



**An Roinn Leanaí, Míchumais
agus Comhionannais**
Department of Children,
Disability and Equality

19 May 2025

Minister Foley announces €25 million in funding to deliver 1,500 additional early learning and childcare places

Minister for Children, Disability and Equality, Norma Foley has today announced €25 million in funding to deliver 1,500 additional early learning and childcare places.

The Building Blocks Extension Scheme will deliver additional capacity by supporting existing private and community early learning and childcare providers to extend their premises. It will also allow community services to purchase or construct new premises.

Grants of up to €500,000 are being provided for large-scale extensions for community and private early learning and childcare services.

Grants of up to €750,000 are being allocated to purchase or construct new premises for community early learning and childcare services.

In total, 49 community and privately operated services have been shortlisted for funding under the scheme.

Minister Foley said:

“I am very pleased to approve the shortlisting of these services under the Building Blocks Extension Scheme. These projects will deliver 1,500 quality, affordable places for children in areas where they are needed most, which is a key priority of the Government. It will be a huge boost for parents in these areas.”

“I absolutely recognise that we need to go further to support parents, educators, practitioners and providers across the early learning and childcare sector, with the

focus always on ensuring positive experiences for children. I will be developing an action plan to set out the important next steps that build on the very positive foundations we now have in place.”

The Building Blocks Extension Scheme funds additional places through four categories

- extensions to existing premises for private early learning and childcare services
- extensions to existing premises for community early learning and childcare services
- purchase of new premises for community early learning and childcare services
- construction of new premises for community early learning and childcare services

All early learning and childcare services were required to deliver net increases in full-time places for one to three-year-olds in order to qualify for Building Blocks funding.

To protect the State’s investment, early learning and childcare services getting Building Blocks funding will be required to continue to deliver the additional places and to remain as a Core Funding Partner Service operating within the conditions of that scheme for a period of up to 17 years after date of last payment of the grants.

In line with the State’s policy of universal accessibility for people with disabilities, early learning and childcare services getting Building Blocks funding are also required to incorporate Universal Design Guidelines for early learning and childcare services so premises can be used by children, parents and staff of all abilities.

All early learning and childcare services getting Building Blocks funding have provided a comprehensive construction plan that has outlined in detail all elements and stages of the proposed works. A team of architects at the Office of Public Works appraised the quality and readiness of the applications, and Pobal reviewed the evidence of need.

Minister Foley thanked the Office of Public Works and Pobal for assisting the Department of Children, Disability and Equality in the delivery of the Building Blocks scheme.

Minister Foley has contacted the successful services to advise them of the next steps. It is expected that the projects will commence in the coming months, with many of the additional places coming on stream to towards the end of the year.

The Building Blocks Extension Grant Scheme is part of the wider Building Blocks Capital Programme for Early Learning and Childcare under the National Development Plan. It is

the third capital scheme under the Building Blocks programme. It follows the Building Blocks Improvement Grant, delivered in 2023 and the Building Blocks Expansion Scheme, delivered in 2024

Minister Foley is currently considering the possibilities for future capital programmes, including potentially operating a Building Blocks type scheme next year to support the expansion of provision by existing providers, subject to budgetary provision. As soon as those details are finalised, there will be further communication with the sector.

Notes

Building Blocks Extension Grant Scheme

Strand 1: Extensions to private services

- private providers could apply for funding between €50,000 (min) and €250,000 (max) to extend existing premises
- match funding was required with a maximum contribution by the Department of €250,000 or 50% of total project costs, whichever was lower
- project values between €100,000 and €650,000 were eligible, with any additional project costs exceeding €500,000 to be funded by the service

Strand 2: Extensions to community services

- community providers could apply for funding between €100,000 (min) and €500,000 (max) to extend existing premises
- project values between €100,000 and €650,000 were eligible
- any additional project costs between €500,000 and €650,000 to be funded by the service

Strand 3: Purchase of building to supplement an existing premises or to replace a leased premises (community only)

- community providers could apply for funding between €300,000 (min) and €750,000 (max) to purchase and fit out an Early Learning Childcare facility or a premises that could be easily adapted for this purpose
- any additional project costs exceeding €750,000 to be funded by services, subject to a maximum project value of €1,500,000
- services could purchase a premises to supplement their existing premises or to replace a leased premises

Strand 4: Construction of a new premises (community only)

- community providers could apply for funding between €300,000 (min) and €750,000 (max) towards the cost of building a new premises or installation of a modular building
- any additional project costs exceeding €750,000 to be funded by services, subject to a maximum project value of €1,500,000
- services could construct a premises to supplement their existing premises or to replace a leased premises

As part of the application process, services were required to submit a Project Execution Plan, which sets out in detail the proposed work, along with the costings and timeframe for delivery of the project.

Applicants were required to deliver a certain minimum number of full-time places children aged 1-3 (pre-ECCE) in line with the value of the grant funding that they were seeking as set out below.

Grant value	Minimum number of full day places for 1-3 year-olds required to be delivered
€100,000 - €199,999	10 places
€200,000 - €299,999	15 places
€300,000-€399,999	20 places
€400,000-€499,999	25 places
€500,000-€599,999	30 places
€600,000-€750,000	35 places

Certain other conditions applied depending on the particular strand of funding applied for. In particular applicants to the Construction strand were required to own the land on which the new building was to be constructed, in order to effectively secure the State's interest in the property over the long term.

List of shortlisted services

Name of Service	Area	County	0-3 Places to be delivered	Strand	Indicative allocation
Community Extension Strand					
Donoughmore Family Resource Centre	Donoughmore	Cork	20	Community Extension	€437,303
Loughgraney Kids Corner	Feakle	Clare	10	Community Extension	€189,989
Obair Newmarket-on-Fergus CLG	Newmarket-on-Fergus	Clare	27	Community Extension	€500,000
Cois Ceim Crèche	Lisdoonvarna	Clare	28	Community Extension	€500,000
Ballymachugh Childcare Group	Kilnaleck	Cavan	27	Community Extension	€500,000
Shercock Child Resource Centre	Shercock	Cavan	34	Community Extension	€500,000
Ballyjamesduff Community Crèche	Ballyjamesduff	Cavan	30	Community Extension	€500,000
Creelough Community Childcare Services	Creelough	Donegal	44	Community Extension	€500,000
Newbridge Family Resource Centre	Newbridge	Kildare	30	Community Extension	€500,000
Bright Sparks	Allenwood	Kildare	36	Community Extension	€500,000
Oasis	Freshford	Kilkenny	41	Community Extension	€500,000
Urlingford Community Centre	Urlingford	Kilkenny	12	Community Extension	€226,187
Duagh Childcare	Listowel	Kerry	15	Community Extension	€335,000
The Hive	Summerhill	Meath	18	Community Extension	€289,564
Clones Community Childcare	Clones	Monaghan	20	Community Extension	€366,382
Cuain Bhríde	Four Mile House	Roscommon	36	Community Extension	€500,000
Nenagh Childcare Centre	Nenagh	Tipperary	27	Community Extension	€492,595
Happy Days Crèche	Ballyporeen	Tipperary	17	Community Extension	€117,360
Lios na nÓg	Passage East	Waterford	10	Community Extension	€198,200
Raheen Crèche	Raheen	Wexford	25	Community Extension	€500,000
Teach na nÓg	Carrig on Bannow	Wexford	10	Community Extension	€199,590

Riverside Early Childhood Centre	Limerick City	Limerick	61	Community Extension	€500,000
Glor na nÓg	Aghamore	Mayo	20	Community Extension	€245,000
Newbliss Childcare Services Ltd	Newbliss	Monaghan	22	Community Extension	€500,000
Private Extension					
Magic Years Beechlawn	Clonsilla	Dublin	18	Private Extension	€250,000
Acorn Crèche and Montessori	Naas	Kildare	34	Private Extension	€250,000
Naoinra Montessori Lusk	Lusk	Dublin	12	Private Extension	€84,375
Classes Afterschool	Cork City	Cork	25	Private Extension	€88,485
The Learning Tree	Kilmacrennan	Donegal	12	Private Extension	€195,414
Mary's House Ballapousta	Ballapousta	Louth	54	Private Extension	€250,000
Inis Óg Childcare	Inniskeane	Monaghan	15	Private Extension	€70,576
Community Construction					
Banteer Community Childcare Services CLG (BCCS)	Banteer	Cork	28	Community Construction	€750,000
Rainbow Childcare Crèche (Community Childcare Bantry)	Bantry	Cork	35	Community Construction	€750,000
Rathoe Community Childcare	Rathoe	Carlow	30	Community Construction	€599,954
Letterkenny Community Childcare CLG	Letterkenny	Donegal	54	Community Construction	€750,000
Cherry Orchard Community Childcare Services Ltd	Cherry Orchard	Dublin	40	Community Construction	€750,000
Little Voyagers Childcare	Tralee	Kerry	39	Community Construction	€750,000
Banogue Community Crèche CLG	Croom	Limerick	35	Community Construction	€750,000
Trim Community Childcare CLG	Trim	Meath	51	Community Construction	€750,000
Tubbercurry Family & Childcare Resource Centre	Tubbercurry	Sligo	33	Community Construction	€695,085
Boston Community Childcare Ltd	Tubber	Clare	20	Community Construction	€428,894

Knockatallon Community Childcare CLG	Knockatallon	Monaghan	45	Community Construction	€750,000
Ardaghey Community Childcare	Ardaghey	Monaghan	38	Community Construction	€750,000
Birchgrove Childcare	Mountrath	Laois	42	Community Construction	€309,475
Carrickroe Community Childcare	Carrickroe	Monaghan	41	Community Construction	€647,251
Community Purchasing					
Askea Community Services	Carlow Town	Carlow	36	Community Purchasing	€750,000
Eivers Lane Childcare	Mohill	Leitrim	44	Community Purchasing	€750,000
Spraoi agus Spoirt	Carndonagh	Donegal	55	Community Purchasing	€750,000
Krafty Kidz Ballyconnell	Ballyconnell	Cavan	40	Community Purchasing	€750,000
Total			1,496		