

PRESS RELEASE



**An Roinn Leanaí, Comhionannais,
Míchumais, Lánpháirtíochta agus Óige**
Department of Children, Equality,
Disability, Integration and Youth

Record numbers of families now benefitting from subsidised early learning and childcare



- **Over 105,000 children now benefitting from supports under the National Childcare Scheme**
- **The number of children now benefitting from supports under the National Childcare Scheme has increased by 95% since the same period in 2022**
- **Families welcome positive impact of recent changes to the National Childcare Scheme on their engagement in work or study and on family finances**

19 January 2023

Roderic O'Gorman, Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth today announced that more than 105,000 children are now benefitting from the National Childcare Scheme a 95% increase on the same period in 2022.

Since 2 January, the minimum hourly subsidy under the National Childcare Scheme all children under 15 is €1.40 – an increase of €0.90 per hour from last year.

For families using Tusla-registered early learning and childcare, this subsidy increase represents further cost reductions of up to €2,106 (or a reduction of up to €3,326 in total) off the annual cost of early learning and childcare for each child.

These changes to the National Childcare Scheme - backed by €121 million secured in Budget 2023 by Minister O’Gorman, bringing total funding for the Scheme to €358 million in 2023 – has given rise to an unprecedented growth in parental demand for support under the Scheme.

Parents with children attending Oasis Childcare Centre in Freshford, County Kilkenny and Waterville’s Little Stars in Dublin 15 talked about the impact of recent changes to the National Childcare Scheme on their engagement in work or study and on family finances, with children talking about what they liked most about attending these services.

Katie, whose child attends Oasis Childcare Centre in Freshford, County Kilkenny, says *'without the National Childcare Scheme, I would not have been able to go to work as the cost of childcare would cancel out my wages.....I would highly recommend national Childcare Scheme to all parents.'*

Cristina, whose son who attends Waterville’s Little Stars in Dublin 15 said *'Many parents, especially mothers, think that they have to choose between their careers and motherhood, since childcare costs are so high. Going back to work might look like a financially questionable decision. The National Childcare Scheme it affordable.'* The increase in the subsidy rate *'means more money that could go towards food, clothing and other household needs.'*

Rob, whose daughter attends Waterville’s Little Stars, noted *'the subsidy has helped a lot financially, with the rising general cost for everything: the reduction has been a big relief.'*

Children attending Oasis Childcare Centre in Freshford, County Kilkenny spoke about the favourite things they do there, including 'playing with dinosaurs', 'playing on the swing' and 'listening to stories'. When asked 'what do you learn every day?' they included 'songs and colours of the rainbow', 'putting on my coat, tidying up, washing my hands', 'numbers', 'baking' and 'hurling.'

Welcoming today’s announcement, the Minister said:

“This Government is delivering on its promise to make high-quality early learning and childcare more affordable for families and accessible to all children.

I welcome the news that there are now more than 105,000 children, and their families, benefitting from the National Childcare Scheme.

We have seen huge demand for the National Childcare Scheme since the increase in subsidies was announced as part of Budget 2023, as part of the Government’s €1 billion investment in early learning and childcare for 2023.

I encourage all eligible families to avail of the supports on offer through the National Childcare Scheme, by visiting www.ncs.gov.ie, calling the Parent Support Centre on 01 906 8530 or talking to their early learning and childcare provider”

The National Childcare Scheme many families who would otherwise struggle to meet the cost of early learning and childcare. Increasing female labour force participation has been identified by the ESRI as a crucial step in meeting targets to reduce child poverty, and potentially the policy intervention with the largest impact on groups at risk of poverty.

ENDS

Notes to Editor

The ESRI Report which references the importance of supporting female labour force participation is 'Headline Poverty Target Reduction in Ireland and the Role of Work and Social Welfare', June 2022
Suggested Photo Caption - Minister O’Gorman visiting Waterville’s Little Stars, Blanchardstown.

**Issued by the Press and Communications Office at the Department of Children, Equality,
Disability, Integration and Youth.**
Tel: +353-01- 539 3801
Email: media@equality.gov.ie

This press release has been sent to you because your name is included in a mailing list maintained by the Press & Communications Office of the Department Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth. If you do not wish to receive further press releases, please send a reply to this email with the word "unsubscribe" in the subject line. Written requests to unsubscribe may be sent to: The Press & Communications Office, Department of Children Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth. Block 1, Miesian Plaza, 50-58 Baggot Street Lower, Dublin 2. D02 XW