

Written Ministerial Statement

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Department of Education

NORTHERN IRELAND CHILDCARE SUBSIDY SCHEME (NICSS) ADMINISTRATIVE DATA PUBLICATION

Published at 12pm on Monday 17 August 2026

Mr Givan (The Minister of Education): I have today published Northern Ireland Childcare Subsidy Scheme (NICSS) administrative data. While the publication includes information from the launch of the scheme in September 2024, it also provides the first full financial year of administrative data on the operation and impact of the NICSS; the 12 months from April 2025 to March 2026.

The data shows that:

- 27,486 children from 20,210 households benefited from NICSS during 2025-26;
- £18.4 million in childcare subsidies was applied directly to childcare invoices, reducing the amount paid by eligible families; and
- when combined with Tax-Free Childcare, this generated an estimated £38.6 million in savings for working parents across Northern Ireland.

The publication also provides information on scheme expenditure, uptake of support, childcare costs and provider fees, helping to improve understanding of how NICSS is operating and the nature of childcare provision accessed through the scheme.

This is the first in a series of quarterly NICSS administrative data publications, helping to improve transparency and understanding of the scheme's operation and reach.

The full publication, including detailed tables and supporting information, is available on the Department of Education website, [Northern Ireland Childcare Subsidy Scheme \(NICSS\) Administrative Data | Department of Education](#)

The Executive's Programme for Government 2024-2027 made the delivery of more affordable, accessible, high-quality early Learning and childcare a priority. While much has been achieved, we know that childcare costs remain a major concern for many parents. The data for the full 2025-26 financial year demonstrates the ongoing value of the NICSS in helping to ease those financial pressures for thousands of families across Northern Ireland.

Paul Givan MLA

Minister of Education