

FACT SHEET

FOR PARENTS / CARERS

WHAT IS THE NORTHERN IRELAND CHILDCARE SUBSIDY SCHEME?

The Northern Ireland Childcare Subsidy Scheme (NICSS) is a Department of Education initiative that provides a 15% subsidy on registered childcare costs for eligible working parents in Northern Ireland. The scheme aims to make childcare more affordable and accessible for eligible working parents.

Currently the scheme is available to families who:

- Are eligible for Tax Free Childcare (TFC);
- Have a child who has not yet started primary school; and
- Are using registered childcare.

From 1st September 2025, the scheme will be extended to include school age children up to age 11, allowing eligible working parents to receive the 15% subsidy (up to the capped amount of £184 per month per child) on qualifying costs. This may also include some before and after school activities provided by schools or on a school's premises by a registered childcare provider.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR ME?

To benefit from the NICSS, you must:

- Be a working parent; and
- Be registered for TFC with HMRC – a government scheme that contributes 20% towards childcare costs.

From 1 September 2025, the NICSS will apply to:

- All registered childcare providers; and
- Some before and after-school activities in schools, as long as your school is registered for TFC. It will also be for your school to advise which activities are eligible under TFC.

Eligible families will include:

- Children aged 11 and under attending nursery, primary, or special schools.

- Children with disabilities attending post-primary or special schools, up to age 16.

WHAT DO I NEED TO DO?

You need to ask your school and/or registered childcare provider if they are registered for TFC, as only registered and eligible providers can apply the Northern Ireland Childcare Subsidy Scheme.

Registration for eligible children will open week commencing 21st July. The registration process for school aged children is simple and will take around 10 minutes to complete.

You will not be able to enrol a school aged child on to the scheme until 21st July.

To register, you will need:

- Your Tax Free Childcare Number; and
- A copy of your quarterly reconfirmation notice/certificate from HMRC.

If you have more than one eligible child, you will need to complete the process separately for each child.

If you are not registered for TFC, but would like to learn more about the scheme, please click [HERE](#).

WHERE DO I REGISTER?

The Early Years - the organisation for young children, administers the scheme on behalf of the Department of Education.

For further details on the scheme and to access the registration portal go to the Early Years website: www.early-years.org/nicss/parents

NEED HELP?

If you need any assistance you can contact the Early Years Organisation:

Email: nicssparents@early-years.org

Tel: 028 9066 2825 (Option 3)