

# Start Strong welcomes government action on 'childcare' <sup>[1]</sup>

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## AVAILABILITY

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## EXCERPTS

Start Strong - a coalition of organisations and individuals seeking to advance children's early care and education in Ireland - has welcomed the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs James Reilly's announcement of a new government plan to tackle the high cost of 'childcare'.

Ciairín Buis, Director of Start Strong said: "We absolutely need to reduce the high cost of 'childcare' for parents and the fact that a plan is being put in place is very welcome. However we need a plan that will also benefit children.

Children only benefit from 'childcare' if it's of high quality. But we know from the RTE programme 'A Breach of Trust' that the quality here is very variable. Any plan on 'childcare' needs to address both affordability and quality."

Ms de Buis was responding to an article in today's Irish Independent which outlines a Government plan to support 'childcare' costs and reduce pressure on families.

### New model

"We need a new model of childcare in this country. One that sees early years services as providing a public service and has the necessary investment from the government.

We need to be spending a lot more on our young children but the investment needs to be directly into early years services so we can ensure high quality in those services and at the same time reduce fees to parents."

### Tax credits

"Tax breaks won't do anything to improve the quality of early years services." added Ms de Buis. "They also won't help those on very low wages or families who can't afford to pay 'childcare' costs upfront."

Ireland spends comparatively very little on early year care and education. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) average is 0.7% of GDP compared to an Irish spend of less than 0.2%.

"As the economy begins to move out of recession now is the time for the Government to start increasing investment in our young children." said Ms de Buis.

**Related link:** Tax breaks and subsidies help fund childcare cost <sup>[3]</sup>

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[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/15/01/start-strong-welcomes-government-action-%E2%80%98childcare%E2%80%99> <sup>[2]</sup>

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