

# Tories make surprise U-turn and offer free childcare to more than 3,000 children <sup>[1]</sup>

Education Minister Robert Goodwill gave in to campaigners and reversed the ban on foster children under the scheme

**Author:** Bloom, Dan

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## AVAILABILITY

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## EXCERPTS

Foster children will eligible for 30 hours of free childcare a week after a surprise Tory U-turn.

More than 3,000 children in care had been excluded from the government scheme for three- and four-year-olds.

But Education Minister Robert Goodwill tonight gave in to campaigners and reversed the ban.

Labour MP Lisa Nandy, who raised the issue, said she was “speechless” but “extremely pleased”.

She had warned the policy had forced children out of nursery when they went into care, “destroying” friendships at a traumatic time.

Neil Leitch, chief executive of the Pre-school Learning Alliance, said he “warmly welcomed” the U-turn.

He added nurseries must get extra funding to deliver the new places.

Mr Goodwill told a debate in Westminster Hall: “Children in foster care should have access to the same support and opportunities as all children have.

“Since it was brought to my attention, I have been looking carefully at the issue of the current exclusion from the 30 hours policy for children in foster care.

“I have instructed my officials to work up plans to allow children in foster care to take up the additional hours.

“We will work with local authorities, fostering service providers, and others in the sector to ensure we implement this change in a way that promotes the best interests of the child.”

-reprinted from Mirror

This is a TEST paragraph.

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