

Your Ref: 516/8

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel Early Years Review

I write further to your letter dated the 15th May 2007 and submit my written evidence for your records and perusal.

The current system in place for nursery education is out of date (1985) and clearly needs to be updated to reflect Jersey's requirements for our young children and their parents.

If ESC and the States are unable to fund into the private sector nurseries then a fairer and more equitable system needs to be found by either:

- Children attending states nursery classes could be charged a nominal fee (by establishing a fair means testing system for parents), the extra revenue obtained would be re-invested in the private sector to enable children to access high quality education
- The States should stop spending the capital sums building, increasing more expenditure on staffing and equipping new nursery classes, but should invest in current private provisions

The implications the island could possibly face if this proposal is not funded.

- Financial burden on the states system could be increased with greater number of parents claiming social security or welfare, as they are unable to return to work due to the high costs involved in childcare
- Decrease in tax return revenue as people unable to return to the workforce, due to the high childcare costs
- Risk of parents using cheaper childcare options, i.e. unregistered childminders
- Further immigration required to fill vacancies, adding to the already over subscribed housing market and increasing house prices
- The introduction of sales tax will be applied in 2008 to many private nurseries and will penalise parents already having to pay high childcare costs

Benefits of implementing the proposal:

- A reduction in crime and anti-social behaviour (source: Daycare Trust 1996)
- For every £1.00 invested in early years there is a economic return of £4.00 (source: Daycare Trust 1996)
- Children accessing high quality nursery education significantly benefit from this experience. One key finding is that 'full time attendance led to no better gains for children than part time attendance' Source: EPPE (Effective provision of Pre-School Education project)
- Children attending one establishment benefit from continuity of care and are not exposed to many childcare settings before starting school
- Parents have complete freedom of choice where their child attends and are not penalised for their decisions.

- A greater partnership between all providers of education to enable practitioners to share and develop their ideas and stop any competition between the sectors that exists at present
- By investing in private establishments the states are helping to keep some nurseries afloat that provide valuable childcare to the under 3's.

ESC now want to establish a integrated strategy for Jersey's 0-4 year olds, they should consider that due to an outdated policy to build a nursery class to every primary school, this has had a direct impact on many private nurseries that were forced to close and childcare costs becoming too excessive.

There has been a lack of strategic forward thinking and planning with a strategy that has been designed to compete with private enterprises, rather than creating a mutually beneficial and totally equitable system.

Should you require any additional information, please feel free to contact me.

Yours faithfully

Zoe Bisson