



Mr. Pat Buckley T.D.
Leinster House
Kildare Street
Dublin 2

24th July 2025

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Dear Deputy Buckley,

I refer to the PQs below for answer on Tuesday 1 July 2025.

PQ 36035/25

To ask the Minister for Children; Disability and Equality the number of childcare providers that have closed; the childcare places that have been lost as a result of these closures in the constituency of east Cork in each of the years 2020 to 2025, respectively.; and if she will make a statement on the matter.

PQ 36034/25

To ask the Minister for Children; Disability and Equality the number of new childcare places that have been opened in the constituency of east Cork for the years 2020 to 2025 respectively.

Tusla, the independent statutory regulator for early years services, including pre-school, childminding and school age services, is responsible for maintaining the register of services under the Child Care Act 1991. Where an early years service ceases operation, the registered provider is required by law to advise Tusla of this and the service will then be removed from the public register. Tusla provides my Department with the verified figures on closures and new service openings a month in arrears. This allows time for verification. The most recent available figures are therefore up to the end of May 2025.

Tusla have responsibility for recording and publishing this information and for operational reasons they produce this by county only. As such, it must be noted that the following data refers to all of Cork – both county and city – and not just the east Cork constituency.

Data provided from Tusla on service registrations in Cork are detailed in the following table and shows the number of pre-school, school age and childminding services that opened from January 2020 to May 2025 as well as the number of services that ceased operation in Cork over the same time-period



Cork	New		Ceased	
	Pre-school	School age	Pre-school	School age
2020	9	56	23	2
2021	7	99	16	2
2022	5	45	13	9
2023	7	40	17	16
2024	11	44	9	10
2025 (<i>Jan-May Inc</i>)	0	6	1	3
TOTAL	39	290	79	42

Cork		
Childminder*	New	Ceased
2024	1	0
2025 (<i>Jan-May Inc</i>)	0	0
TOTAL	1	0

** It must be noted that the Childminding Services Regulations only became operative in September 2024. Childminders who were previously registered under the 2016 and 2018 regs are included in the Pre-School and School Age figures.*

In any year, it is normal for a number of services to open and close. In terms of closures, there is considerable diversity in the reasons given for closure by providers. While some services state they closed for financial reasons, many state they closed for other reasons (e.g. retirement of the owner/manager, property related, availability of staff, and reduction in child numbers). Information on reasons for closure is self-reported and is not verified by Tusla.

In relation to places, data provided by Pobal in the table below uses a snapshot date of 1 November for each year, except for data on new services in 2025 where Pobal has used an alternative snapshot from June 1st as the data is not yet available for Nov 1st 2025. On that basis, the table below shows the following:

- Number of childcare places created as a result of new services that have been opened in County Cork (*Cork City included*) for the years 2020 to 2025. *E.g. On November 1st 2024, 1,483 children attended services that opened the same year. On June 1st 2025 146 children attended services that opened in 2025.*



- Number of childcare places that have been lost due to service closures in County Cork for the years 2020 to 2025. These figures are based on services closed and the children in attendance on Nov 1st the previous year at these services. *E.g. On November 1st 2024, 215 children attended services that went on to close in 2025.*

Places in New Services	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025 (to date)
No. children attending on November 1 st of each year in services that newly opened that year	146	168	395	638	1,483	(as of June 1 st 2025) 146
Places in Closed Services	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025 (to date)
No. children attending on the previous November 1 st in services that closed each year	462	119	229	501	275	215

My Department has a range of supports in place to avert closures and to work with providers and stakeholders to avoid closures where possible. Through a case management process, City/County Childcare Committees and Pobal work together to assess and provide support to ELC and SAC services experiencing difficulties. This support focuses on operational as well as financial supports to assist services to manage their immediate difficulties and transition to a more sustainable model of delivery.

Yours sincerely

Norma Foley TD.
Minister for Children, Disability and Equality