

Disabled children failed by childcare system at every step, says inquiry ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

A Parliamentary Inquiry into childcare for disabled children supported by Contact a Family, has revealed widespread failures for disabled children across the childcare system.

The cross-party led inquiry found that:

41% of families with disabled children aged three and four, are unable to access the full 15 hours free entitlement to childcare and early years education, due to a chronic lack of appropriate settings or lack of funding.

The majority of parent carers (86%) told the inquiry they paid above average childcare costs.

72% said they had cut back or given up work because of childcare problems.

The childcare situation gets worse the older a child gets, with increasing costs and even more limited availability.

There is confusion among local authorities, nurseries and schools about what their duties are in providing childcare for disabled children.

As a result, MPs and Peers leading the inquiry, are calling for all political parties to develop one coherent policy that addresses these serious faults in the childcare system, which have resulted in thousands of disabled children and young people missing out on vital education and social opportunities.

Contact a Family organised an oral evidence session in Parliament for parent carers to share their experiences on childcare with MPs and Peers as part of the inquiry.

Commenting on their findings, co-chair of the Parliamentary Inquiry, Robert Buckland MP said: "Through our inquiry, we heard from disabled young people and their families that they are experiencing a childcare crisis. This is despite huge progress in making childcare more affordable and improving choice for other families. Piecemeal policies over a decade, have led to confusion among local authorities and childcare providers about their duties to provide childcare for disabled children. Ahead of the next general election all political parties must commit to tackling the lack of affordable and quality childcare for disabled children once and for all."

The publication of the Parliamentary Inquiry's report, Levelling the playing field for families with disabled children and young people, follows Contact a Family's own research published last month, that shows three quarters of mothers with disabled children are forced to take a step back, or give up careers due to childcare problems.

Related link: Parliamentary Inquiry's report, Levelling the playing field for families with disabled children and young people ^[3]

Region: Europe ^[4]

Tags: affordability ^[5]

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Links

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<http://www.cafamily.org.uk/news-and-media/disabled-children-failed-by-childcare-system-at-every-step-says-inquiry/> ^[3]

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