

Make the First Five Years Count: A manifesto for early education and care

General Election 2024 party policies and manifesto pledges reference guide



Funded early education and childcare



Give working parents 30 hours of free childcare a week from when their child is nine months old to when they start school.

From September 2024, eligible parents of children between nine months and two years old will also be able to access 15 hours free childcare. From September 2025, this increases to 30 hours of free childcare a week.

Increasing hourly funding rates over the next two years by an estimated £500 million.

Funding rates to be linked to National Living Wage, average earnings and CPI for next two years.



Open an additional 3,000 nurseries through upgrading space in primary schools, to deliver the extension of government funded hours families are entitled to.

Improve the quality of maths teaching across nurseries and primary schools.

Free breakfast clubs in every primary school.

Commissioned the David Bell Review to drive up childcare standards in England.

Deliver half a million more children hitting the Early Learning Goals by 2030.



Review the rates paid to providers for free hours to ensure they cover the actual costs of delivering high-quality childcare and early years education.

Triple the Early Years Pupil Premium to £1,000 a year.



Other support for parents and families



A Family Hub in every local authority in England.

Accelerate the rollout of Universal Credit to ensure it always pays to work.

Raise the child benefit earning threshold.



Review the parental leave system, so it best supports working families within first year.

Review Universal Credit so that it makes work pay and tackles poverty.



Doubling Statutory Maternity and Shared Parental Pay to £350 a week.

Increasing pay for paternity leave to 90% of earnings, with a cap for high earners.

Incorporating the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child into UK law.



Workforce and training



Introduce the Advanced British Standard, a new approach to 16-19 education which will build on the best of A Levels and T Levels.

Creating 100,000 more apprenticeships in England in every year of Parliament.

Changing the law to close university courses in England with the worst outcomes for their students.

2p off employee National Insurance.

Maintain the National Living Wage in each year of the next Parliament at two-thirds of median earnings.



Youth guarantee of access to training, an apprenticeship, or support to find work for all 18 to twenty-one-year-olds.

Training and upskilling – new Technical Excellence Colleges.

Transforming the apprenticeship levy to give employers flexibility to train their workforce in new and relevant skills.

Ban zero hours contracts.

Introducing basic rights from day one to parental leave, sick pay, and protection from unfair dismissal.

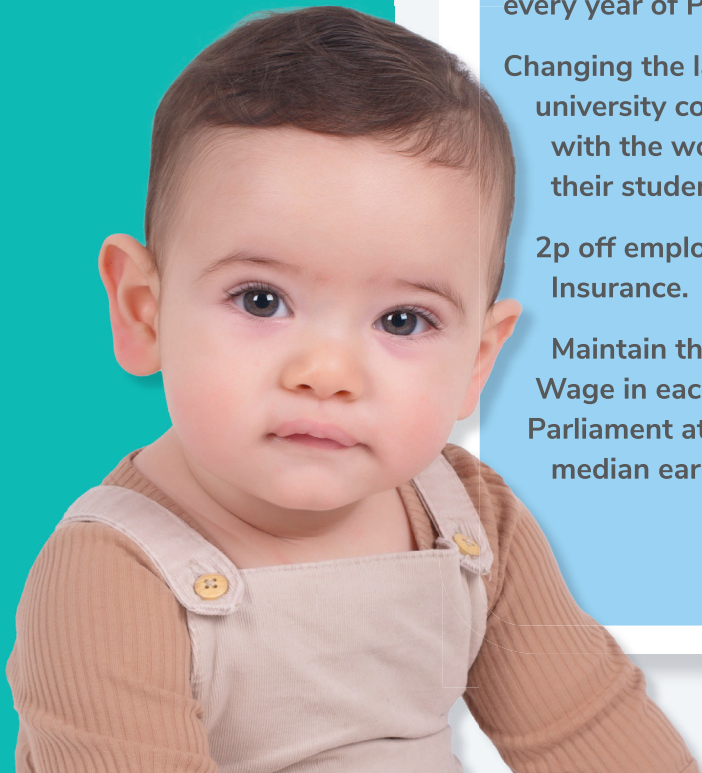
The National Minimum Wage is a genuine living wage which will account for the cost of living. Remove the age bands.



Developing a career strategy for nursery staff, including a training programme with the majority of those working with children aged two to four to have a relevant early years qualification or be working towards one.

Including a specific emphasis on identifying and supporting children with special educational needs and disabilities in the new training programme for early years staff.

Boosting the take-up of apprenticeships, including by guaranteeing they are paid at least the National Minimum Wage by scrapping the lower apprentice rate.



Business and regulation



Continue to ease the burden of business rates for high street, leisure and hospitality businesses.

Keep the VAT threshold under review.



Improve quality of provision: work with LAs to boost provision where inadequate.

Reform Ofsted - enhance the inspection regime by replacing a single headline grade with a new report card system telling parents clearly how schools are performing.

Labour will replace the business rates system with a system that raises the same amount in a 'fairer' way.



Replacing the three different current registration processes with a single childcare register.

Commissioning a practitioner-led review to simplify regulation, reduce administrative burdens and attract new childminders while maintaining high standards.

Reform Ofsted inspections and end single-word judgements.



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NDNA key priorities

An early education and care system that's child-centric, delivering high-quality provision.

1. In the first 100 days launch a national commission into the future of early education and care to ensure policy is child-centric, driven by evidence and best practice, and is valued on the same level as with mainstream education
2. Create a comprehensive national dataset, encompassing education, health and social care, for all children. This will enable an individualised, consistent and holistic approach to child development and support early years professionals to be more involved in identifying and referring children with additional needs to services that can offer support
3. Consult on any plans to use under-utilised school premises to support the delivery of early education and care places. Any provision developed on school sites must:
 - Be age appropriate to meet the needs of all children, drawing on expertise of local providers
 - Be carried out in consultation with the established settings and local community to ensure the flexibility to meet families' needs
 - Not duplicate, displace or undermine existing high-quality provision and their sustainability.

A funding system that works for all children, families and providers.

1. Implement a progressive system with an element of universal, fully funded early education and care that supports all children and families. The system should also provide more targeted support to those who most need it including bringing the Early Years Pupil Premium in line with primary school rates. To reflect the reality of the current funding model the word "free" should be removed to confirm that the support to parents

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- is a subsidy
2. Carry out an independent annual review into the cost of delivering high-quality early education and care. This must ensure that shortfalls in SEND funding are addressed to ensure inclusive access to places
 3. Create a single online childcare account for families to reduce complexity, increase take-up and ensure funding follows the child. While this system is being designed and implemented the existing funding must be ringfenced to ensure any underspends in Tax Free Childcare and early years budgets are reinvested in early years. The system should ensure funded payments to providers are made in advance and a more consistent approach to provider contracts
 4. Remove business rates and VAT for all early education and care settings while delivering funded places, especially as around 80% of a setting's activity will be the delivery of government subsidised places
 5. The sector must be consulted on any conditions attached to delivering funded places. This is to avoid any unintended consequences on sustainability, capacity, flexibility and quality within the sector.



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A system that values and invests in the early years workforce.

1. Create a sustainable workforce strategy for the sector to provide professionals with a clear career path, status and the respect they deserve. The annual review of funding must cover investment in staff pay and conditions
2. Revise the curriculum for all early education and care qualifications to ensure that apprenticeships and qualifications are fit for purpose in line with the EYFS and that qualifications adequately address the specific needs of children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
3. Introduce incentive schemes to attract people of all backgrounds to train in early years and encourage progression to higher qualification levels.

A regulatory framework that is fit for purpose and proportionate.

1. Review the role of Ofsted to ensure its activities are focussed on continuous improvement of quality, consistency of inspection activity and supporting the workforce
2. Undertake a review of the value and challenges caused by single-word judgements
3. Ensure that providers continue to receive funding for a minimum period of time in the event of any inspection downgrade to allow for improvement plans to be put in place.





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National Day Nurseries Association is the national charity representing children's nurseries across the UK. At NDNA we don't just provide nursery membership, lobby government and offer training, we are dedicated to making a difference. Get involved:



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National Day Nurseries Association

