

# Make a Real Difference for Young Children

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Local councils to develop and implement **employment, training, upskilling and career development initiatives**, similar to the Belfast City Council Academies programme, that is **reflective of the needs** of the early childhood and school age care, learning and development sectors.

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Local councils to advocate for, and support investment in **Sure Start** within their localities towards **maintained and increased levels of funding** and **expansion of services and projects**.

3

Local councils to advocate for, and support, the **mainstreaming of Shared Early Education initiatives** that are currently funded through the Peace IV programme, including the development and enhancement of capital projects.

4

Local councils to advocate for, and support increases **in pre-school capitation** for funded pre-school places offered by **providers in the voluntary, community and private sectors** - in order to be on a **level playing field** with their statutory (nursery school and nursery unit) counterparts and recognise the capacity of each sector to deliver high quality early childhood services.

**Equitable funding and training support** for providers across the sectors to adequately facilitate the delivery of **high quality early childhood development for children with disabilities and other additional needs**.

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6

Local councils to advocate for, and support a **rates relief/exemption scheme** for private settings, similar to Scotland and Wales, to alleviate the significant amount of financial strain on providers, seeking to deliver affordable high quality services in the face of a number of other rising costs, and for the parents and families who require these essential services.

**Northern Ireland remains a region that has failed to provide early education, care and development with the necessary degree of strategic and budgetary significant that it requires and has fallen considerably behind the other regions of the UK and also Ireland in this respect.**

We appreciate the significant challenges faced by local and national administrations in the current economic and political climates.

**NOW** is the time to seize upon opportunities to work and think differently through a clear focus on, and investment in, early childhood and school age care and development, that progresses up through the educational, health and wellbeing, training and employability pathways.

[www.early-years.org](http://www.early-years.org)

**Calls to local councils  
and decision makers  
regarding early  
childhood learning and  
development.**