

STATES OF JERSEY



CHILD CARE SCHEME FOR LOW INCOME FAMILIES: AMENDMENTS (P.173/2004) – COMMENTS

**Presented to the States on 9th November 2004
by the Education, Sport and Culture Committee**

STATES GREFFE

COMMENTS

The Education, Sport and Culture Committee takes the view that Proposition P.173/2004 is untimely and addresses only one aspect of early years provision in Jersey. The Committee believes that it would be inappropriate to address this issue in isolation, especially as 2 other relevant reviews are currently in process.

The Education, Sport and Culture Committee is reviewing its strategy in respect of early years. The Jenny Spratt report, 'A Vision for the Future of Early Education and Childcare in Jersey', was commissioned in February 2004 and presented to the States as R.C.35/2004 on 3rd August. Responses to a public consultation on this report are being collated and will be discussed by the Committee early in December. Following that, a further public consultation will take place, after which the President of Education, Sport and Culture will take a Proposition to the States, early in 2005.

The Committee is aware that the Employment and Social Security Committee is undertaking a comprehensive review of its benefit schemes, including those in respect of childcare. The Report 'Income Support System' R.C.48/2004, presented to the States on 2nd November, recognises some of the complexities of the current childcare support schemes which are based on *'the requirement that childcare is necessary to allow parents to find or maintain employment'*. However, the report also recognises that *'there is a different point of view that suggests that childcare is beneficial to the child, and as such the requirement for parental work should be dropped'*.

The Committee believes this is a fundamental philosophical issue that needs to be the subject of a much broader States debate. Such a debate will enable the States to determine its overarching philosophy and vision for early years education and childcare and to agree a coherent, cohesive and comprehensive strategy which can be underpinned by realistic and effective investment. It is within this context that the issues raised by Deputy Southern should be considered.

Consequently, the Education, Sport and Culture Committee cannot support Deputy Southern's proposition.