



## Palna Scheme under Mission Shakti

### *A Journey of Women Empowerment and Child Care*

Ministry of Women and Child Development

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#### Introduction

Government's sustained initiatives on **education, skilling and employment** of women have resulted in increased opportunities for their employment, and more and more women are now in gainful employment, working within or outside their homes. Past few decades have shown a **rapid increase in nuclear families**. Thus, the children of such working women, who were earlier getting support from joint families while they were at work, are now in need of **day care services** which have to provide **quality care and protection** for the children. Lack of proper day-care services is, often, a deterrent for women to go out and work. To address these difficulties faced by the working mothers in giving due child care and protection to their children, **day-care crèche facilities** are being provided through **Palna Scheme**. Crèche services formalise the child care responsibilities hitherto considered as part of domestic work. **Formalization of care work** supports the "decent work campaign" to achieve the **Sustainable Development Goal 8 – Decent work and economic growth**. This will also enable more mothers, who will be free from unpaid child-care responsibilities, to take up gainful employment.



In **2022**, erstwhile **National Creche Scheme** was reorganized and renamed as **Palna Scheme** under the sub scheme 'Samarthya' of 'Mission Shakti'. **Palna** is a **Centrally Sponsored Scheme** ensuring the participation of State/ UT government to ensure better day-to-day monitoring and proper implementation of scheme, and is implemented with a funding ratio of **60:40** between Centre and State Governments and UTs with legislature except **North East & Special Category States** where ratio is **90:10**. For UTs without legislature, **100% funding** is provided by the central government.

Region	Centre's Share	State/UT Share
General States	60%	40%
North-Eastern and Special Category States	90%	10%
UTs with Legislature	60%	40%
UTs without Legislature	100%	0%

## Objectives of the Palna Scheme

The **objective** of the Palna scheme is to provide **quality crèche facility** in **safe and secure environment** for children (from ages 6 months – 6 years), **nutritional support, health and cognitive development** of children, **growth monitoring & immunization**. Crèche facilities under Palna are provided to all mothers, irrespective of their employment status.

Apart from the aforementioned primary objective, another objective of the component would involve **monitoring compliance** of the stipulations laid down in **Section 11A** of the **Maternity Benefit Act** regarding setting up of crèche facilities by the establishments. For this purpose, the States/UTs would explore the possibility of hosting an application/portal in convergence with the **Labour & Employment Departments** of their respective States/UTs for facilitating establishments to register on the portal and furnish details in respect of the crèches set up in accordance with the Act.



## Integrated Package of Services under Palna

The Palna component under the Mission Shakti scheme aims to deliver a comprehensive set of services to children aged 6 months to 6 years. These services are designed to support early childhood care, development, and nutrition in convergence with **Mission Poshan 2.0**.

### Key services include:

- **Day care facilities**, including **sleeping arrangements**
- **Early stimulation** activities for children below 3 years
- **Pre-school education** for children aged 3 to 6 years
- **Supplementary nutrition**, sourced locally
- **Growth monitoring, health check-ups, and immunization** support

The infographic is titled "Key Services under Palna Scheme" and is presented in a pink and white color scheme. It lists five key services, each accompanied by a small icon of a child. The services are: 1. Sleeping facility (with a baby in a bed icon), 2. Early stimulation for children below 3 years of age (with a baby playing with blocks icon), 3. Pre-school education for children between the ages of 3 to 6 year (with a baby sitting at a table icon), 4. Supplementary nutrition (to be locally sourced) (with a baby eating from a bowl icon), and 5. Growth Monitoring, health check ups and immunization in convergence with POSHAN 2.0 (with a baby being held icon). The infographic also features the logo of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, and the Poshan 2.0 logo.

As part of enhancing access to childcare facilities, the **Ministry of Labour & Employment** has amended the **Maternity Benefit Act** to mandate all establishments with **50 or more employees** to provide a **crèche facility**.

## Anganwadi cum Crèche (AWCC)

There are **two types of Crèches** under Palna: **Standalone Crèches** and **Anganwadi-cum-Crèches (AWCCs)**. As per Mission Shakti guidelines, for Standalone Creches, there is a provision of **one Creche Worker** and **one Creche Helper**. Similarly, for AWCCs, **in addition** to the already existing **Anganwadi Worker** and **Anganwadi Helper**, a provision for a **Creche Helper** and a **Creche Worker** has been made in Mission Shakti

Guidelines. Anganwadi centres are the **world's largest childcare institutions** dedicated to providing essential care and support to children ensuring delivery of care facilities till the last mile. Anganwadi cum Crèche initiative aims to **increase 'women work force participation'** in the economy. The **Ministry of Women and Child Development** is targeting to establish 17,000 new Anganwadi cum creches under the Palna Scheme in 2024-25. As of **March 2025, 11,395 AWCCs** across **34 States/UTs** have been approved, as per proposals received from various States and UTs.



**Crèche Workers** under supervision of **Anganwadi worker** do proper care and safety of children attending the Creche:

- **Provide proper arrangements for sleep** and rest of children.
- **Ensure personal hygiene** and Creche helper keep personal hygiene of every child and keep washrooms clean, help for toilet training.
- **Inculcate proper toilet habits** and toilet training.
- **Facilitate regular health check-ups** and referrals in liaison with Asha/AWWs/Primary Health Centre (PHC)/AWC.
- **Ensure that the food is hygienically and age appropriately cooked**, stored/preserved and fed to the children at appropriate intervals.
- **Follow all laid out safety procedures** for taking/handing over the child and w.r.t. quality of toys and other materials given to the children.

The Anganwadi Cum creche scheme shall be implemented with the intra-ministerial convergence specially with **Integrated Child Development Services** and **Poshan**. It complies with legislations under **Labour Laws** as well as **Maternity Benefits Act**. As of **February 2025, 1,761 AWCCs** are operational with **28,783** current beneficiaries. Besides this, **1,284 Standalone Creches** are also operational across the country with **23,368** current beneficiaries.



### Creche Operation under Palna Scheme

The Mission Shakti Guidelines state that the **crèche timings** need to be **flexible** depending on the local requirements. Crèches shall be open for **26 days in a month** and for **seven and half (7.5) hours per day** as per the work schedule of majority of the mothers in the area. The **Standard Operating Procedures** for AWCCs also state that the Creche timings may be decided by **State/ UT governments as per local need**, however, it has to be ensured that timing should facilitate working mothers.



The Creche Workers and Creche Helpers under Palna are **honorary workers**. There is **no provision of salary**



**or wages** to the Creche Workers or Creche Helpers. However, the scheme guidelines have provision for grant of honorarium to Creche Workers and Creche Helpers. The **amount** of honorarium is governed through the **type of Creche**, and is detailed as below:

Type of Creche	Creche Worker	Creche Helper
Standalone Creche	Rs. 6,500	Rs. 3,250
AWCC	Rs. 5,500	Rs. 3,000

Palna as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme is implemented through the respective State/ UT Government. The respective States/ UTs **may provide additional amount of honorarium** to Creche Worker/ Helpers, as a Top-Up from their own funds. There is **no bar or restriction** from the Central Government about this.

The **funds allocated** and **released** under Palna scheme since its introduction, are detailed as under:

*(Amount in Crores)*

Financial Year	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Amount Allocated	35	85	150.11
Amount Released	4.68	64.15	43.66*

*\*Data as on December 19, 2024*

To maintain quality care and individualized attention, each crèche is ideally limited to a **maximum of 25 children**. To ensure ease of access and continued breastfeeding for infants, crèches must be situated close to either the:

- **Residential areas** of the children
- **Workplaces** of the mothers (preferably within **0.5–1 km walking distance**)

This proximity supports parental engagement and provides convenience in emergencies or regular pick-up and drop-off.



## Conclusion

By providing a safe, nurturing, and developmentally appropriate environment for children aged 6 months to 6 years, the Palna scheme ensures that children receive holistic care, nutrition, education, and health services. With convergence across key ministries and flexibility to adapt to local needs, Palna strengthens the foundation for a healthier, more inclusive, and gender-sensitive society.

## References

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