

LINKS CHILDCARE POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Admission for Children with Additional Needs and/or Disabilities

Last Review Date: April 2023

Policy No. 3

Issue Date: January 2019

Policy Statement

Links Childcare welcomes all families and children into our service inclusive of gender, marital status, family status, age, disability, race, sexual orientation, membership of the Travelling community and religious belief. We recognise that some children will have additional needs that may require particular help, intervention and support. We are committed to working with parents/guardians, and any relevant professionals to share information, identify needs and help the child and their family to access the support they need. This policy should be read in conjunction with the Links Childcare Admissions Policy. This policy is available to all on www.linkschildcare.ie (<https://linkschildcare.ie/about-us/our-policies/>) or contact us at info@linkschildcare.ie.

Admission for External Children

1. Parents complete enrolment paperwork and submit relevant medical paperwork. It is imperative that parents disclose all relevant medical details at this stage of the process.
2. The paperwork submitted by parent will be sent to senior management for review.
3. Allocation of place:
 - Please refer to Admission Policy – allocation of places. “Places will be allocated on a “first come first served” basis, depending on availability for the type of care/place required at the time of enquiry”.
 - Each centre has a quota of allocated places for children with additional needs (at AIM Level 7) – one child per room. Where there is a child in receipt of Level 7 AIM support, frequently necessitating a reduced ratio in his/her room, Links Childcare cannot consider admitting to that same room, an external child with similar care needs.
 - The senior management team will assess the medical report, should the centre not be deemed suitable for the child the parent will be informed of this.
4. Should a place be available, parent must be aware that the child cannot commence care until necessary support is put in place in the form of a specially designated carer/reduced ratio under the AIMS scheme or equivalent.
5. Meeting with parent/guardian to advise on next steps
 - Follow AIM Application
 - Special Needs & Tuition Grant Application



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Admissions to Pre-School for Children who are already in Attendance

For children who are already in attendance at Links Childcare and where it becomes obvious that they require support for an additional need or disability, the following applies:

1. Crèche Management will have a meeting with the parents about their child's development and advise on the next steps. The parents will be asked to provide a medical assessment. Parents must engage with the management team with this process as failure to do so may result in care being withdrawn.
2. The paperwork submitted by parents will be sent to senior management for review.
3. When medical needs have been established and additional support is required for the child the senior management team will assess the child's place in the crèche. The following factors will be taken into consideration:
 - a. Each centre has a quota of allocated places for children with additional needs (1 child per room).
 - b. The senior management team will assess the medical report, should the centre not be deemed suitable for the child the parent will be informed as to why.
 - c. Care for the child may not be provided until suitable supports can be put in place. The parent may be asked to care for their child at home until suitable support is provided.
 - d. Should a request for an increase in care be submitted by a parent during this period, it will not be possible to provide such care until necessary support is secured.
4. The management team will advise the parent on the appropriate additional needs application processes.

Practical Considerations for Children with Additional Needs:

1. A child can commence care under AIM only when a suitable Educarer has been recruited and all necessary paperwork has been submitted and processed. Please note there may be a period of time where childcare cannot be provided between the allocation of support and the recruitment of the Educarer.
2. If the allocated Educarer is certified sick for 2 or more days, the child cannot attend until the allocated Educarer returns from leave or a substitute Educarer has been sourced.
3. In the case of the allocated Educarer's resignation, the parent will be given a minimum of one week's notice that the Educarer is terminating employment. If Links Childcare cannot recruit a suitable Educarer during the notice period, the child's care will be withdrawn until a suitable replacement has been recruited and all necessary paperwork is submitted and processed.

Please refer to Appendix 1 & 2



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Review

Management in consultation with staff monitors and reviews the effectiveness of this policy yearly or as required.

Review Dates:	January 2020	October 2020	July 2021	April 2023
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Appendix 1

The **Access and Inclusion Model (AIM)** is a model of supports designed to ensure that children with disabilities can access the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme. Its goal is to empower pre-school providers to deliver an inclusive pre-school experience, ensuring that every eligible child can meaningfully participate in the ECCE Programme and reap the benefits of quality early years care and education.

AIM is a child-centred model, involving seven levels of progressive support, moving from the universal to the targeted, based on the needs of the child and the pre-school service. For many children, the universal supports offered under the model will be sufficient. For others, one particular discrete support may be required to enable participation in the ECCE Programme, such as access to a piece of specialised equipment. For a small number, a suite of different services and supports may be necessary. In other words, the model is designed to be responsive to the needs of each individual child in the context of their pre-school setting. It offers tailored, practical supports based on need and does not require a formal diagnosis of disability.

What supports are provided under AIM?

AIM provides a suite of universal and targeted supports across 7 levels.

Universal Supports (Levels 1 – 3 of the Access and Inclusion Model)

Universal supports are designed to promote and support an inclusive culture within pre-school settings by means of a variety of educational and capacity-building initiatives.

Targeted Supports (Levels 4 – 7 of the Access and Inclusion Model)

The supports at levels 1 to 3, when appropriately developed, have been found internationally to be sufficient to support many children with disabilities. However, where a pre-school provider, in partnership with a parent or guardian, considers that some further additional support may be necessary to meet the needs of a particular child, they can apply for one or more of the following targeted supports:

- **Expert advice, mentoring and support** is available from a team of 60 specialists in early years care and education for children with disabilities. These experts, termed Early Years Specialists, are based in the Better Start National Early Years Quality Development Service.
- A scheme is available for the provision of **specialised equipment, appliances and grants towards minor building alterations** which are necessary to support a child's participation in the ECCE Programme.
- **Therapy services**, which are critical to a child's participation in the ECCE Programme, are available through AIM and will be provided by the HSE.
- Finally, where the above supports are not sufficient to meet the needs of a child, pre-school providers, in partnership with parents or guardians, can apply for **additional capitation** to fund extra support in the classroom or to enable the reduction of the staff to child ratio.

Extract Better Start AIM. Further information can be accessed on Tusla website.



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Appendix 2

The purpose of this Home Tuition Scheme is to provide a compensatory educational service for children who, for a number of reasons such as chronic illness, are unable to attend school. The scheme also provides a compensatory educational service for children with special educational needs seeking an educational placement. Provision is also made for early educational intervention for children with autism.

How to Apply

Please read Circular [0041/2018](#) - Home Tuition Grant Scheme 2018/2019 - Special Education Component, for information on this Scheme and details of eligibility criteria.

Application Forms

- [HTSEN1](#): Application for home tuition for children with special educational needs.
- [HTMED1](#): Application for home tuition for pupils with a significant medical condition.
- [HT_TUTOR](#): Application for change of Tutor or additional Tutors

Contact

- **Address:** Special Education Section, Department of Education & Skills, Cornamaddy, Athlone, County Westmeath. N37 X659
- **Email:** special_education@education.gov.ie
- **Phone:** (090) 648 4187