

Funding scheme launched for parents campaigning against cuts to children's centres ^[1]

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EXCERPTS:

Daycare Trust and Unison have joined forces to provide grants to support parents and staff campaigning to save their local Sure Start children's centres from closure.

Unison is funding the scheme, which will award grants of up to £800 each to campaign groups to cover costs, such as transport, publicity, phone calls and childcare.

Twenty-five grants of up to £800 will be available to local groups fighting to save their neighbourhood centres.

Applications can be made between now and April, with a number of grants awarded on a monthly basis.

Anand Shukla, chief executive of Daycare Trust, said, 'Sure Start children's centres offer a vital lifeline to children, parents and families. Local authority budgets are under an incredible amount of pressure because of central Government cuts, but Sure Start must be prioritised to keep that lifeline intact.

'Parents and centre users have a key role to play. They value the Sure Start service and have made a real difference in campaigning against closures. Just last week four Sure Start children's centres in Liverpool were saved after a fantastic parent-led campaign.

'Daycare Trust will be supporting parents, equipping them to stand up for Sure Start against any potential cuts. We urge local authorities to do the same.'

Last week, Liverpool's Labour council agreed to keep four children's centres open that had been earmarked for closure following protests from parents and staff.

However, although the buildings would stay open, the council said that it would be reviewing staff and administration costs at all centres.

Dave Prentis, Unison general secretary, said, 'Unison is proud to be funding this campaign, which will help parents and communities to safeguard Sure Start for the children of today and tomorrow.

He added, 'Thousands of our members work tirelessly to keep vital Sure Start centres running, and even more depend on them for support. So do many families across the country - the centres are crucial to giving every child the best possible start in life, and they help parents to stay in work.

'Before the election, the government promised Sure Start Centres would not be cut - this campaign will help families and communities hold them to account - protecting Sure Start for the future.'

According to Department for Education figures released at the end of last year, 124 centres had either closed or merged with other centres between April 2010 and September 2011.

In October, a survey of local authorities carried out by shadow children's minister Sharon Hodgson through the Freedom of Information Act, found that 83 per cent of local authorities had cut their budget for Sure Start in real terms for 2011/12.

Eighty-nine per cent of local authorities that at that point had already set their budget for 2012/13, said that they would be cutting their Sure Start budget next year.

Campaign for Sure Start website ^[3]

-reprinted from nursery world

Region: Europe ^[4]

Tags: advocacy ^[5]

funding ^[6]

Source URL (modified on 27 Jan 2022): <https://childcarecanada.org/node/6238>

Links

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