

Dear Deputy Doublet and the Education Scrutiny Panel,

As a parent I feel very concerned about the proposed changes to Nursery funding and hope you don't mind me asking a few questions and raising a few points for consideration. As a family we would fall within the group still entitled to the free 20 hours if the proposed cuts go ahead as currently publicised, but I still have concerns about the overall effects on the families of the island and the economy as a whole.

Firstly, the cuts would yet again hit the middle income families of Jersey and this seems very unfair. With the high cost of living in Jersey if the cuts are going to go ahead the threshold should be raised to at least £100K + to avoid this.

Removing funding for use of the 20 free hours at private nurseries and pre-schools is surely going to see some of these close or workers made redundant due to fall in demand, so potentially damaging the economy if these people become unemployed or reduce their income tax payments if their new jobs are vastly different in terms of income. It removes parental choice about where a child will thrive at such a young age. Also, how much will it the cost the States of Jersey to expand State school nurseries to accommodate the places needed due to the changes in relation to the cost of providing the free places as at present?

How will the cuts affect families who have already put their child's name down for a nursery or pre-school place in 2017 a few years ago? We all know that timing of registration for a place is critical in getting your child a place at your chosen pre-school and the proposed cuts will cause an enormous upheaval in plans that families have begun to make, some as long as two years ago. Will families now expected to pay be pushed out of their state school nursery places to accommodate those entitled to the means tested free hours?

What will happen to the economy if many families decide that one parent will give up work to bring their household income down to retain access to the free hours? Those families will surely pay less income tax into the system and therefore there will be less money in government funds to support public services. Skilled workers would also be lost from their jobs and who will fill them? More migrants bulging and over stretching services on an already overpopulated island?

Finally, and most worryingly in my opinion, what will happen to those children who might not be given a pre-school education at all as their families can't afford it when they are expected to pay? Surely they will be behind in many ways when they start school and the level at which reception education is aimed will have to be brought down to accommodate this, yet again changing the goal posts for our hardworking and overstretched teachers. What will be the knock on effects to schooling? The social aspects of a pre-school education are so important in building confidence in a child before the go into a formal education setting, I can't help but feel these cuts will actually potentially damage the education of our children and therefore the future of our island.

Surely the total costs of making these changes is going to exceed that of providing a free nursery or pre-school place for just one year to each child in the island? It also means all children and families are not getting equal access to free education from the beginning of their lives, which is a real pity.

Thank you for taking time to read through my concerns and questions. I really hope that as our elected representatives you can help think through this plan more clearly and make any changes fairer for the families and children of our island.

Yours faithfully