



Cymru
National Day Nurseries Association

Welsh Elections 2026 party manifesto pledges reference guide

**The Best Start for
Children in Wales**

#WhereTheBestStartHappens

ndna.org.uk/WalesManifesto



Funded early learning and childcare



Extend free childcare to children aged 9 months to 4 years old.

Give working parents a choice to nominate a grandparent to receive a Grandparent Childcare Payment of up to £4,800 per year to care for their grandchildren.

Reform Flying Start to ensure that it is targeted at families who need it, not postcodes.



Invest in play-based early years provision, school meals, daily movement and outdoor play, recognising that early childhood is an effective way to prevent and reduce inequality.

Introduce universal childcare for nine-month to four-year-olds, without requiring parents to work a minimum number of hours. Existing schemes will be unified into a simpler system available for 48 weeks per year. Establish a universal block of 20 hours, alongside additional hours on a scale of fees based on income. Expand the universal block for two to four-year-olds from 20 to 30 hours per week.

Strengthen the ALN system, ensure schools are fully accessible for disabled children and expand early support. All learners will be supported to develop racial literacy and meaningful cultural awareness.



Phase-in funded childcare to babies aged 9 months old and make childcare easier to access over the course of the next Senedd. Create 20,000 new funded childcare spaces as part of our phased plan.

Support the growth of co-operative childcare settings in Wales.

Open more opportunities for children and young people to learn through the medium of Welsh by implementing the Welsh Language and Education Act.



Extend free, high-quality childcare to every child from 9 months to 4 years old. Offer will be for 30 hours per week, 48 weeks per year.

Develop a career strategy for early years staff.

Ensure every early years setting is equipped to identify and support children with additional learning needs.



Reform the Curriculum for Wales on core academic subjects like maths and science, remove what it sees as ideological content, reintroduce phonics-based reading instruction, and place greater emphasis on physical education.



Every child aged 9 months to 4 years will be entitled to 20 hours of free childcare every week, for 48 weeks per year.

For children aged 3 and 4 whose parents are in work, education or training, the existing offer of 30 hours of funded childcare per week will be honoured.

Introduce a single, streamlined application system so families can easily access the new childcare offer.

Look at ways to improve access to childcare for parents who work irregular hours and live in rural areas, including through expanding delivery via childminders.



Other support for parents and families



Offer access to free parenting lessons to equip mums and dads with the skills and knowledge they need to raise their children with confidence and support healthy relationships at home.



Expand provision of free Welsh lessons both in person and online, including for parents whose children are in Welsh-medium education.

Make schools safer by implementing new national guidance on pupil behaviour and making new resources available nationally on tackling weapons in schools.



Provide free school meals to eligible children throughout the school holidays.



Recruit additional health visitors for parity of support in rural areas. Improve school readiness with more health visitors to track developmental milestones, in response to concerns about gaps in basic early skills.

Support the expansion of academies and free schools to increase innovation, parental choice and standards - especially where schools are underperforming - while ensuring inspections of faith schools are proportionate and explicitly protecting the Christian ethos, teaching and worship practices of Church in Wales and Catholic schools.

Review the ALN system to reduce disparities, strengthen support for special schools and ensure teachers receive adequate specialist support for pupils with complex needs.

Restore classroom discipline by enforcing clear behaviour standards, empowering teachers, taking a zero-tolerance approach to disruption and violence, and banning phones in schools.



Plan to work with the sector to ensure childcare provision beyond the early years - including after-school and holiday provision - continues to develop to meet the needs of families across Wales.



Workforce and training



Set an ambitious target to deliver 125,000 apprenticeships over the next Senedd term to meet the skills Wales needs to drive economic growth.

Deliver apprenticeship opportunities from all Welsh Government funded major infrastructure projects.

Implement a UK Shared Prosperity Fund that tackles inequality and deprivation, and levels up across the whole of Wales.



Deliver a fairer deal for school support staff by setting up a new statutory School Support Staff Negotiating Body, with year-round pay and access to professional learning as its first priorities.



Investing in high-quality apprenticeships and training, and deepening the connections between our colleges and universities.

Work towards a School Leavers' Guarantee ensuring that no one is left without a pathway into learning or work.



Expand technical education and apprenticeships, working with employers to better match skills training to the needs of the Welsh economy, including trades and agriculture.



Work closely with childcare providers to build capacity across the sector and grow the workforce ahead of any expansion.

A Welsh skills system that ensures education and training opportunities are aligned with the real needs of Welsh employers.

Embed collaboration between schools, colleges and employers to improve the availability and take-up of vocational qualifications and training opportunities.

Business and regulation



**Plaid Werdd
Green Party**

Move away from an extractive model based on short-term corporate investment and instead support businesses rooted in Wales, including cooperatives, worker-owned firms and social enterprises.

Reform business rates to create a fairer and more progressive structure.

Establish a Co-operative Development Hub to identify opportunities for cooperative and social business models and help entrepreneurs establish and scale community-focused enterprises.



**Welsh Liberal
Democrats
Democratiaid
Rhyddfrydol Cymru**

Backing small and growing businesses by prioritising access to capital to enable innovative businesses to scale up and create more jobs.



**Plaid Cymru
Party of Wales**

A new, business-led National Development Agency for Wales, to help Welsh businesses secure investment, trade and innovate.



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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