

Deputy F.J. Hill BEM,
Chairman,
Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel

Monday 4th June 2007

Dear Deputy Hill,

Education and Homes Affairs Scrutiny Panel – Early Years Review

In reply to your letter dated 16th May with regard to gathering evidence for the Panel.

Considering the requirements for the effective delivery of early years education and care with specific regard to the children, parents and providers:-

- Highly trained staff who understand the emotional, educational/learning needs of these young children and are able to plan and deliver suitable practice – there has to be quality In-service training accessible on the Island.
- Staff that are enabled to team with parents advising over a range of issues
e.g. parenting, health issues – also knowing when to listen and when to input
– all part of the staff training package
- A network/partnership with outside agencies such as speech and language experts, health visitors etc. This partnership should include parents.
- Suitably resourced setting to encourage quality child development – nursery building and resources

Consider the cost and resource implications of the stated aims of the Minister for Education, Sport and Culture

- Equity of access has got to be of paramount importance. In the two years that d’Auvergne Nursery has been open, we have been totally over-subscribed by the amount of children registered to attend. It is very difficult to be fair when allocating places, even though set criteria is in place. Nevertheless there is a difference between providing care and education (which of course would include care). The bottom line is that there are not enough nursery places in the public sector. Potential partnership between public and private sectors would be an ideal that we should be able to work towards, but there will have to be much dialogue, sharing practice and training, in order to maintain the current level of expertise/practice.
- Expectations and requirements of parents obviously have to be taken into consideration, but so does the well-being of each child. In an ideal world it might be better for the child to be able to go home with the parent at the end of a nursery mid-afternoon session; the children do get very tired, but obviously for many parents this is not possible as they have to work outside the home.
- The stated aims of the Minister for Education, Sport and Culture seem to be a way of addressing current issues of entitlement. I am not surprised that the cost may seem high, but if we are investing in the future of our Island it is surely worth it, as long as that provision is educationally suitable for each child.

I hope these points assist your Panel's work.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Ann Curzons
Headteacher