

Dé Máirt, 21 Iúil, 2020
Tuesday, 21st July, 2020

2 p.m.

GNÓ COMHALTAÍ PRÍOBHÁIDEACHA
PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Fógra i dtaobh Leasú ar Thairiscint: Notice of Amendment to Motion

13. “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 European Union (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 people, has some of the most highly 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; and
- the barrier to employment, particularly for women, as a direct result of accessing childcare and the exorbitant costs which are particularly cumbersome; and

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 one per cent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as recommended by the early years sector and United Nations Children’s Fund (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; and
- 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; and
- commit to engage with the sector in the development of the plan and ensure that representatives of the sector are consulted with.” — *Kathleen Funchion, 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, Claire Kerrane, Pádraig Mac Lochlainn, Mary Lou McDonald, Denise Mitchell, Imelda Munster, Johnny Mythen, Eoin Ó Broin, Donnchadh Ó Laoghaire, Ruairí Ó Murchú, Louise O'Reilly, Darren O'Rourke, Aengus Ó Snodaigh, Maurice Quinlivan, Patricia Ryan, Brian Stanley, Pauline Tully, Mark Ward, Violet-Anne Wynne.*

Leasú:

Amendment:

1. To delete all words after “Dáil Éireann” and substitute the following:

“acknowledges the challenges faced by the early learning and care sector, and welcomes the commitment in the Programme for Government to reform the childcare system to create one that:

- brings together the best of community and private childcare provision, using key State supports to ensure affordable, quality outcomes for children and parents;
- is focused on children’s rights and providing a trusted developmental environment for our young children to flourish in;
- is inclusive, ensuring access to quality childcare is provided fairly to all children, including children with a disability or with additional developmental needs;
- promotes quality outcomes in terms of both education and care;
- addresses current inequalities;
- appropriately values the work of staff and encourages their retention; and
- substantially reduces costs for parents; and

furthermore, welcomes the Government’s commitment to:

- increase State investment in the sector in a manner that improves the affordability of early learning and care for parents;
- establish an agency, Childcare Ireland, to lead in the expansion of high-quality childcare and the professionalisation of the workforce;
- build on the benefits for children and parents of the National Childcare Scheme and the Early Childhood Care and Education Programme, to deliver increased investment and reduce costs for parents;
- develop and introduce a long-term, sustainable funding model by fast tracking the work of the Expert Group to develop a new Funding Model for Early Learning and Care and School Age Childcare;
- develop supports for parents, whether they choose childcare outside or inside the home;

and

- support the achievement of appropriate terms and conditions for the early learning and care workforce.” — *An tAire Leanai agus Gnóthai Óige*.