

Start Strong analysis of budget 2016 ^[1]

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AVAILABILITY

Full budget analysis PDF ^[2]

Overview

Start Strong welcomes the Budget 2016 early years measures, which mark a significant step forward in the development of early care and education in Ireland.

In our Pre-Budget Submission, published in July, we recommended the following:

1. Extend paid family leave

- Introduce 6 weeks' paid parental leave, rising to 26 weeks by 2021, so a child can be at home for at least the first year.
- Introduce 2 weeks' paid paternity leave.

2. Develop quality, affordable childcare

- Linking public funding to quality, including a review of capitation rates (to include paid non-contact time and the introduction of salary scales).
- Extending subsidised childcare places to lower-income families in all areas.
- Cap fees for parents.
- Invest in supports for quality.
- Audit the quality of early years services.

3. Move to a second free pre-school year

- Give an entitlement from age 3, and allow entry at multiple points in the year.

Budget 2016 delivers some key measures – in particular the extension of free pre-school and the introduction of paternity leave – and it commits to developing a framework for affordable, quality childcare.

There is no action on some key issues – such as paid parental leave, a review of capitation rates, and salary scales – and some issues are still unclear. However, the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs described the Budget measures as a 'first step' and 'the beginning of a multi-annual programme of investment', implying an intention to increase investment over time.

Related link: Start Strong pre-budget submission 2016 ^[3]

Region: Europe ^[4]

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