

Urgent Call for Investment in Young Children

early years
the organisation for young children



Early Years - the organisation for young children, is the largest organisation in Northern Ireland and Ireland for young children. We are a non-profit making organisation and have been working since 1965 to promote high quality childcare and pre-school education for children aged 0 - 12 and their families.

Early Years believes that major investment in our young children is critical to ensure the educational, social, emotional and cognitive development of our future generations. Nobel Laureate and Economist James J. Heckman, analyzed the investments made in early childhood programs and learned that, at the same cost, there are far greater gains to be had when children are younger.

These are some of the key issues for the early years sector in Northern Ireland. Please make your local MP and MLA aware of them and encourage them to press for action.

Continued Investment in the Pre-school Sector in Northern Ireland

X Fact In Northern Ireland, each child gets only 12 ½ hours of pre-school education per week for one year. In England and Wales each child gets 20 hours of government funded pre-school education per week for two years.

We Need Equality of provision and for this system to be introduced into Northern Ireland at a total cost of £2270 per year per child.

X Fact In Northern Ireland there is no training and development strategy for people working with young children, compared with England and Wales where £200m has been allocated for this type of training.

We Need An investment of £5m per year to give early years practitioners in Northern Ireland the same opportunities.

Urgent Release of the Northern Ireland 0-6 Strategy

X Fact The Early Years sector has been waiting for the release of the Department of Education's 0-6 Strategy for some time. We are three years into the Ten Year Strategy for Children and in 2009 we saw the Play and Leisure Policy for Children being published in Northern Ireland.

We Need Politicians and policy makers to fully embrace the implementation of these critically important policies for children, to call on the Department of Education to publish the 0-6 Strategy and to support the implementation of the Strategy.

Urgent Call for Investment in Young Children



Continued Investment in Sure Start

X Fact Early Years believes that Sure Start is providing a much needed service to families in disadvantaged areas of Northern Ireland and that any changes to the initiative need to be evidence-based about what works for children, not just policy changes for policy change sake.

We Need Continued investment in Sure Start in order to continue supporting young children and families throughout Northern Ireland.

Greater Role for the Community/Voluntary Sector in the Delivery of Early Years Services

X Fact Organisations in the community/voluntary sector are in a position to do things differently and to adopt more creative and innovative approaches. Early Years believes that the role of government should be about setting policy and developing the funding framework. The community/voluntary sector should have a key role as delivery agent.

We Need Better flexibility in delivery of services in order to allow the community/voluntary sector to play a greater role.

Introduction of a Flexible Parental Leave System

X Fact Flexible working is increasingly important to today's fathers who want to be more involved in taking care of their children. Research has also shown that children's development is greatly accelerated when a father is more involved.

We Need More flexible parental leave for new mothers and fathers to be able to take up to six months off work simultaneously, or to divide a year's parental leave between them.

Role of Early Years Services in Inclusion and Community Relations

X Fact Early Years has developed a sound, evidence-based Respecting Difference Programme that is effective in promoting social inclusion and growing a respect for all forms of difference, not just sectarian difference.

We Need This programme to be delivered right throughout the primary stages and brought onto the national stage.

**Contact Early Years on: (028) 9066 2825
or visit www.early-years.org**