

DÁIL ÉIREANN

GNÓ COMHALTAÍ PRÍOBHÁIDEACHA

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Fógra Tairisceana: Notice of Motion

I move:

That Dáil Éireann:

notes:

the early years sector has been acutely underfunded for many years and as a result Ireland is ranked the lowest country in the EU for investment in this vital area;

this lack of adequate and sustainable funding has ensured fees for parents are amongst the highest in the EU;

that the steep costs accrued by parents in securing early years childcare, places a significant financial burden on families;

this sector, which employs approximately 30,000 has some of the highest qualified professionals who are paid some of the lowest wages of any sector, with many existing on minimum wage;

that the public health emergency has further highlighted sustainability issues within the sector, with many early years providers fearing closure;

the barrier to employment, in particular that of women as a direct result of accessing childcare and exorbitant costs is particularly cumbersome.

calls on the government to introduce a comprehensive early years plan that: defines the early years as a distinct phase with unique learning and developmental requirements;

recognises the diversity of the early years sector and acknowledges that a “one size fits all” solution is insufficient to address this diversity;

delivers an early years sustainability fund for the whole sector;

commits to significantly ramping up investment year on year, fast-tracking to a spend of at least 1% of GDP as recommended by the early years sector and UNICEF;

reinstates the wage subsidy scheme at the full amount, as the basis of investment in the sector, so that entry level wages increase to the living wage;

fully commits to implement pay scales and full Continuous Professional Development for all staff which properly value childcare as a viable long-term career choice;

ensures, once proper investment is in place, that a maximum weekly childcare fee is set, incrementally reducing until the service is free at the point of use;

commits to engage with the sector in the development of the plan and ensure that their representatives are consulted with.

Kathleen Funchion, Claire Kerrane, Chris Andrews, John Brady, Martin Browne, Pat Buckley, Matt Carthy, Sorca Clarke, Rose Conway Walsh, Réada Cronin, Seán Crowe, David Cullinane, Pa Daly, Pearse Doherty, Paul Donnelly, Dessie Ellis, Mairéad Farrell, Thomas Gould, Johnny Guirke, Martin Kenny, Pádraig Mac Lochlainn, Mary Lou McDonald, Denise Mitchell, Imelda Munster, Johnny Mythen, Eoin Ó Broin, Donnchadh Ó Laoghaire, Ruairi Ó Murchú, Aengus Ó Snodaigh, Louise O'Reilly, Darren O'Rourke, Maurice Quinlivan, Patricia Ryan, Brian Stanley, Pauline Tully, Mark Ward, Violet-Anne Wynne.