

No more baby steps: A strategy for revolutionising childcare ^[1]

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AVAILABILITY

Full report in pdf ^[2]

Description:

In this report we set out plans for how the UK can move towards a universal, high-quality and affordable system of childcare and early-years provision, complemented by reforms to parental leave and rights to flexible employment.

As the number of women entering employment has continued to rise, the need to enable parents to balance their work and family lives has led to increased demands for affordable childcare. However, the benefits of high-quality early-years provision do not end there: it has been found to promote greater equality in early childhood development, and better social and educational outcomes later in childhood. Affordable childcare also helps to reduce gender inequalities in terms of both earnings and the division of family care, by ensuring that childcare responsibilities do not prevent women from continuing to work, and enabling mothers and fathers to more equally share the obligations and rewards of parenting. Finally, by promoting dual earner households, it helps to reduce child poverty.

In this report we set out plans for how the UK can move towards a universal, high-quality and affordable system of childcare and early-years provision which - combined with reforms to parental leave and rights to flexible employment - would enable us to meet three core objectives of public policy for the early years:

- higher employment rates for parents, particularly mothers
- reductions in early childhood inequalities
- greater gender equality.

We set out detailed, costed plans for the expansion of early-years provision, with the following core components:

- an extension of universal early-years provision
- a new framework of affordable childcare for working families
- improvements to the quality of childcare and early-learning, to support children's development
- reforms to parental leave entitlements.

More generally, we argue that the government's priority should be funding and developing institutions in which care, early learning and family services are provided, rather than relying on cash transactions between the state and families in the form of vouchers, tax credits or reliefs. Institutions such as children's centres and nursery schools bring communities together, promoting relationships and attachments that underpin flourishing lives, and are therefore more likely to command enduring popular support.

Related link: IPPR calls for all families to receive help with childcare costs ^[3]

Region: Europe ^[4]

Tags: funding ^[5]
universality ^[6]

Source URL (modified on 27 Jan 2022): <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/14/07/no-more-baby-steps-strategy-revolutionising-childcare>

Links

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