

Cross-party MPs call for the 30 hours to be extended to all pre-school children ^[1]

The All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on a Fit and Healthy Childhood is calling for the 30 hours of funded childcare to be extended to all UK three- and four-year-old children to help those families most in need.

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AVAILABILITY

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EXCERPTS

It is one of a number of recommendations outlined in a new report from the APPG, which is co-chaired by Baroness Floella Benjamin.

The report, 'The Impact of Social and Economic Inequalities on Children's Health', argues that childcare is a potential early intervention tool. However, only working parents who earn at least the minimum wage qualify for 30 hours funded childcare.

It goes on to say, 'The scheme permits this allocation to run in tandem with claims for Universal credit, Tax Credits or childcare vouchers, but a large swathe of families are not covered by the provision. Its expansion to all UK children would deliver tangible and practical help to the families most in need.'

The APPG's recommendation builds upon calls from the Education Select Committee to open up the 30 hours to all three- and four-year-olds, including those in families whose parents do not work.

Alongside making the 30 hours of funded childcare a universal benefit, the APPG suggests making the voluntary food and drink guidelines for childcare settings more stringent, which, together, the MPs claim would give those in the most deprived areas and from families in need, a healthier start to childhood.

Other recommendations include:

- Making breakfast clubs available in all schools - free to all infant children, those from low-income families and with a minimum charge to children from higher income families.
- Reinstating and revising the discontinued Infant Feeding Survey, which was used to determine the incidence, prevalence and duration of breastfeeding and other feeding practices adopted by mothers in the first eight to ten months after their baby is born.
- A new cross-departmental ministerial post on social mobility with particular focus on encouraging policy collaboration on the issue between relevant departments. The post holder should report to a new cabinet minister for children.

-reprinted from Nursery World

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