

Minimum ECCE Enrolment Exemptions

DCYA Procedures

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:

9. *The Registered 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 Grantor (through the CCCs) in the case of:*
- a) *Registered 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 Registered Providers 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; and*
 - c) *a service that has an ECCE room that is full but has children eligible for ECCE in a room that is an appropriate setting for the delivery of the pre-school programme but which has 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.*

Note: requirement of 8 ECCE eligible children applies to each session in multi-roomed services.

You must apply to your local CCC for one of the exemptions listed above. Your application will be processed by the DCYA.

Applying for an ECCE Minimum Enrolment Exemption

1. The service informs their local City/County Childcare Committee (CCC) that they require an exemption to the minimum numbers criteria as set out in the terms of the ECCE Contract.
 2. The service, with the guidance and approval of the CCC, completes the Minimum Numbers exemption application Form.
 3. The CCC applies to the DCYA on behalf of the service for the exemption through:
prog_applications@dcya.gov.ie
 4. The Completed Minimum Numbers exemption application Form must include the following details:
 - Service name
 - Service DCYA Reference Number
 - Service type (Community/Private)
 - Relevant option under which the exemption is sought (A/B/C)
 - The number of eligible children attending the session and dates of birth of each of those children
 - Local area need for childcare places, relevant staff qualifications and daily attendance options selected appropriately
 - CCC recommendation / comments
 5. The DCYA reviews the application and approves/denies request based on the following criteria:
 - There is a need for childcare places in the area
 - The service is a registered Child Minder
 - The routines and schedules are appropriate for ECCE child needs
 - Developmentally appropriate materials and resources are available for ECCE children
 - The service has had prior approval for an exemption to the ECCE minimum enrolment criteria and are being provided with a new DCYA reference Number, e.g. changing legal structure
- Note: the above list is not exhaustive and further information may influence the decision
6. DCYA, upon approval, informs the CCC that the application has been approved or DCYA informs the CCC where there is a refusal of the application
 7. The Pobal Compliance team will check for notification of approval of minimum ECCE enrolment exemptions on PIP prior to conducting compliance visits and prior to issuing of non-compliance based on insufficient ECCE enrolment numbers. Service providers should maintain a copy of the email approving the exemption on file for Pobal visits.