

# Poorer families 'locked out' of big expansion in free nursery hours, analysis finds <sup>[1]</sup>

Almost third of not-for-profit nurseries in England, which play vital role in caring for children with special education needs, closed or taken over by private firms

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**Source:** The Guardian

**Format:** Article

**Publication Date:** 8 Nov 2023

## AVAILABILITY

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

## Excerpts

Poorer families are being "locked out" of a big expansion in free nursery hours, experts have warned, as exclusive Guardian analysis reveals that the number of not-for-profit nurseries in England's most-deprived areas has fallen sharply.

Close to a third of not-for-profit nurseries closed their doors or were taken over by private companies, including private equity firms, in the poorest parts of the country from 2018-2022, according to analysis of official figures.

Experts warn that state-run and not-for-profit nurseries play a vital role in caring for children with special education needs and cater to the UK's poorest families.

...

"On the whole, disadvantaged children fare better in not-for-profit or state nursery care settings but these centres are dwindling," said Abby Jitendra, policy adviser at the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. "This is because the government has higher standards for not-for-profits than their counterparts, when the priority should be making sure every child has access to quality care no matter where they live."

...

High quality early education and care plays an essential role in children's future, especially for those living in deprived areas who are more likely to have special needs as it can "help close the attainment gap which widens during their school years," said Tanuku.

The Department for Education said the government was "rolling out the single biggest investment in childcare in England's history."

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

**Tags:** private equity <sup>[4]</sup>

low-income families <sup>[5]</sup>

**Source URL (modified on 9 Jan 2024):** <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/24/01/poorer-families-%E2%80%98locked-out%E2%80%99-big-expansion-free-nursery-hours>

## Links

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/24/01/poorer-families-%E2%80%98locked-out%E2%80%99-big-expansion-free-nursery-hours>

[2] <https://www.theguardian.com/money/2023/nov/08/poorer-families-locked-out-of-big-expansion-in-free-nursery-hours-england> [3]

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