

Minimum ECCE Enrolment Exemptions

In certain circumstances, a service may receive an exemption from the minimum number of ECCE children required per session. As per the ECCE Grant Funding Agreement:

The approved provider shall have a minimum daily enrolment of 8 children in pre-school room sessions who are eligible for the ECCE Programme. Subject to compliance with all other contractual requirements, exceptions will be considered by the Minister (through local County Childcare Committees) in the case of:

- a) Approved providers who have a daily enrolment of at least 8 children, but for good reason, only 3 or more are in the ECCE Programme and the remainder are between the ages of 2½ and 6 years;
- b) Smaller services which are considered appropriate settings for delivery of the pre-school programme, but for good reason, have a daily enrolment of not fewer than 5 ECCE eligible children in pre-school room sessions;
- c) A service that has an ECCE room that is full but has children eligible for ECCE in a room that is also delivering the ECCE pre-school programme to a daily enrolment of not fewer than 5 children between 2½ and 6 years – subject to the requirement that ECCE staff qualification criteria are met; and
- d) Tusla-registered childminders with a daily enrolment of 5 children between the ages of 2½ and 6 years.

In addition to the above, 2 further options have been added to the 2020/21 minimum numbers exemption application form in recognition of the fact that some services may experience reduced enrolments as a result of Covid-19.

E) A service has a minimum of 4 children in a childcare service, who are all eligible for the ECCE programme and is based in an area where no other ECCE provision is available to parents;

F) Where a service needs to adjust numbers due to Covid-19 Pod requirements.

Please note that the requirement of 8 ECCE children applies to each individual session in multi-session services.

Services must apply to their local County Childcare Committee for one of the exemptions listed above. Applications will be reviewed by County Childcare Committees before being forwarded to Pobal via: pipdocuments@pobal.ie

Approved applications will be uploaded to the CRM by the Pobal Data Management team.

Pobal Compliance will check for notification of approval of minimum ECCE enrolment exemptions during the course of a compliance visit prior to issuing of a minor non-compliance based on insufficient enrolment numbers.

Where a minimum numbers exemption application does not meet the qualifying criteria, the application can be placed on hold for a 1 month holding period to allow service providers the opportunity to work with their County Childcare Committee to increase enrolment numbers. A notification of non-compliance cannot be issued to a service provider during the duration of this 1 month holding period.