

Government free childcare scheme 'could leave London families worse off'^[1]

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EXCERPTS

A flagship government plan to extend free childcare for working parents could leave some families in London worse off, a report has warned.

From September, thousands of parents with three- and four-year-old children will be entitled to 30 hours a week of free childcare if they work for a minimum of 16 hours a week and neither earns more than £100,000 a year.

The report, based on a survey of nurseries and other childcare providers in London, claims underfunding means that some will be unable to afford to provide the places.

It says in some cases eligible parents will miss out, while in others places will only be provided by cutting quality.

The report also predicts charges for additional childcare beyond the 30-hour free entitlement will rise.

The report, published by the 4in10 network, says mothers from lower-earning families could be particularly badly affected.

It says responses "paint a picture of an early-years sector ... deeply concerned that underfunding for 'free' places threatens quality of provision, places for disadvantaged children and the financial viability of settings."

The Department for Education has said the reforms are adequately funded and can "deliver a huge economic prize" by enabling more parents to work.

-reprinted from Evening Standard

Region: Europe^[3]

Tags: access^[4]

child care policy^[5]

cost^[6]

spaces^[7]

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