

**WRITTEN QUESTION FOR THE PRESIDENT OF THE EDUCATION, SPORT AND CULTURE
COMMITTEE BY DEPUTY R.G. LE HERISSIER OF ST. SAVIOUR**

ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON 6th JULY 2004

Question

Would the President state what impact the provision, by the Committee, of early nursery education is having upon other child care provision? What policies are in place to ensure that the total availability of such provision is not seriously jeopardised?

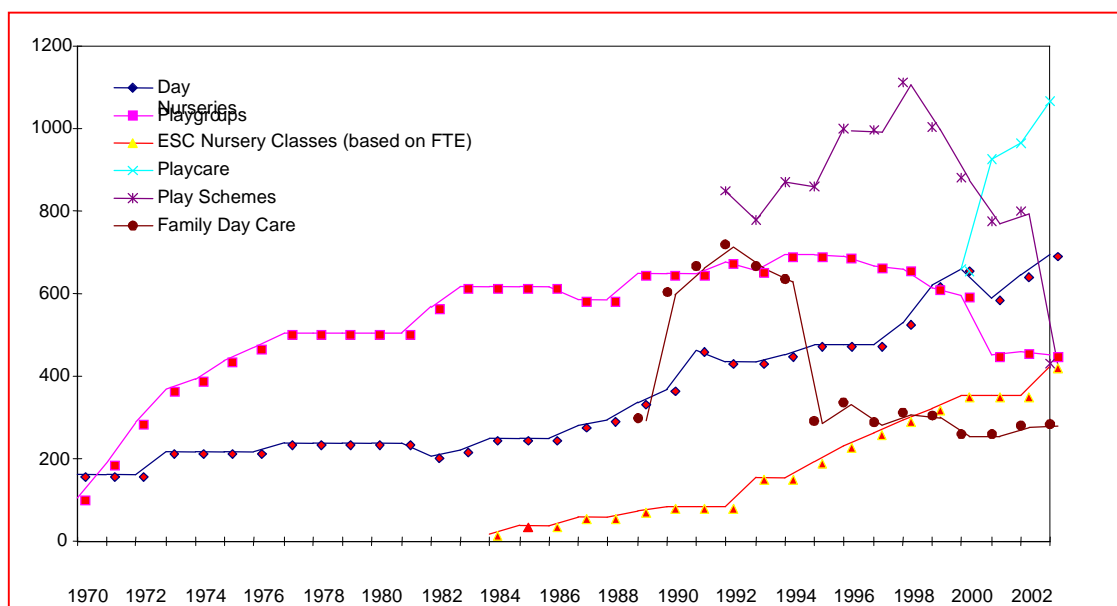
Answer

1. Range of child care provision

There is a complex and interconnected range of provision for child care in Jersey, as illustrated by the following graph which profiles the number of places within States' provided schools (nursery classes) and the various classifications of registered providers.

Nursery classes in provided schools offer full and part time places for children aged 3+. They are staffed by a qualified nursery teacher and nursery officers. Wrap-round care after school and during the holidays is an option that is being piloted at Janvrin School from September 2004 in partnership with Centrepoint Trust.

Profile of Nursery Classes and Registered Childcare in Jersey



1.2 The classification of providers, for purposes of registration under the Children's (Jersey) Law 1969, Part VII, are as follows:

Day Nurseries - provide full day care for children of a wide age range, which may include babies. Hours of opening usually accommodate the needs of working parents and a lunch and snack service is provided. Many establishments offer an all year round service from Monday to Friday, closing only on Bank Holidays and for short periods at

Christmas and Easter.

Playgroups - offer sessional care for a period of no more than five hours. Children attend playgroup between the ages of two and five years. Playgroups may refer to themselves as nurseries, nursery schools, kindergartens or playgroups. Some groups follow school times of opening whereas others are open all year round.

Playcare - provides for children from school entry up to the age of twelve years to meet the needs of working parents before and after school and during the school holidays. Playcare may occur in a variety of settings, such as school premises, day nurseries, children's centres, community centres or church halls. The hours of opening vary in accordance with the type of service offered. This may be breakfast club, a before and after school facility, a school holiday club or a combination of these services. Some playcare services include a homework club.

Play Schemes - provide playcare during the Easter and Summer school holidays for children age 5 to 11+ years. They are based in schools across the Island and can accommodate up to 480 children. Parents pay a means tested fee for their children to attend with approximately 10% of children offered places at no cost.

The children are offered a wide range of activities including sports, art and craft, visits to the beaches, parks and quiet activities and games.

Family Day Care - offers care to children in the family day carer's own home.

A maximum of 6 children under the age of 14 may be cared for at any one time of which no more than three may be under the age of five years.

2. Trends in child care provision

While various interpretations may be drawn from the data, certain significant trends are apparent:

- (a) the growth in nursery places in provided schools gives continued effect to the former Education Committee's policy^[1], agreed in October 1989, to provide nursery classes at each of its provided primary schools. Nursery classes are now provided or planned at the following schools:

	No of places	Opened
Bel Royal	30	2002
First Tower	40	1996
Grands Vaux	30	1985
Grouville	30	2000
Janvrin	30	(from Sept 2004)
La Moye	30	2003
d'Auvergne	30	(from Sept 2005)
Le Squez	30	1998
Mont Nicolle	30	2003
Plat Douet	30	1998
Rouge Bouillon	30	1985
St. Clement	30	(from Sept 2006)
St. John	30	1997
St. Lawrence	30	1991
St. Mark	25	1989
St. Martin	30	1992
St. Saviour	30	1993

- (b) the majority of these nursery classes have been developed in conjunction with the redevelopment or refurbishment of primary schools through the Committee's capital development programme;
 - (c) the increase in the number of places available in the Committee's nursery classes has been matched by a proportionate increase in the number of places available in Day Nurseries, the majority which are privately provided. Others are operated by not for profit organisations or, in the cases of Avranche and Westmount Nurseries, supported by the Parish of St. Helier;
 - (d) there has, following a period of consistent growth up to the mid 1990's, been a subsequent decline in the number of Playgroups, which is unlikely to be attributable to the increased number of places available in States' nursery classes, although it may be effected by the increased number of places in day nurseries as a consequence of the variety of provision made by that sector;
 - (e) following an increase in the number of registered places available from 1989-1995, the availability of Family Daycare places has remained stable, although demand for these places reduced significantly in 2003;
 - (f) the number of Playcare places has increased significantly in the last four years, following the requirement to register, while, following a peak in 1997, the number of places in Play Schemes has declined.
- 2.2 It can be argued that, due to the complexity of provision, it is difficult to isolate one factor, such as the impact of the Committee's provision for nursery education, on other particular forms of provision. However, it is reasonable to assume that the increase in the number of places for children aged 3½ in the Committee's nursery classes from 30 places in 1985 to 510 places in 2003 has had an impact on the nature and distribution of other provision, particularly at a time when demographical change is also impacting on the number of children for whom placement is sought.

3. Review of the Committee's investment in Early Years provision

- 3.1 The Committee is concerned to ensure high quality early years' provision, not least because of the beneficial impact which this has on individuals' throughout their lifetimes (see Appendix). The Committee considers it to be essential that the needs of the child in terms of personal, social and educational development is held to be paramount although meeting the needs of parents and other carers must also be given careful consideration.
- 3.2 The Education, Sport and Culture Committee acts as the political sponsor for the Jersey Child Care Trust. The Trust, which was established in 1997, following the adoption by the States of a proposition by the Education Committee (P.244/1996)^[2], is charged to co-ordinate, promote and facilitate expansion of child care provision in the Island. The achievements of the Trust towards realising its purpose and, in particular, the ambitious programme which was approved by the States in October 2001^[3], have been charted in its annual reports and a recently published report on progress towards the achievement of aims and objectives detailed in its Strategic Plan.
- 3.3 However, the Education, Sport and Culture Committee, recognising the complexity of early years provision, its significance and cost, has initiated a comprehensive review of its investment in this area. The terms of reference for the review are:

“To undertake a mid-term review of the Jersey Child Care Trust Five Year Strategy, and the funding, responsibilities and purposes of the Trust in relation to the overall strategy for early years and childcare in Jersey and to make recommendations to the Education, Sport and Culture Committee with regard to:

the need for an overall strategy based on integrated working to support children and families;

creating clarity and focus regarding the roles and responsibilities of different departments and organisations in developing the strategy and achieving its aims.”

- 3.4 The review is well advanced and it is planned that the Committee will receive the report and its recommendations on 20th July. On that date, it will also be presented to the Partnership Group for Early Years Care and Education, which includes representatives from Private Sector providers, Departments for Employment and Social Security, and Education, Sport and Culture and parents’ representatives nominated by Jersey Child Care Trust.
- 3.5 The Committee considered it to be essential that the review be undertaken by an independent practitioner and it is being led by Jenny Spratt, who is responsible for nursery education and care in Peterborough, which is recognised for excellence in early years’ provision through its status as a “Beacon Authority”. We are confident that the report will offer clear advice to the Committee in order that it might consider and determine its future policy in respect of this important area of activity.

The Effective Provision of Pre-School Education (EPPE) Project*

The Institute of Education, University of London, University of Oxford and Birbeck College, University of London have recently completed the first major European Longitudinal study of a national sample of young children's intellectual, social and behavioural development between the ages of 3 and 7. In addition to investigating the effects of pre-school provision on young children's development EPPE explores the characteristics of effective practice and has demonstrated the positive effects of high quality provision on children's development.

Key findings

Impact of attending a pre-school centre:

- (a) Pre-school experience, compared to none, enhances children's development.
- (b) The duration of attendance is important with an earlier start being related to better intellectual development and improved independence, concentration and sociability.
- (c) Full time attendance led to no better gains for children than part-time provision.
- (d) Disadvantaged children in particular can benefit significantly from good quality pre-school experiences, especially if they attend centres that cater for a mixture of children from different social backgrounds

The quality and practices in pre-school centres:

- (a) The quality of pre-school centres is directly related to better intellectual/cognitive and social/behavioural development in children.
- (b) Good quality can be found across all types of early years settings. However quality was higher overall in integrated settings, nursery schools and nursery classes.
- (c) Settings which have staff with higher qualifications, especially with good proportion of trained teachers on the staff, show higher quality and their children make more progress.
Where settings view educational and social development as complementary and equal in importance, children make better all round progress.
- (d) Effective pedagogy includes interaction traditionally associated with the term "teacher", the provision of instructive learning environments and 'sustained shared thinking' to extend children's learning.

* *The full text of the EPPE Report is available from the States of Jersey Department for Education, Sport and Culture – contact Mrs. Y. Thebault 509426.*

[1] Pre-school Education: Future Strategy 1989

[2] Report of the Working party on Child Care

[3] Jersey Childcare Trust: Five Year Strategic Plan