



An Roinn Leanáí
agus Gnóthaí Óige
Department of
Children and Youth Affairs



PROGRAMMES IMPLEMENTATION PLATFORM (PIP)

Optional Extras

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DCYA Childcare Funding Programmes Optional Extras Guide

The DCYA does not recommend charges for optional extras for children attending any of the DCYA Childcare Funding Programmes; in practise most participating service providers do not seek them. However, it is recognised that some services have genuinely additional optional activities and, in many cases, it may not be reasonable to prevent participating services from charging for these. For example, a trip to the zoo is not a key part of the curriculum, and therefore a reasonable charge may be made for such an outing. In all cases there must be an alternative set of programme-based activities for children who do not participate in the optional extra activity. It must be kept in mind that no child should ever feel excluded if they are not participating in an optional extra for whatever reason.

Charging extra for items which would be expected to be part of a pre-school service (e.g. arts and craft materials) is not permitted under the programme. Similarly, it is **not** permitted for services to make payment of 'optional' charges a criterion for admission to the service, or to combine a list of additional services into a single option on the fees list. Any extra services **must be individually optional**, and this requires if necessary an individualised charge for each optional extra.

Where an optional extra happens during class time, children not attending the optional activity **must** have a full content-based session and the required child to adult ratio must be maintained for children taking part in the optional extra as well as those not participating.

No additional activity should be held in such a way as would leave non-participating children feeling excluded (e.g. colouring, while other children in sight of them are baking), and if a service is unsure as to whether this would happen, the additional optional events should happen outside the normal times/days of the session.

If a family is no longer in a position to continue to fund an optional extra previously agreed to, they should be allowed withdraw from it. While notice may be required for such withdrawal, it must not exceed four weeks.

Potential optional extras (NB: Many of these will be provided by services free of charge)

Food over and above that which the service is required to offer children by the Pre-School Regulations for the type of place provided. Children must also have the option of bringing their own snack instead.

Swimming classes and other classes which involve instruction not normally part of a pre-school programme

Transport

School trips which incur a cost (e.g. admission fees)

Additional hours/weeks

‘Gymboree’ type events, where outside providers deliver an educational and/or entertainment based activity

Nappies / pull-ups (where applicable)

Class photo / yearbook

Merchandise such as T-shirts etc.

Aprons/smocks (option to wear one’s own must also be allowed)

Gardening (where there is an education component, e.g. a plant cared for by the child during the year)

Baking (where this is a regular part of the programme)

Pedagogical documentation e.g. memory books / learning stories showing the development of the child in chronological order as shown through photos and artwork

Cannot be an extra charge

Booking Fees (NB; a refundable booking deposit may be taken, but it must not exceed four weeks capitation, and must be refunded once the child is successfully registered on PIP.)

Arts & Crafts materials

Worksheets

School trips which incur no cost (e.g. walking to a nearby park)

Report cards

Graduation diploma

Insurance

Claims to have higher quality, or to have lower staff ratios than other participating services

Different curricula

Unspecified “flexibility” in drop-off and collection times

Dancing (as opposed to programme-based dance instruction)

School plays/concerts

Anything which is required for effective participation in the programme