

Ofsted extends tougher inspections to nurseries ^[1]

Author: Adams, Richard

Source: The Guardian

Format: Article

Publication Date: 2 Aug 2013

EXCERPTS:

Ofsted is to extend its tougher inspection regime to nurseries, with underperforming pre-schools to be stripped of their legal status if they fail to improve rapidly. The move - backed by Ofsted's chief inspector, Sir Michael Wilshaw - is the latest attempt by the education watchdog to improve teaching in England, this time during the crucial years between two and five.

"As a nation, we spend around £5bn a year on funding early education but too many pre-schools and nurseries across the country are not yet good, particularly in the most deprived areas. That's why Ofsted is determined to introduce greater challenge into the early years sector," Wilshaw said, announcing the changes.

Childcare providers will no longer be rated as "satisfactory" and will instead be graded as "requires improvement" and subject to more regular monitoring. They will be expected to rise to "good" within two years or be graded "inadequate".

Providers judged to be "inadequate" - Ofsted's lowest grade - can be revisited within six months and are at risk of having their registration cancelled if they fail a second inspection.

The move drew protests from the Pre-school Learning Alliance, unhappy that Ofsted's most recent inspection process has already recorded lower ratings for many. "The sector is growing more concerned by the day about the unfairness of Ofsted inspections, with an increasing number of childcare providers having their rating downgraded," said Neil Leitch, the alliance's chief executive.

"Unless Ofsted acts to sort this out, what is intended to move the sector towards higher standards could end up being unfairly detrimental." The idea, according to Wilshaw's ambition is to hurry along an improvement in the quality of early years childcare teaching, which research shows to be a critical to a child's educational development.

"Preschools and nurseries need to give children a solid foundation. Two years is a long time in a child's life and it's long enough for a setting to improve," Wilshaw said.

"It is vital that very young children make good progress so that they succeed in later years. I am clear that we ignore early education and care at our peril."

Day nurseries, pre-schools and private nursery schools are required by law to be on the early years register, and follow the government's early years foundation stage teaching syllabus. Parents must use Ofsted-registered providers to be eligible to claim tax credits for childcare costs in England.

Mindful of the complications of abruptly closing a provider and leaving parents without childcare, Ofsted said it will take into account the potential impact on a case-by-case basis.

-reprinted from the Guardian

Region: Europe ^[2]

Tags: quality ^[3]

legislation and regulation ^[4]

Source URL (modified on 27 Jan 2022): <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/13/08/ofsted-extends-tougher-inspections-nurseries>
Links

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/13/08/ofsted-extends-tougher-inspections-nurseries> [2]

<https://childcarecanada.org/category/region/europe> [3] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/quality> [4]

<https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/legislation-and-regulation>