

Poor career prospects causing high staff turnover in childcare^[1]

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EXCERPTS

At Impact trade union's education conference in Dublin yesterday, it unveiled plans to work with employers in the early years sector to seek increased state funding and the professionalisation of the industry "so that staff providing quality services can be properly rewarded". The union's deputy general secretary Kevin Callinan accused politicians of abandoning the childcare issue less than a month after the election.

"The cost and quality of childcare was one of the biggest issues in February's General Election," he said, "A month later, it already seems to have fallen off the political agenda. The issue has barely appeared on the priority lists drawn up by the mainly middle-aged men involved in discussions on the make-up of a government." He said in the meantime Ireland lags behind most European countries when it comes to investment in early care and education.

"That's why Irish parents face among the highest childcare costs in Europe, while staff in the sector — including well-qualified professionals — are among the lowest paid in our economy," he said.

Mr Callinan said the additional free pre-school year, announced by the outgoing government in its last budget, was applauded by parents and providers alike. But he said the programme's inadequate capitation payment was driving down wages because employers were being asked to provide services 'below cost'.

Impact said a recent Irish Congress of Trade Unions survey found that, although Irish parents pay dearly for pre-school care, early years staff, including well-qualified workers, could earn as little as €5,150 a year in an increasingly casualised sector.

Mr Callinan said low pay, poor career prospects, and long periods off-payroll in the summer, were damaging service quality by driving staff out of the sector, with turnover rates for childcare professionals at 22%.

Mr Callinan said all evidence shows investment in early years services delivers huge benefits for children — particularly those from lower-income backgrounds — and for society and the economy generally.

"Whatever its shape, the incoming government needs to commit to sustained investment in early years to at least bring Ireland up to the OECD average," he said.

"That investment must be linked to top-quality service provision which, in turn, requires the professionalisation of all early years staff."

-reprinted from the Irish Examiner

Region: Europe^[3]

Tags: wages^[4]

childcare workforce^[5]

Source URL (modified on 27 Jan 2022): <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/16/04/poor-career-prospects-causing-high-staff-turnover-childcare>

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