

Education and home Affairs Scrutiny Panel

Early Years review

1. a. The Children

Children need continuity of care and environment. It is the first step from the care of parents and the home environment into the social world. Love, patience and understanding are vital. They need foremost, nurturing in hand with education and it should be an extension of the home, developing into preparation for School. It's in this environment that they learn most of their social skills.

At this point in time some children spend one year at a private Nursery, then on to School nursery then to school.

b. The Parents

Invariably, every time a child has been moved on to a School nursery from our Nursery, it has been financial and the parents in question have been emotionally upset and guilty with the move.

Parents need the availability of staff attention as soon as problems arise, however small they may seem to someone else. Parent/staff relationship is as important as it is with the children. This is not always feasible within a larger School Nursery class. In fact, we have had a child return to us from a School for this reason.

Hours must fit in with Parents' working hours.

c. The providers of care and education.

The expertise of Nursery Practitioners needs to be acknowledged and respected. We have had specialist training in our field and have often been unfairly criticised in comparison with teachers by certain States members.

Good staff/child ratio should be the same across the board.

There must be equality in Staff training and regulations. At this point in time Private nurseries have to follow far more stringent rules.

2a. Cost and Resource implications

School Nurseries have been provided with a large source of income for their facilities and, I should imagine receive a substantial amount per annum.

Surely this could be examined and part used towards funding. We'd have to be resourced from somewhere.

The idea of funding so many hours would have to be considered, as Private Nursery fees vary according to the establishment. We could not afford any additional costs. This would cause us to close, which has often happened to others over recent years,

b. Equity of access.

Parents should have a choice of Nursery education according to their choice of genre, ethics, beliefs etc, and not initially finance.

Every family should have some Nursery funding regardless of income.

At the moment some parents are taking advantage of a free year's pre- School education when they fully intend to send their child to private school.

There doesn't seem to be a fair, level system of intake.

c. Potential impact of partnership between private and public sectors.

We need achievable goals from both sides.

Equality in regulations and standards is important. No "them and us".

d. Expectations and requirements of parents who wish to work.

Some parent are happy to fit in with School term times and work on a part time basis with the children attending mornings only.

The priority for full time working parents would be to have continual care without too many disruptions.

- 3 To consider how the department of E.S.C work on provision of education and childcare for 3 to 4 year olds will fit within overall integrated strategy.

Provide funding for the private nurseries to enable children to stay right through to School age encouraging consistency in care and education.

Don't build more School nurseries but utilise the available private sector.

- 4 Further issues relating to the topic

It was mentioned that if funding went ahead, there would be conditions to which we'd have to adhere. We are most concerned that if agreements are made, that goalposts would not be moved in the future.

We wish to reiterate that a stable foundation is vital for the development of our future generation.