

Childcare fees are too high and wages are too low. That is the reality that we hear daily from parents and workers in the childcare sector.

That's why I have undertaken the 'My Childcare Story' campaign. I want to show that there are alternatives, that continuing to do nothing is not an option and that a Sinn Féin government would listen to, and learn lessons from parents, workers and providers.

Families need affordable and reliable childcare.

Prolonged underinvestment by Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael has led to Ireland sleepwalking into a privately-run and expensive system that cripples ordinary working families.

We know that parents feel let down by the current system. Many women are locked out of the workplace because childcare fees are too high.

Covid-19 has added considerable additional strain and challenges, but it also presents us with an opportunity to completely overhaul the current broken childcare system.

The reality is that there can be no economic recovery without a childcare system that works for all.

That is why Sinn Féin is prioritising childcare in our budget proposals for 2021.

That is why we are committing to cutting the costs of childcare by one third in 2021.

That is why we are prioritising measures to keep creche doors open and provide a living wage to childcare workers.

That is why we are calling on Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael to step up and make a real difference by investing in childcare in Budget 2021.

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Kathleen Funchion TD

Sinn Féin Spokesperson on Children



CUTTING THE COST OF CHILDCARE

Kathleen Funchion TD

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CUTTING COSTS FOR PARENTS

Over two budgets a Sinn Féin government would cut the costs of childcare for parents by two thirds. We would do this by taking on the wages of the sector at a cost of €620 million, implementing legislation and ensuring sustainability

A LIVING WAGE FOR CHILDCARE WORKERS

Immediately increase the pay of childcare workers to the living wage of €12.30 by investing €30 million

SUSTAINABILITY

Sinn Féin would keep creche doors open by introducing a sustainability fund of €124 million for childcare providers

FEES ARE TOO HIGH, WAGES ARE TOO LOW. IT'S TIME FOR FAIRNESS

Irish parents pay some of the highest childcare fees in Europe. Some parents are forking out the equivalent of a second mortgage with fees as high as €1,000 per month and higher.

Childcare workers, highly qualified and skilled professionals are paid some of the lowest wages of any sector, with many existing on the minimum wage.

The current model of childcare provision in this state is failing everybody.

We can't afford to continue doing nothing. We must reduce the cost of childcare and invest in this vital sector which will in turn benefit the wider economy with more women, in particular, getting back to work.

Sinn Féin will achieve its vision for childcare over two budgets with the introduction of a sustainability and capacity fund for providers, full public funding of childcare workers' pay and legislation mandating fee reductions for parents*.

*Costs provided above are gross. Net cost of package - €271 million



In their own words – Parents tell their childcare stories



“ I am a single mam of two girls. When they both went to school I decided to go back to education as I was out of the workplace of a number of years. I found out my entitlement regarding childcare and went about trying to find a place for my girls. Unfortunately, no childcare facility in my local area near the girl's school participated in the schemes I was entitled to. This meant I would have to pay full fees which I just couldn't afford. LORRAINE



“ I took the decision to stay at home when my children were born, now I am looking to go back to work and it's nearly not worth it with the childcare fees we are faced with. MARY



“ My husband and I have both worked all our lives and as a result of high childcare fees I'm not in a position to return to work. It just wouldn't be worth our while. LAUREN