

Re Childcare Education and Training (CETS) Scheme

Dear Provider,

Thank you for participating in the CETS programme. Enclosed is your copy of the CETS contract. Please keep this safely.

This letter sets out how the CETS programme will work from September 2011. Please read it carefully and keep it for reference.

Allocation

Your initial allocation, if any, under the programme is as follows:

VEC full time places:

VEC part time places:

VEC afterschool places:

FAS full time places:

FAS part time places:

FAS afterschool:

These places are allocated to you for an initial 25 weeks and may be extended beyond that if the need arises.

In some cases, this initial allocation includes places from the previous year. These overlap places will only be paid until the end of the course that the parent is on. If you have an overlap place and have not been given an allocation, please contact your local City/County Childcare Committee (CCC).

You may request additional places later in the year as the need arises, through your CCC.

Important: Do not give a parent a CETS place in your service unless you have been allocated the place and you have written evidence that the parent is entitled to it. We will not be able to reimburse you in other circumstances.

Overview

The CETS programme is managed by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs on behalf of FAS and the VECs. FAS and the VECs, in conjunction with the Dept of Education and Skills, decide who is eligible and the main terms and conditions of the programme.

There are about 2,800 places in total available under the programme. These are divided between FAS and VEC parents, with full-time, part-time and afterschool places available.

The purpose of the programme is to benefit parents on eligible FÁS and VEC courses.

For September 2011, the operation of the programme is being revised. This has been done to make it more cost-effective and more accessible to parents. The payments system is being improved also and more services are taking part than before.

How it will work

Most of the places will be allocated throughout the year as the need arises.

A number of providers who were in the programme will get an initial allocation. All other providers who were accepted into the programme will get **no allocation to begin with, but can apply for individual places as eligible parents seek places in their facility.**

If a parent has contacted their CCC looking for a place and the CCC decides your service is suitable, the CCC will contact you to ask you to take a CETS child. You are entitled to refuse a place if you are unable to take the child.

Alternatively, a parent may decide to come to you looking for a CETS place.

1. Make sure you have a letter issued by FAS/the VEC from the parent confirming they are entitled to CETS. The letter should be issued by FAS or the VEC.
2. The letter must state all of the following: the name of the parent, the name of the eligible course, the start date and number of weeks of the course, and confirmation that they are eligible for free childcare with the CETS scheme for this course. (The Department may stop payment and seek repayment of monies paid out if it transpires that a provider does not have adequate proof that a parent is entitled to CETS.)
3. Keep a copy of the letter and contact your local County or City Childcare Committee (CCC) to apply for your CETS place.
4. When you apply, the CCC will need to know the following:
 - Your service reference number
 - The name of the parent
 - The name of the child
 - Whether the place is FAS or VEC
 - Whether it is full-time, part-time or afterschool
 - The duration of the course
5. If the parent has any question about whether they are entitled to CETS, remember that it is FAS and VEC who decide eligibility. It is up to the parent to ask their local FAS or VEC office.
6. Any questions that you, the provider, have about how the CETS programme works should go to the CCC.

Conditions of the programme

The conditions of the programme are set out in the contract. However, you should bear in mind a few points:

Services offering VEC places under CETS must be open from September 2011 to at least 6th July 2012.

Services offering FAS places under CETS must be open the whole year around (except for one week at Christmas).

Services will not be paid for one week from Christmas to New Year.

Contracts

All services which applied for the CETS and which met the criteria were sent contracts in Summer 2011, regardless of whether they have been allocated any initial places or not.

This will ensure that, if a service needs a FAS or VEC place later in the year, there will be no delay caused by the requirement to put contracts into place.

Parents

Meanwhile, FAS and VECs will have been sent a list of CETS services, and will be asked to advise qualified parents to contact their CCC for placement in childcare services. Parents who qualify for the programme will be provided with an initial letter from FAS or the VEC detailing their eligibility.

The CCCs will try, where possible, to match qualified parents with services that have unused places among their allocations. However, where this is not possible, they can identify services in contract which can provide suitable place(s), and submit these to the Department.

Approval

Under Government accounting rules, the Department must approve each place allocated by the CCC. The Dept will usually approve each request for a new place within one full working day and the CCC will then inform the parent or provider.

Payment

Your initial approval is for 25 weeks with a 1st instalment by the end of September of 15 weeks and a further payment by the end of January of 10 weeks. Places continuing from the previous year (overlap) will be paid until the end of the course.

As with the previous year, there will then be an occupancy review and after that, services will be paid on the basis of occupancy.

Additional places added to services will be paid for the duration that the places are occupied. As with last year, Pobal will be making the payments periodically.

The rates of payment for FAS and VEC services will be:

Full-time: €170 per week

Part time: €95 per week

Afterschool: €50 per week

Afterschool with pickup service: €95

In total, FAS places will be paid for a maximum of 51 weeks and VEC places will be paid for a maximum of 43 weeks.

Documents to sign

Parents will have two forms to complete.

The first is a CETS Parent Declaration form (including PPS number of parent and child), and hand it to the service provider, who will forward it to the Department (without making a copy). The second one is the weekly sign-in sheet.

Summary of role of CCCs in CETS for Sept 2011

- Allocating additional places from a float - being contacted by eligible parents & services, sending information to Dept and getting approval, informing parents & services of the success of their application
- Collecting the attendance sheets that services complete with the parents and sending out new ones

Summary of what the parent does

- The eligible parent gets a letter from FAS / the VEC giving their entitlement to CETS and contacts a provider and / or the CCC to get a suitable CETS place.
- Once they start a course, the parent will provide a letter to the service from FAS / VEC saying they have started the course.
- The parent fills in a CETS Parent Declaration form and sends it to the Department through the provider.
- The parent signs an attendance sheet every week.

Summary of what the provider does

- The provider applies to be in the CETS and signs their contracts and returns them.
- The provider might be included in the initial allocation or they may not; if not, they can look for a place for qualified parents as the need arises.
- The provider keeps copies of letters from the parent confirming their eligibility and participation in courses.
- The provider sends on the CETS Parent Declaration form to the Department.
- The provider gets the parent to sign the attendance sheet every week and sends it at the end of each term to the CCC.

Summary of what the Department does

- Sends the providers the draft contracts and co-signs the signed contracts, sends them back out to the provider
- Sends out the initial allocation to the CCCs
- Approves requests from the CCCs for additional places or swap existing places
- Checks the PPS information in the CETS Parent Declaration forms to make sure children aren't benefiting from several programmes at the same time
- Provides the payment information to Pobal so services can be paid
- Maintains responsibility for finance, audit, terms and conditions etc of programme, on behalf of FAS and VEC.

Mary McLoughlin
Principal Officer
Childcare Directorate

18th August 2011