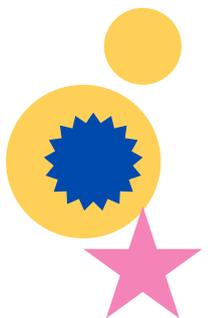


Parenting Maze



Welcome to the guide to the support services that are available for children from 0-12 years in Ireland.

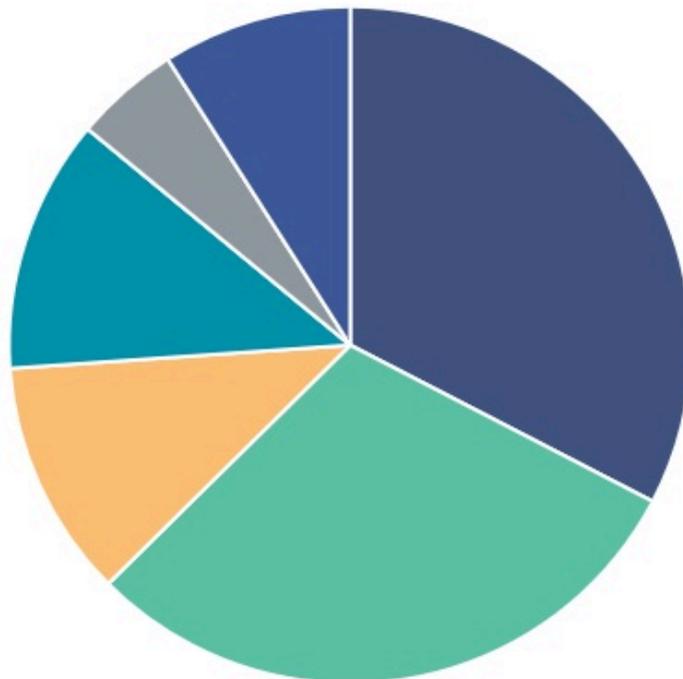
The booklet is aimed at the parents providing them with information about government and agency support.





There were 1,012,287 children under 15 years of age in Ireland in 2022. Around 1/3 of them attend childcare; 3% of the children in childcare have a long-lasting condition or difficulties to a great extent.

CSO
2023



CSO 2023

1 - 10 hrs per week	11 - 20 hrs per week	21 - 30 hrs per week	31 - 40 hrs per week
41 hrs or more per week	Hours in childcare not stated		

CHILD BENEFIT



Child benefit is the monthly payment for all children, and it is extended until 18 if the child attends full education.

The rates are:

- One child €140
- Twins €210 each
- Multiple births €280 each

please find attached form:

[42f7099b15a3431b9ef0a46e23948ae9.pdf](#)
(www.gov.ie).



Health Care Services



Maternity and Infant Care Scheme provides free maternity care, infant health checks, and vaccinations for children up to 6 years old:

https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/health/health-services/reproductive_health/maternity-and-infant-welfare-services/

Public Health Nurse Services offer support and advice on child health, development, and parenting to families in their local communities:

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/1/lho/louth/>

Family and children services in Louth are multidisciplinary teams that provide assessments and interventions for children with developmental concerns, including access to psychology and social work services:

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/1/lho/louth/children-and-family-services/>



Child protection and welfare



[Tusla - Child and Family Agency](#): Ireland's dedicated state agency responsible for child welfare and protection services, including family support, foster care, and child protection

[Childline](#): A confidential helpline for children and young people to talk about any concerns or issues they may have, including abuse, bullying, or mental health problems.

Organisations such as [Early Childhood Ireland](#) and [Barnardos](#) provide resources, training, and advocacy on issues relating to early childhood development and education.

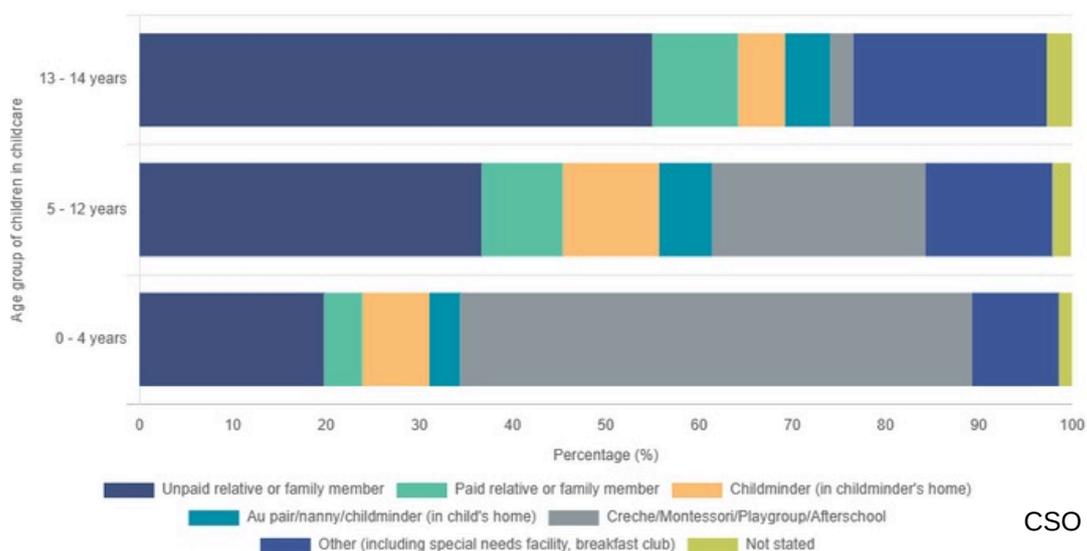
[Family Resource Centres](#): Community-based centres offering a range of supports and services for families, including parenting support, counselling, and playgroups.

[Early Childhood Development Initiatives](#): Local initiatives and projects aimed at promoting early childhood development and supporting families in [disadvantaged areas](#).



ECCE

- Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme: This government-funded program provides free early childhood care and education for children aged 2 years and 8 months to 5 years and 6 months: [gov - Early Childhood Care and Education Programme \(ECCE\) \(www.gov.ie\)](http://www.gov.ie)
- Childcare Subsidies: The National Childcare Scheme(NCS) offers financial support to eligible families to assist with the cost of childcare for children under the age of 15: [National Childcare Scheme \(NCS\) \(citizensinformation.ie\)](http://citizensinformation.ie)
- Community Childcare Subvention Plus (CCSP) Scheme: This scheme provides subsidised childcare places to parents in receipt of certain social welfare payments or participating in training, education, or employment schemes: <https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/education/pre-school-education-and-childcare/community-childcare-subvention-programme/>



Early Intervention Services

Various agencies provide early intervention services for children with developmental delays or disabilities, including speech therapy, occupational therapy, and physiotherapy.

Early childhood intervention services may include developmental assessments, individualised therapy sessions, parent education and training, and coordination of care with other service providers. National Council for Special Education (NCSE)

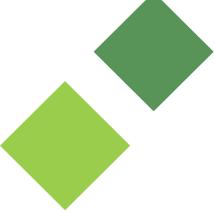
<https://ncse.ie/>

Early Intervention Teams comprise multidisciplinary professionals (speech therapists, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, psychologists, and educators) teams provide comprehensive assessments, individualised intervention plans, and ongoing support for children with developmental delays or disabilities and their families.

[Health Service Executive \(HSE\)](https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/childrensservices/)

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/childrensservices/>





More early intervention services



Speech and Language

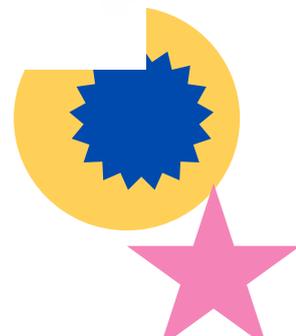
Speech therapy aims to assess and treat communication disorders, including difficulties with speech, language, voice, fluency, and swallowing. Therapists work with children to improve their communication skills, enhance their ability to express themselves and facilitate better social interactions.

Irish Association of Speech and Language Therapists (IASLT)

<https://www.iaslt.ie/>



Irish Deaf Society



Occupational therapy focuses on helping children to develop the skills they need to participate in everyday activities and improve their independence. Occupational therapists work with children to address sensory processing difficulties, fine motor skills, gross motor skills, self-care skills, and other functional abilities.

Association of Occupational Therapists of Ireland (AOTI)

<https://www.aoti.ie/>

Physiotherapy focuses on improving a child's physical abilities, mobility, and gross motor skills. Physiotherapists work with children to address issues such as muscle weakness, coordination difficulties, balance problems, and physical limitations caused by developmental delays or disabilities.

Irish Society of Chartered Physiotherapists
(ISCP)

<https://www.iscp.ie/>



Parent support



National Parenting Support Line is a helpline providing advice, information, and support to parents and caregivers on a range of parenting issues:

Parent line phone: 1890 927 277

Barnardos: <https://www.barnardos.ie/what-we-do/parenting-support>

Various organisations offer parenting courses and workshops covering topics such as child development, behaviour management, and positive parenting techniques.

Local Parenting Support Service

TUSLA

HSE.ie



Parent and Toddler Groups

Local community centres often host parent and toddler groups where parents can socialise, share experiences, and access support.



- Connect Family Resource Centre: <https://www.connectfamilyresourcecentre.com>
- St Kevin's Community Centre- Philipstown Louth: [St Kevin's Community Centre | Louth | Facebook](#)
- Blackrock Haggardstown Community Centre, Sandy Lane, Blackrock: [Blackrock Haggardstown Community Centre | Blackrock | Facebook](#)
- Culloville Community Centre: [Culloville community centre | Newry | Facebook](#)
- Muirhevna Mor Community Centre: 83 Sliabh Foy Park, Dundalk
- Mullaghbuoy, Riverstown, Dundalk: [Mullaghbuoy Community Centre | Dundalk | Facebook](#)
- Ardee Parish Hall: [Ardee Parish Centre | Ardee | Facebook](#)
- Redeemer Family Resource Centre: [Home \(redeemercentre.com\)](#)
- The Foy Centre Carlingford : [The Foy Centre Carlingford | Carlingford | Facebook](#)
- East Coast Family Resource Centre: [Crann Support Group - Crann Support Group](#)



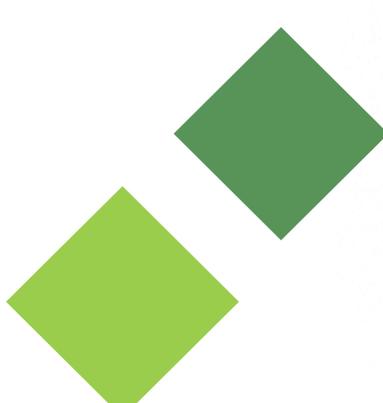
Family

Maternity benefit is financial assistance provided to eligible women during their maternity leave period, Provided they are covered by social insurance (PRSI). To receive this benefit, individuals should apply at least 6 weeks before their planned maternity leave commencement (or 12 weeks in the case of self-employment). Certain social welfare recipients may qualify for a half-rate maternity benefit.



The Paternity Leave and Benefit Act 2016 introduced a new Paternity Benefit together with statutory paternity leave of 2 weeks. The combined package of paternity leave and paternity benefit (€230per/week) can start at any time within the first 6 months following the birth or adoption of a child. The provisions apply to births or adoptions on or after 1 September 2016.

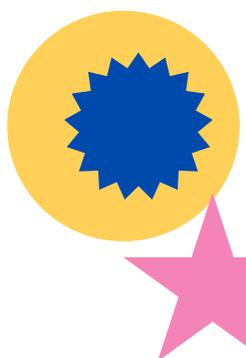
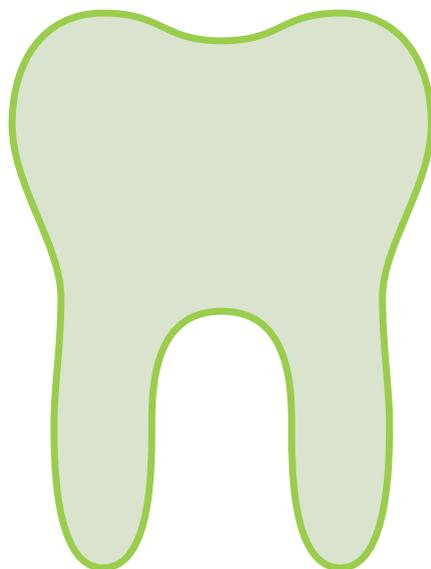


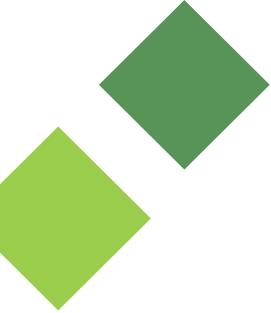


Medical card covers health expenses and limited dental intervention.

To qualify for a medical card your weekly income must be below a certain figure for your family size. Online registration opens in May for children with disability. The form could be found at:

[Medical cards - HSE.ie](https://www.hse.ie/eng/health/medcard/medcard.htm)





Back-to-School Clothing and Footwear Allowance means-tested

The allowance is paid for each eligible child aged 4-11 years of age €160

The allowance paid for each eligible child aged 12-22 in second-level education €285

[gov - Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance \(www.gov.ie\)](http://www.gov.ie)



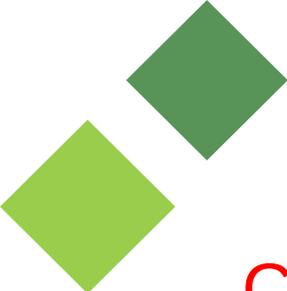
The scheme operates from July until the last week in October each year.

SPECIAL NEEDS

The domiciliary care allowance (DCA) is a monthly financial support provided to children under the age of 16 who have a severe disability, necessitating continuous and extensive care beyond what is typical for their age group. This allowance, set at €340 per month by the Department of social protection, is not subject to means testing.

[gov - Domiciliary Care Allowance \(www.gov.ie\)](http://www.gov.ie)





Carer's allowance is a payment made by the department of social protection for carers who are looking after someone who needs support because of age, physical or learning disability or illness, including mental illness. It is a means tested payment. If you qualify for a carer's allowance you may also qualify for free household benefits (if you are living with the person, you are caring for) and a free travel pass. Carer's allowance is not considered in the assessment for a medical card.



CARER'S BENEFIT AND DISABILITY ALLOWANCE

Carer's Benefit is a payment made to insured persons in Ireland who leave the workforce to care for a person(s) in need of full-time care and attention.(237 €/week)

[gov - Carer's Benefit \(www.gov.ie\)](http://www.gov.ie)

Disability Allowance is a weekly payment for a person who has an injury, disease or physical or mental disability that is expected to last for at least one year and is aged 16 to 65. It is means-tested

[gov - Disability Allowance \(www.gov.ie\)](http://www.gov.ie)

The Disabled Drivers and Disabled Passengers Scheme provides a range of tax reliefs linked to the purchase and use of specially constructed or adapted vehicles by drivers and passengers with a disability

Since January 2015, if you qualify for tax relief under the scheme you are also eligible for a fuel grant under the Disabled Drivers and Disabled Passengers Fuel Grant Regulations 2015

[Form for a fuel grant for a driver, passenger or family member with a disability \(revenue.ie\)](http://revenue.ie)





Primary Medical Certificate



This certificate issued by the HSE certifies that a person is severely disabled and permanently disabled for [Disabled Drivers and Disabled Passengers Regulations 1994.](#)

Disabled Person's Parking Permits or Cards (also known as European Parking Cards or Disabled Parking Badge) are available to people living in Ireland with certain disabilities and those who are registered blind, whether they are drivers or passengers.

[Disabled Person's Parking Card \(citizensinformation.ie\)](#)

A housing adaptation grant is available where changes need to be made to a home to make it suitable for a person with a physical, sensory or intellectual disability or mental health difficulty to live in.





People suffering from certain conditions, and are not medical card holders, can get free drugs, medicines and medical and surgical appliances for the treatment of the condition. These are provided under the [long-term illness scheme](#). This scheme is administered by the health service executive (HSE), under section 59 of the Health Act 1970.

[Form for Long Term Illness Scheme](#)

- Intellectual disability
- Mental illness (for people under 16 only)
- Diabetes insipidus
- Diabetes mellitus
- Haemophilia
- Cerebral palsy
- Phenylketonuria
- Epilepsy
- Cystic fibrosis
- Multiple sclerosis
- Spina bifida
- Muscular dystrophies
- Hydrocephalus
- Parkinsonism
- Acute leukaemia
- Conditions arising from use of Thalidomide



The drug payment scheme

The [Drugs Payment Scheme](#), sets a monthly cap of €80 (as of January 2013) for approved prescribed drugs, medicines, and specific appliances used by you and your family. This cap applies for those who don't have a medical card.





Incapacitated child tax credit

The [Incapacitated Child Tax Credit](#) is for the parents or guardians of a child who is permanently incapacitated, either physically or mentally. The Credit could be claimed for::

- A stepchild
- A formally or informally adopted child
- Any child of whom you have custody, who is maintained at your own expense and who is permanently incapacitated

The credit could be claimed for more than one child where more than one child is permanently incapacitated.

Where the child is maintained by one parent only, that parent is entitled to claim the full amount of the tax credit. However, where more than one person maintains the child, the tax credit is divided between them in proportion to the amount paid by each towards the maintenance of the child.



Health



- **School health services:** school nurses provide health screening, vaccinations, and health promotion initiatives in primary schools across Ireland.
- **Dental care:** The HSE dental service offers free dental examinations and treatments for children under 16 years old, including fluoride varnish applications and fissure sealants.
- **Vision and hearing screening:** regular vision and hearing screening programs are conducted in schools to identify and address any issues that may affect children's learning and development.





SCREENING AND ASSESSMENTS

Developmental screening can be referred by the parents/guardians or public health nurse, GP or other education professional. Forms are available online from HSE

- Referral forms-children
- Referral form CAMHS(mental health for children).

Assessment of Needs for children born after 1.06.2002 with HSE Assessment Of Need Officer will determine what equipment or actions are necessary to provide to help family/child. This can be done through the Children's Disability Network Team, CDNT.



HSE Scheme

HSE-free nappy scheme for children with disability over 3 years of age. They were applied through the public nurse office.

Drogheda, Boyne Centre, Patrick Street
Telephone: (041) 9809500

Dundalk, Dublin Road Health Centre
Telephone: (042) 933 2287





Phone numbers for disability services in Co. Louth

Local Health Office: (042) 938 1400

Area Manager, Louth (042) 933 2287

Lios na Griannia, Drumnacarra, Ravensdale, Dundalk
(042) 938 0660

The Villa, Market Street, Ardee, Co. Louth (041) 685
3728

The Coastguards, Point Road, Dundalk (042) 932 6151

Mounthamilton House, Carrick Road, Dundalk (042) 938
1400

Unit 20, Boyne Business Park, Drogheda (041) 9842423

Sruthan House, Ashbrook, Dundalk (042) 933 1407

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/1/lho/louth/disability-services/>



EDUCATION

- Primary Education: All children in Ireland have access to free primary education from ages 6 to 12. The primary school curriculum covers a wide range of subjects, including languages, mathematics, science, and social studies.

- Special Education Needs (SEN) Support: Children with special educational needs may receive additional support through resources such as learning support teachers, resource teachers, and special needs assistants.

- Homework Clubs: Some schools and community centres offer homework clubs where children can receive assistance with their schoolwork in a supportive environment.



Preschool education

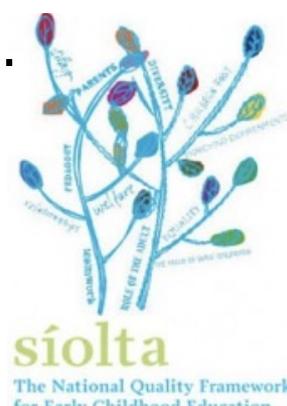
Curriculum

Aistear is the early childhood curriculum framework in Ireland for children up to six years old. It emphasizes the importance of early childhood in children's lifelong learning journeys. It outlines important types of learning for early childhood and offers practical ideas for nurturing this learning through play, interactions, assessment, and partnerships with parents.



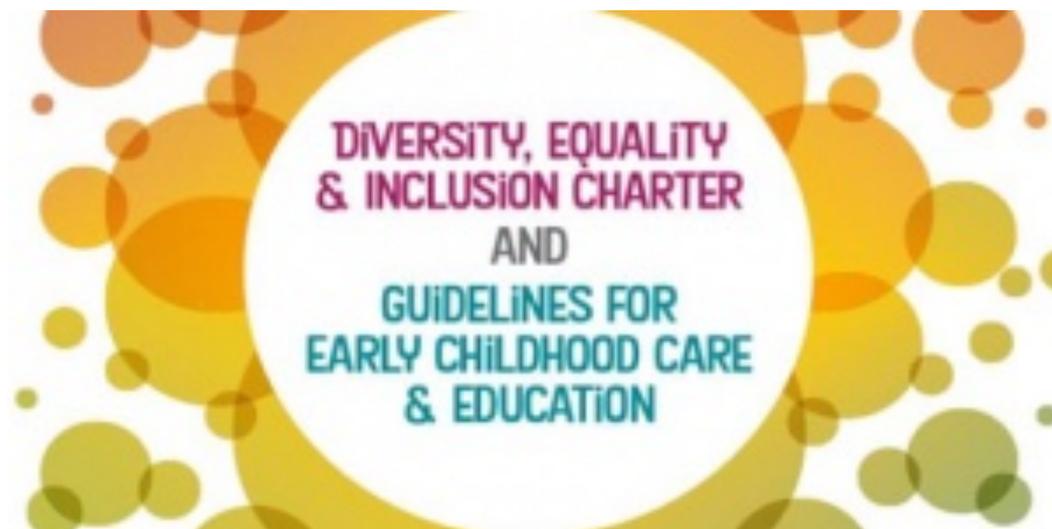
Quality standards

Síolta National Quality Framework is a set of standards for early childhood education in Ireland. It aims to enhance the quality of experiences for children from birth to six years old and was created in consultation with various stakeholders in the early years sector. The Early Years Education Policy Unit (EYEPU) was established in 2008 to monitor the implementation of quality standards.



Guideline

Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Charter and Guidelines for Early Childhood Care and Education are principles for early childhood education in respecting and nurturing each child's cultural identity and sense of belonging, recognising parents as primary educators, implementing an inclusive and reflective curriculum that promotes equal access and participation, celebrating diversity, challenging bias and discrimination, and ensuring the safety and well-being of all children.



Summer Programme

July provision is a scheme available to children with autistic spectrum disorders and severe to profound learning disabilities. The scheme operates in two ways, home-based provision and school-based provision. Applications are available through the school, for home-based provision parents are expected to find the SNA or teacher themselves.

[gov - Summer Programme 2024](http://www.gov.ie)

[.\(www.gov.ie\)](http://www.gov.ie)

[JulyProvision.com – Helping Connect Families with Teachers](http://JulyProvision.com)



Childline

Its well-known support line which now provides a 24-hour listening service through phone and webchat.

It's open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year – it never closes. It's free to contact and you can get in touch in two different ways: through our website childline.ie where you can have a live chat with us via the Live Chat button on the screen or by phone – 1800 66 66 66.



Transport



The Department of education and skills provides school transport services for children with special educational needs. Bus Eireann (the state public transport operator) operates the school transport service on behalf of the department. The school transport service may not be available in all areas. Where the transport cannot be provided, you may be eligible for a special transport grant to help with the cost of making private transport arrangements.

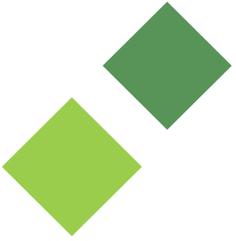


Eligible children are exempt from school transport charges.



A special transport grant towards the cost of private transport arrangements may be provided at the discretion of the department in certain situations.





School Support

- **School Counselling Services:** Many schools have access to guidance counsellors or psychologists who provide support to children experiencing emotional or behavioural difficulties.
- **Parental Support Programs:** Some agencies offer programs and workshops to support parents in promoting positive mental health and well-being in their children.
- **School Meals Program:** Some schools provide free or subsidized meals to children from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- **Parenting Support Groups:** Parenting support groups provide a forum for parents to share experiences, seek advice, and access information on parenting skills and strategies.
 - **Exemption** from studying the Irish language is available to certain pupils with disabilities at primary and secondary levels.



Some more to explore



Working to deliver a better special education service



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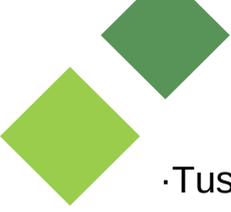
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