

CETS Guidelines 2011/12

Overview

The CETS Programme is carried out by the Dept of Children on behalf of FAS and VEC. FAS and VEC decide who is eligible and the main terms and conditions of the scheme.

There are about 2,800 places in total available under the programme. These are divided between FAS and VEC, with full-time, part-time and afterschool places available.

This year, the programme is being revised. About 40% of the places will be allocated initially for Sept 2011 by the Dept, after consultation with the CCCs, D/Education & FAS. The opening allocation for CETS will be circulated shortly to the CCCs and they are asked to let the services with an allocation know.

The balance will be a float which will be divided among CCCs. These places will be allocated on a needs-basis.

Contracts

All services which apply for the CETS and which the CCCs consider suitable for the programme will be sent contracts in Summer 2011, regardless of whether they have been allocated any places or not. This will ensure that, if a service needs a FAS or VEC place later in the year, there will be no delay caused by putting contracts into place.

The handling of the contracts will be similar to the procedure for the ECCE contracts – the printers will send the draft contracts (2 copies) to the providers directly, they sign and send both copies to the CCC, the CCC check they are in order and then return them in bulk to the Dept and we do the final signings and send one copy back to the provider.

Parents

After that, once the CETS services are in contract, FAS and VECs will be sent the list of services, and will be asked to advise qualified parents to contact their CCC for placement in childcare services. Parents who qualify for the scheme will be provided with an initial letter detailing their eligibility from FAS or the VEC.

The CCCs will try, where possible, to match qualified parents with services that have unused places among their allocations. However, where this is not possible, they can identify services in contract which can provide suitable place(s), and submit these to the Dept along with the reason for approval (on a template still to be developed).

If parents or providers try to contact the Department directly for a CETS place, we will refer them back to the CCC so that the work will all flow through the CCC.

Approval

Under Government accounting rules, the Department must approve each additional place allocated by the CCC. Note that this is only necessary for additional CETS places – we do not have to be contacted if a parent takes up a place that is part of the initial allocation in September 2011.

The Dept will usually approve each request for a new place within one full working day (or decline), and the CCC will inform the parent and service that the application

for an additional place has been successful. It is likely that in most cases, the application will be successful.

Information to gather

When a CCC asks us to allocate an additional CETS place, we will need to know some key information, such as the reference number of the service, the type of place (FAS, VEC, full-time, part-time, afterschool), from what date the place is needed and for how many weeks. We will complete development of the template for sending this information by the summer.

Payment

Services included in the initial allocation will be paid for a maximum of 25 weeks for each allocated place at the outset. As with the previous year, there will then be an occupancy review and after that, services will be paid on the basis of revised figures for the remaining weeks.

Additional places added to services will be paid for the duration that the places are occupied. As with last year, Pobal will be making the payments periodically.

The rates of payment for FAS and VEC services will be:

Full-time: €170 per week

Part time: €95 per week

Afterschool: €50 per week

Afterschool with provision of a required pickup service: €95

In total, FAS places will be paid for a maximum of 51 weeks and VEC places will be paid for 43 weeks.

Documentation

Parents, when approaching services to book a place, will show them the letter detailing their eligibility under the scheme (to full day, half day mornings only etc).

When they commence in the place, they will furnish the service with an additional letter they get from FAS/VEC confirming they have commenced in the course.

Parents will, on starting to avail of the place, sign a CETS Parent Declaration form (including PPS number of parent and child), and hand it to the service provider, who will forward it to the Department (without making a copy).

Thereafter, parents will sign an attendance form each week confirming attendance at the course and the child's attendance at the service. The service will send these forms at the end of each term to their CCC. New attendance forms for each term will be sent out to services by the CCCs. The CCCs can keep these forms and use them to inform their occupancy survey. After that, the CCC should retain the completed forms until after the end of the CETS year (Aug 2012) and then send them to the Department.

Swapping VEC for FAS places and vice versa

Providers will be able to swap allocated FAS places for VEC places and the other way around. To do this, they contact their CCC who then get approval from the Department in same way as an additional place is approved. The same applies when a provider wants to swap full-time for part-time and afterschool places and vice versa.

Summary of role of CCCs in CETS for Sept 2011

- Sending out CETS application forms to services, collecting them, sending them to Dept with info in spreadsheets
- Identifying any applications they believe may be unsuitable for CETS (e.g. exclusively sessional services)
- Telling services their initial allocations
- Gathering draft CETS contracts, similar to ECCE contracts process
- Proposing the allocation of additional places from a float – being contacted by eligible parents & services, sending information to Dept and getting approval, informing parents & services of the success of their application
- Facilitating swaps of FAS/VEC places within a service, contacting Dept for approval, etc.
- Collecting the attendance sheets that services complete with parents and sending out new ones

Summary of what the parent does

- The eligible parent gets a letter for the FAS / VEC giving their entitlement to CETS and contacts a provider and / or the CCC to source a suitable CETS place.
- Once they start a course, the parent will provide a letter to the service from FAS / VEC saying they have started the course.
- The parent fills in a CETS Parent Declaration form and sends it to the Department through the provider.
- The parent signs an attendance sheet every week.

Summary of what the provider does

- The provider applies to be in the CETS and signs their contracts and returns them.
- The provider might be included in the initial allocation or they may not; if not, they can look for a place as the need arises.
- The provider keeps copies of letters from the parent confirming their eligibility and participation in courses.
- The provider sends on the CETS Parent Declaration form to the Department.
- The provider gets the parent to sign the attendance sheet every week and sends it at the end of each term to the CCC.

Summary of what the Department does

- Sends the providers the draft contracts and co-signs the signed contracts, sends them back out to the provider
- Sends out the initial allocation to the CCCs
- Approves requests from the CCCs for additional places or swap existing places
- Checks the PPS information in the CETS Parent Declaration forms to make sure children aren't benefiting from several programmes at the same time
- Provides the payment information to Pobal so services can be paid
- Maintains responsibility for finance, audit, terms and conditions etc of programme, on behalf of FAS and VEC