

Early childhood education working group set up [MT] ^[1]

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See text below.

EXCERPTS

Preparations by the Education Ministry and the Education Division to launch a consultative document on changes to current educational practices and systems are in an advanced stage, Education, Youth and Employment Minister Louis Galea said.

"It has clearly emerged that a lot of attention needs to be dedicated to the sector for early childhood education," he said as he also announced the launching of a working group to propose an early childhood education policy for all children in Malta and Gozo.

Dr Galea, who was opening the 14th annual conference on Quality In Early Childhood Education, organised by the European Early Childhood Education Research Association on Thursday, said the early childhood education working group would review policies in various countries that are associated with good practice in early childhood education and care.

The group would review policy and practice in the field with a focus on quality issues, learning programmes and curricula.

In the final phase, it would draft a policy for early childhood education in Malta taking into consideration issues related to the cultural climate, curricular demands, transition, the learning programme, language and methodological practices.

The Minister for the Family and Social Solidarity, Dolores Cristina, said one of the major challenges that needed to be tackled in the coming years was ensuring that while the quality of child day care services substantially improved, the services would always remain affordable.

Ms Cristina said a consultation process on early childhood development and care launched last July, including proposed regulations and standards, will be concluded by the end of this month.

A technical committee is meeting entities directly involved in early childhood education and care on an individual basis and group meetings are also being held for groups such as service providers and parents. She said the aim was to encourage all interested parties and those involved in the sector to come forward with their comments and feedback.

The Department of Family Welfare was shedding its role as service provider and assuming a new regulatory role, she said. A team of professionals was currently receiving training for the role of assessors.

Ms Cristina said a feasibility study on the proposed regulations was being conducted to determine the impact of such rules on current providers.

- reprinted from the Times of Malta

Region: Europe ^[2]

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