



Department of  
**Education**  
[www.education-ni.gov.uk](http://www.education-ni.gov.uk)



# Northern Ireland Childcare Support Scheme (NICSS)

administered by [Early Years – the organisation for young children](#) on behalf of the [Department of Education](#).

## REGISTRATION OPEN FOR SCHOOL AGED PROVISION

Dear Parent/Guardian

On 15<sup>th</sup> May 2025, the Minister for Education new funding for Early Learning and Childcare Initiatives, including an expansion of the **Northern Ireland Childcare Subsidy Scheme (NICSS)**, which helps make childcare more affordable for working families.

The scheme, launched in September 2024, currently provides a 15% subsidy on childcare costs for working parents of children below primary school age. From 1 September 2025, it will be extended to include:

- All children aged 11 and under attending nursery, primary or special schools; and
- Children with a disability in post-primary or special schools, up to the age of 16.

If you are registered for HMRC's Tax Free Childcare (TFC) scheme, you may be eligible to receive a 15% subsidy (up to £184 per child per month) on qualifying costs, including before and after-school activities.

To benefit for the Scheme, you must:

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

**You are receiving this correspondence because your provider has successfully registered to participate in the Northern Ireland Childcare Subsidy Scheme.**

## REGISTRATION

In order for you to benefit from the NICSS we require you to register your child. The process is simple and should take no more than 10 minutes to complete.

**STEP 1** – Click on the link below and set up an account on the Early Years Grants Portal

[Register Your Child](#)

**STEP 2** – Follow the instructions to complete the registration process.

Please have the following information ready before starting the registration process:

1. TFC registration number for your child. This number can be found on correspondence from HMRC and is typically a combination of (Initial letter of their first name) (First three letters of their second name) (number characters)

e.g. for Adam Smith this would be (A SMI #####)

2. Copy of the TFC quarterly confirmation letter/notice for your child. Please take a screen shot or screen grab of this communication from HMRC which clearly shows:

- i. name of your child,
- ii. the quarterly expiration date

You will be required to upload this document as part of the registration process. (If you are waiting on HMRC to approve your current eligibility and don't have a current approval document please use the most recent one for now.)

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

Your provider will only have access to the key data required to process your claim. This will include child's name, TFC number and date of birth. **All other information will remain confidential and be used for monitoring purposes only.**

**STEP 3** – Submit your application.

Providers will approve your child's eligibility following submission of your application. You will receive notification of the status once this has been completed. Successful applications will see the subsidy applied to their invoice commencing September 2025.

Details on the scheme including guidance to support your registration are available on the Early Years website: [www.early-years.org/nicss/parents](http://www.early-years.org/nicss/parents).

Regards

A handwritten signature in grey ink that reads "Pauline Walmsley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Pauline Walmsley,  
Chief Executive Officer, Early Years – the organisation for young children