

Higher Capitation rules and Q&A 2017-2018 ECCE Year

This document supplements the rules for Higher Capitation within the ECCE programme, as set out in the **Rules for DCYA Childcare Funding Programmes**

1. Higher capitation

Higher Capitation is part of the ECCE programme, and is based on ECCE registrations.

The ECCE higher capitation rate is equivalent to an additional €10.50 per child per week. Higher capitation may be paid in respect of any ECCE room that meets the qualifying criteria (see below). It is possible for services with multiple ECCE rooms to be granted higher capitation for qualifying rooms and standard capitation for others. Higher capitation is paid in respect of the number of Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) children in the qualifying room.

1.1 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) higher capitation

Higher capitation is calculated on the basis of the number of Full-time Equivalent (FTE) children attending an ECCE room which is approved for higher capitation. Children on CETS, CCS and CCSP (and fee paying children) who attend the higher capitation room cannot be included in the FTE calculation, but must be included in the adult to child ratios.

1.2 Higher capitation eligibility

A childcare provider that has an ECCE room which meets the following requirements is eligible to apply for ECCE higher capitation:

- i. A Room Leader with a qualification recognised as meeting the minimum requirements for ECCE “Higher Cap” as set out on the published list of ‘Early Years Recognised Qualifications’ or a Letter of Eligibility from DCYA which indicates same;
- ii. The same Room Leader has a minimum of three years’ paid experience working in the childcare sector;
- iii. The regulatory adult to child ratio is met; and
- iv. A Room Assistant (if required for adult to child ratios), who holds a full and relevant qualification that meets the minimum regulatory standards.

In relation to (iv), it should be noted that higher capitation will not be granted for an ECCE room where the Room Assistant is working in the service through the ‘grandfathering’ provision, regardless of the qualification level of the Room Leader.

1.3 Higher capitation rate

Where a child is attending a part-time or full-time service that is in receipt of the higher capitation rate, the childcare provider must reduce the fees paid by the parent by the standard capitation rate.

1.4 Higher capitation and ECCE Ratios

The adult:child ratios for the ECCE programme must be strictly adhered to, and higher capitation cannot exceed 11 for a room leader, or 22 for a room leader / room assistant team.

Minimum numbers of required preschool leaders and assistants for ECCE Higher Capitation purposes:	
1 to 11 children per session	at least 1 H Cap eligible pre-school leader
12 to 22 children per session	at least 1 H Cap eligible pre-school leader and 1 H Cap eligible pre-school assistant

1.5 Higher capitation Room Leader – three years’ work experience.

As stated in 1.2 (i) and (ii), to be eligible for higher capitation, a room leader must have an appropriate qualification and three years’ paid experience working in the childcare sector. To clarify, this means:

- i. The year, in three years’ experience, refers to, at least, a full academic year or nine months of work within each calendar year.
- ii. The experience can be gained in sessional, part time or full time services.
- iii. The three years’ experience is cumulative, and so can be gained as any time; it does not have to be gained after the higher capitation eligible award is achieved.
- iv. Practice placements undertaken during education and training cannot be counted as part of the three years’ experience.

1.6 Applying for higher capitation

Higher capitation must be applied for by the service provider. Higher capitation does not roll over from one programme year to the next, and every service must apply for higher capitation for each programme year.

1.7 Higher capitation amendments

The information submitted in the higher capitation application form must reflect the actual arrangement and running of the ECCE room, in terms of child to adult ratios, the Room Leader or Room Leader / Room Assistant team working in the room, and the total numbers of ECCE and non-ECCE children in each room. DCYA must be notified of any changes to staffing and numbers of ECCE children in a room. Amendment forms are available on the DCYA website and must be used to reflect changes in staffing and / or FTE children in the room. Failure to keep DCYA informed of staffing changes and room FTE numbers will result in non-compliance in the event of an inspection.

1.8 Qualifications and higher capitation

A staff member who is eligible for Room Leader at the higher capitation rate should have a qualification which is on the published list or a letter of eligibility to practice from DCYA. This is evidenced by a copy of the graduating certificate or a copy of the letter of eligibility to practice. The higher capitation application form should not be submitted unless the service is clear that a staff member is eligible. Any queries around staff qualifications should be addressed through the Qualifications Assessment process offered by DCYA by the holder of that qualification.

1.9 Higher Capitation Compliance

For compliance purposes, any documentation relevant to higher capitation for the programme year should be available for inspection. This includes staff qualifications, a copy of the service’s higher capitation application form, any amendment forms submitted during the programme year, and any correspondence from DCYA confirming higher capitation and / or an adjustment to higher capitation. If the service provider has any unusual circumstances in the organisation of their setting which would impact their compliance with higher capitation, they should inform DCYA of this at the time of application.

1.10 Staff Absenteeism

Irregular patterns of non-attendance or short-term absences by the higher capitation room staff are allowable for reasonable causes (such as annual leave, sick leave, bereavement, force majeure). The service provider should keep records of such absences and the reason for non-attendance, for compliance purposes. Where a higher capitation room staff member will be absent for a period of more than four weeks, for whatever reason, the service must notify DCYA through the *Higher Capitation Staff Amendment Form*. The same conditions apply in cases of prolonged absence as apply in cases of a staff member leaving (see below).

2. FAQs for Higher Capitation through the ECCE Programme

2.1 How do I apply for Higher Capitation?

Higher capitation applications are currently dealt with by DCYA, and all applications should be made to DCYA. Application forms are available on the DCYA website and on the Pobal website.

- If the service provider was not in receipt of higher capitation before, they should include copies of all staff qualifications with the application form.
- If the service provider was in receipt of higher capitation for the 2016 / 2017 programme year, evidence of qualifications should be submitted for new staff members only.

2.2 How do I know whether a staff member has a qualification which is eligible for Higher Capitation?

The DCYA has published a list of approved Early Years Qualifications, which indicates approval for a range of qualifications. Eligibility can be checked from this list. Alternatively, the staff member may have availed of the DCYA qualifications assessment process, and have a Letter of Eligibility which will clearly state if a person holds a qualification deemed appropriate to work as a Room Leader at the higher capitation rate.

2.3 Do I have to submit evidence of the Room Leader's work experience?

The three years' experience should be established by the service provider through their usual recruitment process (C.V., references, etc.). On the application form, the service provider should indicate the total amount of work experience in years. In doing this, the service provider is undertaking that they have satisfied themselves as to the legitimacy of the work experience. Evidence of the Room Leader's work experience will not form part of the general compliance inspection but may be requested by DCYA if required.

2.4 What is the Higher Capitation CAP?

When the Higher Capitation Application is approved, the early years service is awarded a CAP. The CAP is calculated by the DCYA based on the number of FTE children in the qualifying room(s).

2.5 What is an FTE?

This is a pro rata calculation of numbers of children. For example, one FTE is equal to one child attending an ECCE session for 5 days per week; 0.8FTE is equal to a child attending an ECCE session for 4 days per week. PIP automatically calculates the FTE when actual registrations are submitted.

2.6 How does PIP calculate the Higher Capitation Payments?

PIP calculates the higher capitation payment on a weekly basis based on the actual registrations. If the number of FTE children goes over the CAP then PIP adjusts the payment. For example:

An Early Years Service submits a Higher Capitation Application and is approved a CAP of 11 FTE.

The Higher Capitation Payment is calculated as follows:

ECCE Week	ECCE Registrations	FTE	Higher Cap Rate	PIP Calculations
Week 1	9 children (all 5 days)	9	€10.50	€10.50 X 9FTE = €94.50
Week 2	11 children (all 5 days)	11	€10.50	€10.50 X 11FTE = €115.50
Week 3	13 children (all 5 days)	13	€10.50	€10.50 X 11FTE = €115.50 (Service is capped at 11 FTE)
Week 4	10 children (all 5 days)	10	€10.50	€10.50 X 10FTE = €105.00
Week 5	10 children (9 children for 5 days & 1 child for 4 days)	9.8	€10.50	€10.50 X 9.8FTE = €102.90
Total Payment Calculation				€533.40

2.7 Can I claim Higher Capitation for children not registered in ECCE?

ECCE higher capitation can only be claimed for ECCE-Registered children

2.8 How do I know what I'll be paid for Higher Capitation?

On the PIP Portal, under the special allocations tab, Early Years services will see a special allocation showing the higher capitation amount for each week of the ECCE year.

2.9 When do I get paid for Higher Capitation?

Payments of Higher Capitation will form part of the standard ECCE Payment Schedule which can be found on the PIP Portal.

2.10 I have more than one ECCE room. Some of my staff are approved for Higher Capitation. Can I have Higher Capitation for all rooms in my service?

ECCE higher capitation can only be claimed for ECCE-Registered children attending ECCE rooms led by a higher capitation approved Room Leader, or a higher capitation approved Room Leader / Room Assistant team. The higher capitation staff must be present for the entire session in the ECCE room for which the service is claiming higher capitation.

2.11 What happens to the higher capitation FTE figure if a child leaves a service?

Registering a child as a "leaver" on PIP does not necessarily update the higher capitation FTE figure. An amendment form must also be submitted to the DCYA; see below.

2.6 When do I need to submit a Room Amendment Form?

If you are operating only higher capitation sessions you will receive a higher capitation payment for all ECCE children registered - up to your approved higher capitation FTE cap. If the registered ECCE FTE is less than the FTE cap you will receive payment for the registered ECCE FTE. If you are operating only higher capitation sessions, registering a child as a "leaver" on PIP, or re-registering a child with a reduced or level of provision, will automatically reduce the higher capitation FTE for which you are receiving payment and an amendment form is not required.

However, if you are operating both higher and standard capitation sessions you will still receive a higher capitation payment for all ECCE children registered up to your approved FTE cap. If you are operating both higher and standard capitation sessions a room amendment form must be submitted if the ECCE FTE enrolled in the higher capitation session/s is less than the approved FTE cap. Likewise, if you are operating higher and standard capitation sessions registering a child as a "leaver" on PIP, or re-registering a child with a change of level of provision, does not automatically update the higher capitation FTE figure. An amendment form must also be submitted to the DCYA; see the FTE – Room Amendment Form

2.12 What should a provider in receipt of higher capitation do if their Level 7 room leader resigns?

If a staff member resigns, a *Higher Cap Staff Amendment* form must be completed and returned to the DCYA. This must indicate the leaving date of the staff member and the commencement date of the replacement staff member. If the replacement staff member is not eligible for Higher Capitation, the service will revert to Standard Capitation after four weeks. Non-compliance will result from:

- Failure to notify DCYA of a change in higher capitation room staff
- Failure to record correct leaving / starting dates of staff on the *Higher Cap Staff Amendment* form

2.13 I have a room leader who is eligible for higher capitation who does not work every day. Can I receive higher capitation for the days this staff member works?

No. Higher capitation payments cannot be broken up in this manner. Approved staff should be working in the higher capitation room every day under regular circumstances.

2.14 Can I have one Level 7 room leader for two inter-connecting ECCE rooms?

No. Higher capitation payments can be applied for on the basis of each ECCE room within your service. In this case, you would need to have a Level 7 room leader in each room to qualify for higher capitation.

