

# Universal plan will give child care boost [GB] <sup>[1]</sup>

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## AVAILABILITY

See text below.

## EXCERPTS

A higher quality of child care and a review of nursery nurses' pay was demanded today at the [Scottish National Party] conference in Inverness.

Fiona Hyslop, party spokeswoman on education and lifelong learning, said there was a need to provide firm foundations for the next generation.

The way to do that was through a "universal, comprehensive policy" of high quality early years child care and education.

Ms Hyslop, who has a three-month-old son, said she wanted to extend the availability of free nursery places for three and four-year-olds beyond the current two-and-a-half hours a day.

She also called for more flexible services to suit parents' work patterns and the development of children's centres as part of the community schools' programme to provide care and early education on one site.

Ms Hyslop warned that quality would only be maintained by ensuring that people who worked with young children were properly rewarded for the increasing levels of training and qualifications that were now required.

But she said there was a need to cut red tape and increase support for child care providers.

In her conference motion, Ms Hyslop said integrated early education and child care services in Scotland had been hindered by UK policies which had a market-driven agenda.

The SNP would replace that with a "universal and flexible system of early education and child care where every child is entitled to access services as a right".

She said the recent nursery nurses' dispute highlighted how necessary it was to have high quality children's care and that staff were entitled to a national pay settlement.

Protesters took to the streets in Glasgow during the protests that ended in June after 14 weeks.

- reprinted from the Evening Times

**Region:** Europe <sup>[2]</sup>

**Tags:** affordability <sup>[3]</sup>

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[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/04/09/universal-plan-will-give-child-care-boost-gb> [2]

<https://childcarecanada.org/category/region/europe> [3] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/affordability>