

NDNA Asks "Why Hasn't Childcare Featured in Election Campaigns so far?"

Submitted by: National Day Nurseries Association

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NDNA Head Office Yorkshire, 22 April 2005 – National Day Nurseries Association (NDNA) is today asking the three major political parties "Why hasn't childcare featured in your election campaigns so far?"

Purnima Tanuku comments: "It is now 13 days until the election and we are yet to see childcare featuring at the top of any of the three major political parties campaigns. Whilst the parties have policies for childcare we have not yet heard the political parties debating the key issues around childcare. Childcare is such a crucial concern for the country and with day nursery care being integral to the lives of over two million parents who have considerable voting power, it is an issue that cannot be ignored."

NDNA is asking all political parties to make a pledge to childcare, Purnima continues: "We believe that the next Government should focus on ten key areas to achieve a vision of childcare that is universal, flexible and high quality. These key areas focus on placing the needs of the child at the heart of their strategies; extending the free early education offer and increasing the funding per hour; introducing a special business category for day nurseries to address business rates and VAT; increasing Government investment to give childcare practitioners fair pay and developing a robust audit of parents needs for childcare places and of the existing provision in every area. This is to ensure Government investment is spent wisely without risking closure of existing places."

Purnima adds: "NDNA has pledged to work with both local and national Government as a strategic partner to advise on policy, this will ensure that we support the development of high quality and sustainable childcare that is accessible for all."

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Note to editors:

National Day Nurseries Association (NDNA) is the only national membership association representing day nurseries in the UK. The charity is dedicated to the provision, support and promotion of high quality care and education for all children in the early years.

Here is the full list of ten key areas that we believe should form the next Government's pledge to childcare:

1. Creating a strategy that clearly places the needs of the child at its heart and understands that the birth to five model of integrated childcare and education that day nurseries are designed to deliver should not be lost
2. Introducing a special business category for day nurseries to address business rates; VAT and recognising the role childcare plays in the regeneration and economic development of disadvantaged areas

3. Capital grants to expand private and voluntary nursery facilities to provide room for health visitors, support groups, parent meetings and training, supporting day nurseries to play a role in the development of children's centres
4. Extending the free early education offer to 20 hours a week and increasing the amount per hour, with working parents paying for extra hours according to their income
5. Combining the Tax Credit and free early years funding into one stream, increasing funding to a realistic level and making the payment direct to providers
6. Increasing Government investment to give childcare practitioners fair pay
7. Raising the status of the childcare profession with access to properly funded training for qualifications - a world class workforce is the fundamental ingredient for quality provision
8. Incentives and subsidies for day nurseries that invest in their staff, demonstrate high standards through quality assurance and receive 'good' inspection grades
9. Developing a robust audit of parents needs for childcare places and of the existing provision in every area. This is to ensure Government investment is spent wisely without risking closure of existing places
10. A clear vision of how the Government sees the pattern of delivery in 2020 and the role of the private and voluntary sector

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