

9% said Yes

1% left Blank