

Labour pledges 300 new state nurseries in England within 12 months ^[1]

Exclusive: Education secretary to launch callout for empty classrooms to be converted as part of free childcare plan

Author: Elgot, Jessica
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Excerpts

Three hundred new state nurseries will open in England’s schools by next September, the education secretary, Bridget Phillipson, has promised, as the government hurries to find places before the introduction of free childcare.

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Phillipson said in an interview that she would launch a callout this month for schools in England with empty classrooms resulting from lower demand on school places to be converted into state nurseries, with the aim of 300 new nurseries opening by next September.

Schools will receive funding from April 2025. By the time of the introduction of free places, 80% of childcare costs will be paid by the state, but there are significant concerns in the sector about recruitment.

...

Because of the substantial costs of the scheme, Phillipson said it was crucial the government could show the benefit, not only in terms of help for parents and for women re-entering the workforce, but on child development.

It comes amid worrying statistics from primary schools that report rising cases of children arriving at school still in nappies and with significant language delays.

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