



An Roinn Leanaí
agus Gnóthaí Óige
Department of Children
and Youth Affairs

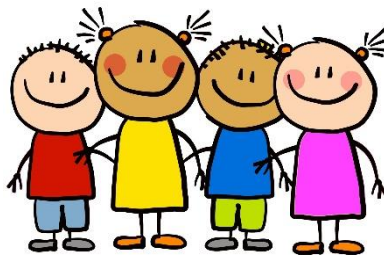


COVID-19 Capital Grant

Re-opening for Early Learning and Care and School
Age Childcare
Services

Application Guidelines

JUNE 2020



Closing date for applications is the 28th August 2020.

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Introduction

On 10 June 2020, the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs announced a major funding package to facilitate the reopening of early learning and care (ELC) and school-age childcare (SAC) services. In accordance with the Government Roadmap for Reopening Society and Business, and guided by the expert advice of the Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HSPC), ELC and SAC services can begin to resume from 29th June, 2020.

The purpose of the **COVID-19 Capital Grant** (€14.2m) is to contribute towards the capital costs associated with the reopening of Early Learning and Care (ELC) and School Age Childcare (SAC) Services because of the easing of some of the government restrictions imposed as a result of the pandemic.

The grant will enable ELC and SAC services to make modifications to their facilities and outdoor areas, purchase the necessary equipment **to ensure compliance** with the government's Public Health Advice and COVID-19 Infection Prevention and Control Guidance ([insert hyperlink](#)) for childcare and school age services.

The **amount of grant** which is paid to each Early Learning and Care and School Age Childcare Service **is based on the number of individual children registered** in a service on one or more **DCYA programmes** on the **12th March 2020**. The number of individual children registered will be taken from Early Years Portal and PIP systems hosted by Pobal.

DCYA Programmes for this grant are:

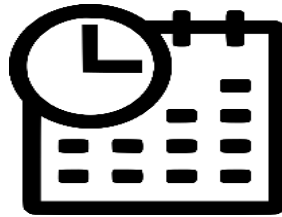
- National Childcare Scheme (NCS)
- Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)
- Community Childcare Subvention Programme Plus (CCSP)
- Community Childcare Subvention Resettlement (CSSR)
- Community Childcare Subvention Resettlement Transition (CSSR-T)
- Training and Employment Childcare (TEC)

The COVID-19 Capital Grant **is allocated** as follows:

Number of children registered on DCYA Programmes	Grant Allocation €
1-11	€1,000
12-40	€2,500

41-100	€4,500
101+	€6,000

Key Dates



ACTIVITY	IMPORTANT DATES	
Open for online applications	Monday, 22 nd June, 2020 @ 10am*	
Closing date for online applications	Friday, 28 th August, 2020 @ 5pm*	
Eligible Expenditure Dates	Between 13 th March 2020 and 16 th October 2020	
Payment Schedule	PAYMENT SCHEDULE	
	Applications approval date	Payment Date
	Wed. 24 th June 2020	Fri. 26 th June 2020
	Wed. 1 st July 2020	Fri. 10 th July, 2020
	Wed. 8 th July 2020	Fri. 17 th July, 2020
	Wed. 15 th July 2020	Fri. 24 th July, 2020
	Wed. 22 nd July 2020	Fri. 31 st July, 2020
	Wed. 29 th July 2020	Fri. 7 th August, 2020

	Wed. 5 th August 2020	Fri. 14 th August, 2020
	Wed. 12 th August 2020	Fri. 21 st August, 2020
	Wed. 19 th August 2020	Fri. 28 th August, 2020
	Wed. 26 th August 2020	Fri. 4 th September, 2020
	Fri. 28th August 2020	Fri. 11th September, 2020
Expenditure Report	No later than 30 th November 2020, if requested to submit by Pobal	

*Times are subject to change

PLEASE NOTE: If you contact Pobal with an ICT issue **within 48 hours of the closing date and time** Pobal cannot guarantee that your ICT issue will be resolved in time for you to submit your application.

Who is eligible to apply?

- Community and privately owned Early Learning and Care (ELC) and School Age Childcare (SAC) services in the Republic of Ireland.
- Services which offer both Early Learning and Care and School Age Childcare within their facility.



Applicants wishing to set-up a new childcare or school-age facility **are not eligible** to apply.

All applicants must:

- **Be registered with Tusla.**
- **Have a DCYA Reference Number** for the premises which is the subject of the application. **Please note:** Applicants cannot access the online application form without a DCYA reference number.

- **Confirm** that that their early learning and care and or school age childcare service was in **operation prior to the 12th March 2020** i.e. open and delivering childcare services.
- Confirm that they **will re-open** on or before the commencement of DCYA programme year 2020/2021. (Refer to pg. 3 Introduction for list of programmes)
- Confirm that the service **had a contract with DCYA** to provide Early Learning and Care Service and or School Age Childcare services on the **12th March, 2020**.

Note: The above declarations are included in the terms and conditions on the application form. If you are unable to confirm these statements your application is ineligible and you will not be able to submit your application form.

Complete and submit an online application form on Early Years Portal - HIVE by the 28th August, 2020 at 5pm.

NOTE: The application form is only available on the Early Years Portal (HIVE). **The application form is not available via the PIP system. Here is a guideline for registering on the new Early Years Portal.** [Link](#)

DCYA Programme Years

Depending on the nature of the childcare service and the contract with DCYA, services must be in a position to **re-open between the 29th June 2020 and early September, 2020** when it is expected that ECCE Programme and AIM will resume. It is expected that all services will be open in time for the 2020/2021 DCYA programme cycle.

Multiple service owners

I own more than one Early Learning and Care and or School Age Childcare facility. How many services am I eligible to apply for?

Multiple owners of childcare services may submit an application form for each facility i.e. complete and submit a separate application for each facility they own, provided that they have a valid DCYA reference number for each facility and each facility meets the eligibility requirements of the programme outlined in pg.5 above.



What must I do in advance of making my application?



Read the following guidelines. Undertake an assessment of your facilities/service and make a plan, including a list of the additional equipment or changes that that may be needed to ensure compliance with these guidelines.

- (a) [COVID-19 Return to Work Safety Protocol](#)
- (b) [COVID-19 Infection Prevention and Control Guidance for settings providing childcare during the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)

Please refer to the **list of indicative eligible items and services** outlined in this guidance document **before making your application**.

Eligible Costs



Only equipment and or modifications **necessary for re-opening in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic** and to comply with the following specific guidelines are eligible:

- **COVID-19 Infection Prevention and Control Guidance for settings providing childcare during the COVID-19 Pandemic**
- **COVID-19 Return to Work Safety Protocol**

The COVID-19 Capital Grant is available to assist ELC and or SAC services to **purchase items and services which are necessary to comply with the guidelines for re-opening childcare services**.

Applicants may be **required** at a later date to **demonstrate how the items or equipment or modifications** paid for with the grant **comply** with these guidelines.

Successful applicants of the COVID-19 Capital Grant may be **subject to an inspection** by DCYA or one of its agents, a Pobal Compliance Visit and or Pobal Audit Visit and or submission of financial return to Pobal.

Eligible cost dates

All eligible items i.e. equipment and or capital works **must be purchased and paid for between the 13th March 2020 and the 16th October 2020**. Any items or services purchased outside of these dates are not eligible under this grant.

Types of eligible costs

Below is a **list of examples** of the types of costs that are eligible under this grant. This is not an exhaustive list of eligible costs however the onus is on the applicant to demonstrate that the **capital or equipment purchased meets the primary objective of this grant** i.e. to re-open their ELC and SAC services in line with the guidelines for re-opening.

All items purchased **must have a potential lifespan of at least 12 months**.

Examples of Eligible Costs		
Category	Items	Additional Explanations
All items purchased must have a lifespan of at least 12 months		
Arrival Spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physically demarcated areas Signage Reception screens for staff 	Modifications and signage to allow for the safe dropping off and collection of children from the service and avoid close contact in doors and hallways between children and adults.
Transitional spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Canopies Perspex screens/roofing 	
Outdoor space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing shelter – potential natural shelter, temporary or permanent coverings 	Items to facilitate use of outdoor learning environment/space to

Examples of Eligible Costs

Category	Items	Additional Explanations
All items purchased must have a lifespan of at least 12 months		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of shade – sails/tents/pergolas/dens/planting-willow • External Handwashing/toileting facilities • Provision of storage for suitable clothing for playing outside in all weathers • Additional outdoor equipment (extra sand pit etc.) • Shed 	<p>comply with the social distancing and hygiene requirements.</p> <p>Containers and storage for toys to ensure that clean toys can be stored for different play pods and toys waiting for cleaning can be stored.</p> <p>Additional equipment and furniture for outdoor eating.</p>
Health and hygiene	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sanitiser stations • Washing machines/dishwashers • Sinks • Signage • Pedal bins • Paper towel dispensers 	<p>Wall mounted dispensers for soap, sanitisers; sterilisation equipment; taps; additional cleaning equipment, improving waste disposal areas and equipment;</p> <p>Additional toileting facilities-space and sanitary ware;</p> <p>Kitchen and laundry equipment including dishwasher and washing machine to ensure laundry can be washed and prepared in line with the guidelines.</p>

Examples of Eligible Costs

Category	Items	Additional Explanations
All items purchased must have a lifespan of at least 12 months		
Indoor space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partitions/room dividers (where it is practical to divide a room while adhering to other regulations such as fire safety) 	<p>Indoor modifications to room(s) to facilitate small groups of children in different “play pods”. Please note that there is no requirement for solid partitions from floor to ceiling, however they must comply with the COVID-19 Infection Prevention and Control Guidance for ELC and SAC services</p> <p>Chairs and tables. Furniture must be made of materials that can be easily sanitised.</p> <p>Containers and storage for toys to ensure that clean toys can be stored for different play pods and toys waiting for cleaning can be stored</p>
Equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appropriate ELC and SAC play and ancillary equipment Fire Safety Measures/Equipment 	<p>Additional play equipment and toys to reduce sharing of play equipment between groups of children.</p> <p>All toys purchased should be capable of being washed and sanitised.</p>

Examples of Eligible Costs		
Category	Items	Additional Explanations
All items purchased must have a lifespan of at least 12 months		
		<p>Modifications to a service lay out to accommodate COVID-19 measures may result in additional fire safety measures to include one or more of the following to ensure continued compliance with fire safety regulations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional escape routes and stairways • Additional escape routes signage • Additional alarms such as Smoke Alarms and CO2 Alarms • Additional Fire doors
Sleep/rest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indoors e.g. Additional cots, bedding, storage space for individual bedding. • Outdoors e.g. rest mats/hammocks 	<p>Containers and storage for sleep/rest equipment to ensure that can be stored properly for each child and those items waiting for cleaning can be stored.</p> <p>Blankets and bedding are personal to each child, they must not be shared and be machine washable.</p>

Are any costs ineligible?

The following costs are not eligible for funding. The applicant must clearly demonstrate that the capital items or equipment purchased are necessary for re-opening in line with public health guidelines and guidelines for re-opening ELC and SACs.

Ineligible costs

This is not an exhaustive list

- Cleaning supplies and consumables e.g. sanitiser, disinfectant etc.
- Soft toys (indoor and outdoor).
- Personal Protection Equipment.
- Televisions.
- ICT equipment including tablets, PCs, Software, printers.
- General maintenance and repairs where there are no modifications.
- General painting and decorating where there are no modifications

Can the grant be used as a part payment or contribution towards an eligible cost?

Part-funding is acceptable under this grant programme. If a service chooses to spend some of the grant on a more expensive piece of equipment or refurbishment and fund the balance through their own resources, this is allowed.

Can I change my mind on an item after I have submitted my application form?

There is some flexibility in relation to the items that can be purchased. If an applicant purchases something not indicated on their application form this is acceptable provided that the applicant can demonstrate that the items and or works are necessary to support compliance with Public Health Advice and COVID-19 Infection Prevention and Control Guidance for ELC and SAC services.

What happens if I do not spend all of the grant?

Any unspent grant after the 16th October, 2020 must be returned to Pobal by the applicant. Please contact Pobal to make arrangements for any refunds. Applicants may also be requested to refund any grant deemed ineligible as result of a compliance, audit or verification visit or as a result of a review of a financial return to Pobal.

What is the approval process for my grant application?

You will be approved for a payment once you have submitted your application form online and our checks indicate that you are tax compliant and that there are no significant issues with your current contracts with DCYA and or Pobal. The application form is also the grant agreement (contract) for this grant. You are not required to complete any further documentation.

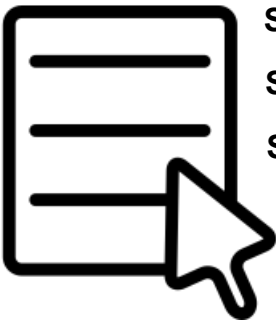
When will I receive my payment and how much will I receive?

You will receive 100% of the grant allocated to your service. You will receive your payment as per the payment schedule outlined on page 4 of this document i.e. Key Dates. The grant will be automatically paid into the bank account that you have setup on HIVE/Early Years Platform.

How do I apply?

This is an online application process. Application submitted by e-mail, post or hand-delivered to any of Pobal's offices or DCYA offices will not be accepted. Late applications will not be accepted.

To **access the online application form** follow these 5 easy steps:



Step 1: Go to Early Years Portal. Here is the [\(LINK\)](#)

Step 2: Login using your verified user e-mail and password for HIVE

Step 3: Select Service Facility/Provider

Step 4: Go to Programmes tab and "select" COVID-19 Capital Grant

Step 5: Complete application

Completing the online form

- Check the pre-filled information is correct for your service. If any of the information displayed here is incorrect, please CLICK ON the My Account drop down menu on the top left hand side of the page and select Service Provider. From here, you will be able to change any details that are incorrect and proceed with the application.

- Please note that if you are increasing your level of service as approved in your Tusla registration, for example from part time to fulltime provision you should contact Tusla to communicate this change.
- Select the capital and or equipment areas of expenditure you intend to purchase or have purchased from the options on the form. You can select all that are applicable.
- Accept the terms and conditions of funding
- The amount of your grant under the COVID-19 Capital Grant programme will be pre-filled for you. You will see this before you submit your application form.
- Submit your application

I do not have a verified username and password for Early Years Portal (HIVE). Can I still apply?

Yes you can apply for the COVID-19 Capital Grant. However you must commence or complete the on-boarding (registration) of your service on the Early Years Portal-HIVE. Select “Start On-Boarding Process” on the top left hand side of the Welcome page.

Please use this link: [HIVE](#). When you have completed the on-boarding process, you will have a user name and password which will allow you to access your application form for this grant.

If you are having technical issues with HIVE please check the Resources section on the HIVE Portal. Alternatively you can **contact** the **Early Years Provider Centre (EYPC)** from Monday to Friday from 8am to 6pm. **Telephone 01-511 7222.**

Requirements for the COVID-19 Capital Grant

All applicants must:

- Have a DYCA Reference Number and have completed your on-boarding on Early Years Platform (HIVE)
- Be Registered with Tusla
- Be Tax Compliant
- Must follow public procurement guidelines
- Retain all documents for inspection or submission
- Comply with GDPR
- Accept and adhere to the terms and condition of the this grant

On-boarding (registering) on the Early Years Platform (HIVE)

A service must register on the Early Years Platform and have successfully completed all the “on-boarding processes” **in order to access the application form** for COVID-19 Capital Grant.

To complete the on-boarding process a service must provide information about their service, including bank account details and contact details. The process also involves identifying a primary authorised user (PAU) who is authorised to access the EYP system, apply for funding and submit information on behalf of the service.

To complete the on-boarding process your service must also be registered with Tusla and evidence of this is required as part of this process.

Registering with Tusla

All Early Learning and Care (ELC) and School Age Childcare (SAC) services must register with Tusla.

It is a legal requirement for all ELC services proposing to operate from **the 30th June 2016** to make application under section 58 D (2) of The Child and Family Agency Act 2013, at least 3 months before it is intended to commence operation. (Except in the case of a Temporary early years’ service in which case at least 21 days’ notice must be given).



Registration of SAC services is a mandatory legal requirement for providers of school age provision from the **18th February 2019**.

- Existing Early Learning and Care Services (ELCs) and School Age Childcare Services (SACs) are required to be registered with Tusla in order to receive a grant agreement or grant payment on behalf of DCYA from Pobal.
- ELC and SAC services should seek advice and support from their City/County Childcare Committee in relation to the registration with Tusla and on the Pobal Early Years Platform.
- **ELC and SAC services must be registered with Tusla before they receive their COVID-19 Capital Grant payment.**

Public Procurement

- All applicants must comply with public procurement guidelines.

- Information on public procurement is available from the Office of Government Procurement www.etenders.gov.ie
- Evidence of compliance with public procurement guidelines may be requested or inspected at a later date. This documentation must be retained for a minimum of 3 years, as per the terms and conditions of this grant.

Do I need to submit quotations with my application?



No. Applicants are not required to attach quotations with their application.

Applicants must **retain quotations from an independent supplier for each item** that they intend to purchase with their grant

Small items of equipment which can be purchased from the one supplier, for example, small pieces of equipment, can be included on the one quotation.

Please ensure that you obtain and retain separate quotations for each cost.

Conflicts of Interest

You must ensure that there are no “conflicts of interest” in relation to the procurement of goods and services paid for by this grant.

A conflict of interest is any form of personal interest, which may impact (or be perceived by others as impacting) upon your impartiality when selecting a supplier/contractor for goods and services. **Personal interest includes cases where a relative or another person connected to your organisation tenders or quotes to provide goods or services to your organisation.**



In addition the Irish Charities Regulator has useful information in relation to [Managing Conflicts of Interest.](#)

Retention of Documents

Applicants must keep the following documents for a **minimum of 3 years**. These must be made available to for inspections and or to support an expenditure return for the grant.

- **Written evidence of your procurement process** e.g. e-mails to suppliers and quotations received in return. Make sure you have the requisite number of quotations as per public procurement guidelines and written evidence of contacting suppliers.
- All **invoices** and **receipts** from your suppliers for both goods and services must be kept.
- **Bank Statements** providing evidence of receipt of the grant and payment for goods and services
- **Accounting records** showing your income and expenditure in relation to the COVID-19 Capital Grant.



General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)



Early Learning and Care Services and School Age Childcare Services must ensure that they are fully aware and comply with their obligations and responsibilities in relation to processing personal data within their service(s).

Please refer to the Data Protection Commission for additional information in relation obligations in relation to GDPR. Here is a link to their website: [Data Protection Commission Guidance](#)

DCYA is the Data Controller for personal data processed for the COVID-19 Capital Grant 2020 for ELC and SAC Services. The DCYA privacy notice can be accessed at: <https://www.gov.ie/en/help/privacy-policy/>

Pobal, **as a Data Processor**, will process applications under the instructions of the DCYA.

We will process your information in the following ways:

- Contact details, primary authorised user and bank account information from the Pobal Early Years' Platform will be used to create the application forms and for the payment process for this grant.
- The information contained in your application form may be used for research purposes by the DCYA or Pobal in relation to the impact of COVID-19 on the early years' sector.

- As part of the administration and management of this grant DCYA or Pobal may share the information in this application form with other Departments, Statutory Bodies or their agents.

Terms and Condition of the COVID-19 Capital Grant

Below are the terms and conditions of the grant. **Please read these in advance of commencing the application process to ensure you fully understand them and you or your board are in a position to accept these terms and conditions.**

Note: Once an application form is submitted and approved for funding, the application form represents the contract between DCYA and the applicant for this grant.

Terms and Conditions

- **I/We confirm that I/We wish to apply for the COVID-19 Capital Grant for Early Learning and Care and School Age Childcare Services**
- **I/We confirm we were operating as an early learning and care and or school age service prior to the 12th March 2020.**
- **I/we confirm that we will re-open on or before the commencement of the DCYA programme year 2020/2021.**
- **I/we confirm that we were in contract with the Department of Children and Youth Affairs to provide Early Learning and Care and or School Age Childcare Programmes on the 12th March 2020.**
- **I/We have undertaken a full assessment of my/our facility to determine the measures to be put in place in line with the COVID-19 Return to Work Safety Protocol for the staff, parents and children attending the facility.**
- **I/We confirm that the modifications or adaptations costs included in this application (if applicable) are necessary to ensure compliance with the COVID-19 Infection Prevention and Control Guidance for settings providing childcare during the COVID-19 Pandemic as set out by DCYA.**
- **I/we confirm that I/we intend to use the grant to purchase items or services in accordance with the guidelines for this grant in compliance the COVID-19 Infection Prevention and Control Guidance for settings providing childcare during the COVID-19 Pandemic set out by DCYA.**
- **I/We confirm that the invoices that will be subsequently used to support this grant will be for eligible costs in line with the grant application guidelines.**

- I/we confirm that the invoices and receipts in relation to this grant have not and will not be used in support of another claim for reimbursement from another funder or grant from DCYA.
- I/we confirm that all items purchased will have a projected lifespan of 12 months or more.
- I/we confirm that I/we will follow the public procurement guidelines when purchasing the goods and services in respect of this grant.
- I/we agree to retain all receipts, invoices and evidence of compliance with procurement process for up to 3 years following payment of the grant.
- I/we confirm that I/we will continue to provide Early Learning and Care and or School Age Services for 12 months post receipt of this grant.
- I/we confirm that the grant payment is to be made to the bank account setup for the Early Learning and Care service on the Early Years Platform (EYP) system.
- I/we confirm that if for some reason the grant or part of the grant is unspent this will be refunded to Pobal.
- I/we accept that I/we may be asked to refund all or part of this grant where the expenditure has been deemed ineligible as part of a financial return, verification visit, audit or compliance check by Pobal, DCYA or other agent of DCYA.
- Any failure of technology or disruption to internet services affecting submission of the application will be at the applicant's risk and Pobal or DCYA accepts no liability whatsoever if the application fails to be submitted or is rejected as a late submission.
- I/we confirm that I/we understand that this funding is an emergency once-off funding provided by Pobal on behalf of DCYA, in response to the impact of COVID-19 on the childcare sector. By submitting the application, I/we declare that the information provided in relation to the Early Learning and Care Service and or School Age Childcare Service described in this application is true and complete to the best of my/our knowledge and belief.
- If this application is successful, this application form and these terms and conditions represent the contract (grant agreement) between, DCYA and or Pobal for this grant programme.

Useful Definitions

Early Learning and Care Services.

Note: Early Learning and Care services, Early Years Services and Pre-Schools are used interchangeably in various regulations, guidelines and policies. The definitions for services are taken from the Child and Family Act 2013. Under this Act, **an Early Years' Service** is a service providing a pre-school service, or a school age service. A pre-school service is any pre-school, play group, day nursery, crèche, day-care or other similar service which caters for pre-schoolchildren. The Act defines a pre-school child as a child who is under six years, and who is not yet going to a recognised school.

“Full day care service” means an early learning and care service or pre-school offering a structured day care service for pre-school children for **more than 5 hours per day** and which may include a sessional pre-school service for pre-school children not attending the full day care service;

“Sessional Pre-School Service” is an Early Learning and Care Service/Pre-School offering a planned programme to children for **not more than 3.5 hours per session**. A Sessional Service can cater for children aged 0-6 years.

“Premises”, in relation to a pre-school service, includes a building or part of a building, and any out-offices, yard, garden or land appurtenant thereto or usually enjoyed therewith in which the service is being or is proposed to be carried on;

“Pre-school service in a drop-in centre” means a pre-school service offering day care to pre-school children which is used exclusively on an intermittent basis;

A **‘school age service’** means any early years' service, play group, day nursery, crèche, day-care or other similar service which ;

- Caters for children **under the age of 15 years** enrolled in a school providing primary or post primary education.
- Provides a range of activities that are developmental, educational and recreational in manner, which take place outside of school hours, the primary purpose of which is to care for children where their parents are unavailable.
- The basis for access to which is made publicly known to the parents and guardians of the children.

Contact Details

If you require any further clarifications or information please contact the Early Years Provider Centre (EYPC).

Open Hours: 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday

Email: EYPC@pobal.ie