

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR CHILDREN AND EDUCATION
BY DEPUTY C.D. CURTIS OF ST. HELIER CENTRAL
QUESTION SUBMITTED ON MONDAY 18TH JULY 2022
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON MONDAY 25TH JULY 2022**

Question

“Will the Minister explain what plans, if any, she has to extend funded nursery provision to include two-year old children?”

Answer

The Early Years Policy Development Board (EYPDB) report and subsequent recommendations that were accepted by the previous Council of Ministers included the creation of Government funded, targeted support for children aged 2-3 years.

The intention is to deliver this ambition through offering part-time hours of nursery care and education for 52 weeks of the year. We would be looking to offer this initially to those children identified at their 2-year child development check with Health Visitors, where the indicators were showing a risk of delay or vulnerability and where the support of early childhood education and care would have a significant positive impact on their cognitive, social, and linguistic development. We are currently in the process of writing a business case for this.

We know that closing the gap for those children at risk of under achievement is crucial at the earliest opportunity in order for children to have the best possible chance to thrive at school.

Funded nursery provision for 2-3 year old children is already extending to provide an additional 20 places for families, through covid recovery funding. These families access the Best Start Partnership ‘Nursery Plus Scheme’ which is delivered with the support of the Jersey Child Care Trust (JCCT) and private nursery providers. The ‘Nursery Plus Scheme’ also provides support to other families from charitable funding. It is our vision to deliver this targeted support through the Government's commitment to investing in early childhood education and care for younger children.

In the longer term, our ambition is for every family to be able to access affordable or funded, high-quality early childhood education for their children from two years of age. This would require sufficient resources in the early Years sector and funding where appropriate. We intend to lay the groundwork for this during this term of office, in partnership with the childcare sector, families and experts, with the aim of giving all our children what they need to thrive.