

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau / Petitions Committee  
Bae Caerdydd / Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd / Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

Dear Committee members

I am a working parent with two young children living in the Vale of Glamorgan, and I would like to support P-04-346: Petition on provision of early years education. I did not sign the petition as I was unaware of its existence. I understand that although the petition is now closed for signatures you are still collecting evidence.

I understand that you are interested in three main areas:

*1) Are you able to access early years education for your 3-4 year old in a way that is convenient to you?*

No. My husband and I work standard office hours (he full time, and myself three days a week). With the early years education provision set at 2.5hrs per day, five days a week, it is impossible for us to access that provision. We would have to pay a childminder or a private nursery to drop them off/pick them up and arrange for additional cover beyond the 2.5 hrs. Both of our children currently attend private nursery from 8am till 6pm, three days a week.

*2) Does the provision of early years education for your 3-4 year old enhance or hinder your opportunities to work or study?*

It is impossible for me to work and take advantage of the early years education as it stands. Whilst I do work part time, it is important that the days I do work, are full days. I often have site meetings to attend out of town so would be unable to accommodate pick-ups and drop-off within 2.5 hrs. By not being able to access the early years provision we are entitled to, we find ourselves subsidising significant childcare costs. Should private nursery fees increase disproportionately to my salary I will be forced to give up work and look after the children as doing otherwise would be uneconomical. I believe it is unfair that the children of working parents aren't able to access early years education provision because it is structured in such an inflexible manner.

*3) Have you declined to take up provision for early years education for your 3-4 year old as it is inconvenient for you to do so? If so, what childcare provisions have you made instead?*

We have applied for an afternoon place in state nursery from January as our private nursery only offers half days in the mornings. However, the only way for us to make use of this place would be for our children to be in private nursery for the morning, be picked up by a childminder, spend 2.5hrs in early years education, and then be picked up again by a childminder for the remainder of the day. That's a minimum of three different childcare providers within the space of one day, and such disruption is likely to undo any good from 2.5hrs worth of education. We will therefore have to decline the place unless the system is changed to offer greater flexibility.

As an example of more flexible provision, we have moved from Bristol where early years education is provided as follows:

- up to a maximum of 15 hours a week spread over at least 3 days and a maximum of 6 hours per day, for at least 38 weeks a year.
- Provided by a number of registered settings and providers, including:
  - pre-school playgroups
  - private day nurseries
  - childminders (if they belong to a registered childminder network)
  - maintained nursery schools
  - nursery classes in primary or independent schools
  - Children's Centres

([http://www.bristol.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/children\\_and\\_young\\_people/support\\_for\\_parents\\_and\\_carers/money\\_for\\_parents/NEG\\_leaflet.pdf](http://www.bristol.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/children_and_young_people/support_for_parents_and_carers/money_for_parents/NEG_leaflet.pdf))

This is the sort of flexibility which enables parents to work while allowing children to access early years education in a consistent setting.

Thank you for taking the time to review this issue, we strongly believe early years education in Wales can be made more flexible and hope to see changes soon.

Yours sincerely,

Amy Twining