

# Petition against plans to change childcare ratios could be debated in Parliament <sup>[1]</sup>

A petition against the relaxation of ratios by the parents of a child who died after a medical emergency at nursery has reached more than 100,000 signatures, meaning it will now be considered for a parliamentary debate.

**Author:** Morton, Katy

**Source:** Nursery World

**Format:** Article

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## AVAILABILITY

Access online <sup>[2]</sup>

## EXCERPTS

It comes a week after the Chancellor signalled the Government's intention to bring forward reforms to improve access to affordable and flexible childcare, following a consultation on proposed measures, including relaxing staff to child ratios in early years settings and promoting childminder agencies. The consultations on the proposed reforms closed on 16 September.

The petition on the Parliament website was started by Zoe and Lewis Steeper, whose son Oliver died a year ago in September 2021, days after he was believed to have choked at nursery. The nursery is now permanently closed.

It calls upon the Government to consider other ways to reduce childcare costs rather than change the number of staff that can care for children in early years settings, which the Steepers warn could 'endanger children in trusted care.'

In response to the news the petition had attracted 10,000 signatures, The Oliver Steeper Foundation tweeted, 'What a powerful voice of objection on the Governments plans to change adult/child ratios in #EYFS. So grateful to everyone who has signed and shared it, please continue to do so as it still open for signatures until 12th November when it closes.'

The Early Years Alliance, which together with Nursery World has promoted the petition, said the fact it has now attracted 100,000 signatures 'clearly shows how worried providers and parents are about the likely impact of proposed ratios changes.'

Chief executive Neil Leitch said, 'Let's be clear: changing ratios is a mindless policy that will do more harm than good to a sector already on its knees. These changes have been falsely sold as a cost-saving measure when, as our own research shows, it will do little – if anything – to deliver savings to parents. Instead, all these proposals will do is put the quality of care and early education children receive at risk, and place even more pressure on an already-overburdened workforce in the middle of a staffing crisis.'

'Given the complete lack of appetite for any changes demonstrated by the success of this petition, it's clear that this issue must be now debated in Parliament as a matter of urgency.'

'We would like to thank Zoe and Lewis Steeper who, during a time of unimaginable personal tragedy, have campaigned tirelessly and selflessly to highlight this issue. We are very proud to join them in calling for the Government to scrap this ridiculous policy before it has a disastrous and irreversible impact on our vital sector.'

**Region:** Europe <sup>[3]</sup>

**Tags:** ratios <sup>[4]</sup>

children's health <sup>[5]</sup>

child care <sup>[6]</sup>

**Source URL (modified on 19 Oct 2022):** <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/22/10/petition-against-plans-change-childcare-ratios-could-be-debated>

## Links

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/22/10/petition-against-plans-change-childcare-ratios-could-be-debated> <sup>[2]</sup>

<https://www.nurseryworld.co.uk/news/article/petition-against-plans-to-change-childcare-ratios-could-be-debated-in-parliament> <sup>[3]</sup>

<https://childcarecanada.org/category/region/europe> <sup>[4]</sup> <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/ratios> <sup>[5]</sup>

<https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/9116> <sup>[6]</sup> <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/child-care>