

'School gate mums' are new target [GB] ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

Labour is targeting "school gate mums" as Gordon Brown says levels of child care and education are as big an economic test as inflation rates.

The party has set out its family policies in a women's magazine-style pamphlet aimed at young mothers.

Labour denies it is a gimmick, and says it often produces such publications.

At a speech at a north London nursery Mr Brown said: "In the past, the focus of budgets was on inflation rates and trade balances.

"Future budgets will focus also on child care, family tax credits and educational investment.

"Children are 20% of our population and they are 100% of our future. So when we say for every child the best start in life, we are talking about an economic concern.

"And when we warn that failure to give all children the best start in life risks failure on many other fronts, we are talking about a social concern.

"If we do not find it within ourselves to pay attention to our children today, they may force us to pay attention as troubled adults tomorrow."

Labour says it does not think young mothers are particularly disaffected with the party, but may be disengaged from politics because of busy lives.

The party is trying to play up all it has done in terms of child care, longer school opening hours and their recent conversion to TV chef Jamie Oliver's crusade to improve school meals.

On Friday the prime minister, accompanied by wife Cherie and Education Secretary Ruth Kelly, met families in Crawley to promote the pamphlet.

He pledged that if re-elected, Labour would create a "new frontier" for the welfare state, extending nursery education and establishing a children's centre in every community.

- reprinted from BBC News

Region: Europe ^[2]

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