

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, SPORT AND CULTURE BY THE
DEPUTY OF ST. MARY
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 19th OCTOBER 2010**

Question

Given the widely acknowledged importance of improving parenting skills, and following on from his answer to Written Question 5055 on 19th January 2010, can the Minister advise members what percentage of parents currently participate in any kind of course on parenting skills?

Does the Minister and the Children's Coordinating Group of Ministers, consider that improving parenting skills is important and, if so, what emphasis will be placed on the development of these skills within the new Children's Plan?

Answer

Approximately 40 % of parents participate in a course of parenting skills which is a 10% increase on last year.

Courses include;

One-to-one consultations
Early literacy & language groups
Understanding children/teenagers groups
Separating parents programmes
Families living with ADHD

The Ministers of Health and Social Services, Home Affairs and Education Sport and Culture who make up the Children's Policy Group recognise that good parenting has an absolutely fundamental role to play in children's lives. The new Plan is built around a number of key principles, one of which is that early intervention is designed to deliver support as and when required. This helps prevent problems from developing, reduces the need for high cost specialist services and, more importantly, helps prevent children's lives from being adversely affected.

The Children and Young Person's Plan will build on "Strong Foundations," the Island's multi-agency Parenting Support Strategy and further develop seamless multi-agency parenting services. Such services are essential to ensure parents receive the support they need in a timely manner.

Agencies such as Brighter Futures and NSPCC Pathways Centre offer a range of family support services for children and their parents. This is proving to be very successful.