

issue 14
Winter 2003

childwise

CHECK OUT CHILDCARE: NEWS AND VIEWS FOR PARENTS FROM DAYCARE TRUST

New Tax Credits

your guide to changes in April 2003

Find out how to
'Have your say'

Government aims to deliver
childcare for all



Visit Daycare Trust's new look website at www.daycaretrust.org.uk

Supported by



 DAYCARE
TRUST
THE NATIONAL CHILDCARE CAMPAIGN

childcare CHALLENGE

Welcome to the new year edition of *Childwise*, Daycare Trust's newsletter for parents.

2002 was an exciting year for childcare - a new vision, new resources and new plans from Government for delivering better services for children and families.

2003 will see that vision start to become a reality with children's centres and more family friendly working. National

Childcare Month in June will celebrate these developments.

Daycare Trust will be raising the voices of parents through new projects and research in our campaign for childcare for all. Join us in seizing the new opportunities and meeting the childcare challenge.

With best wishes for 2003



Stephen Burke
Director, Daycare Trust

A SURE START for children and families

A recent childcare review carried out by the Government highlighted not only the real need for an expansion of childcare services, but also the importance of childcare to increase employment and training opportunities and tackle child poverty. The review looked at current childcare policy and provision and what as a nation we need by 2010 to support all families in modern Britain. Good quality childcare delivered alongside early years education, family support and health services was found to be particularly beneficial to children and communities.

In response to this review, the responsibilities for these services have been combined into one Government unit, called the Sure Start Unit. The budget for the new unit will rise to £1.5 billion by 2005-06 and spending on childcare will have doubled in real terms.

The Government has made a real commitment to enabling all families to access good quality and affordable childcare integrated with early education.



Prime Minister Tony Blair described the review and its outcomes as "good news for children, giving them a better start in early education and health so that they can achieve their potential. It is also good news for parents: a commitment to support the provision of good-quality childcare, giving parents the chance to work".

welcome
to Childwise



parents' eye

A new Daycare Trust project supported by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation is seeking to learn more about the childcare needs of black and minority ethnic parents and carers in Croydon, Kent, Doncaster, Kingston-upon-Hull, Rochdale and Oldham.

Following discussions with parents and carers, the project called *Parents' Eye*, will offer training to enable and empower parents and carers to have more say about childcare and generally raise awareness about childcare. The project will also build a better understanding nationally of the childcare needs of black and minority ethnic families.

This project will be running until June 2003. If you'd like to find out more or if you are based in any of the areas mentioned above and would like to get involved with *Parents' Eye*, you can call Anna Hodge on 020 7840 3350 or e-mail her at ahodge@daycaretrust.org.uk.



What's registered, what's not!

Whether you're a working parent, a student or enrolled on a training course, you may be looking for help towards your childcare costs. Most schemes that provide help towards these costs insist that parents must be using registered or approved childcare. Currently childcare services for children under 8 must be registered with OFSTED. Services that provide care for children over 8 can get 'approved' status, which requires them to meet a regulated level of service and care. If you're not sure what counts as registered or approved childcare, here is a breakdown of what's what:

Registered or approved childcare

- Day nurseries
- Childminders
- Out of school or holiday clubs
- Out of school clubs on school premises, run by a school or local authority
- Playgroups & pre-schools
- Crèches (if they run more than 2 hours a day, for more than 5 days a year)
- Childminders approved to care for children in parents' own home (from April 2003)
- Domiciliary worker or nurse from a registered agency who is approved to provide care in parents' own home (from April 2003)

Unregistered childcare

- Care provided by grandparents, aunts, uncles or any other relative
- Nannies
- Au-pairs
- Parent and toddler groups

TAX CREDITS

What to expect from the new tax credits

In April 2003 the new Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit will replace the current Working Families' Tax Credit, Disabled Person's Tax Credit and Children's Tax Credit. The changes in these tax credits will provide more generous support for families and working parents on low to middle incomes. In fact 9 out of 10 families could be eligible for help through the new Tax Credits. Here are answers to some of the questions you might have:

? What is Child Tax Credit?

Child Tax Credit will provide support for families with children and parents may be eligible for it regardless of whether they work or not. Families with incomes of up to £58,000 could still be eligible for some help. Parents with a baby under one year old and those caring for a disabled child will receive a higher payment. Child Tax Credit is paid directly into the bank account of the main carer, rather than through the wage packet.

? What is Working Tax Credit?

This will provide a top up to wages for those with or without children on low incomes. Extra support is available for working parents and disabled people in work. The main part of Working Tax Credit will be paid through pay packets, or directly to those who are self employed. The amount people receive will depend on their circumstances.

? Is there help with childcare costs?

Yes. The Working Tax Credit contains a childcare element, to help working parents with the cost of registered and approved childcare. It will provide up to 70% of childcare costs, so parents with one child in childcare could receive up to £94.50 per week, whilst parents with two or more children could receive up to £140 per week. To be eligible for the childcare element of Working Tax Credit lone parents must be working 16 hours or more per week; couples can apply where both partners work 16 hours or more or if one works 16 hours or more and the other receives disability benefit. The childcare element of the Working Tax Credit is paid alongside Child Tax Credit payments to the main carer, rather than through the pay packet.

? What if I'm a student?

There's good news for student parents, as they can be eligible for the Child Tax Credit. Student loans and grants will not be regarded as income when Child Tax Credit is calculated, but if you receive the dependant's grant, some parts of this will be considered as income. Student nurses are also eligible for the Child Tax Credit and funding through the NHS Bursary Scheme is not counted as income when your claim is calculated. Most students will not be eligible for the Working Tax Credit, unless they also work 16 hours or more per week. As student nurses are not in paid employment, they are not eligible for the Working Tax Credit.

? How do I find out more?

If you want to find out more about the new tax credits or see if you qualify for help, call the freephone response line on 0800 500 222 or check out the website www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/taxcredits

? How can I claim?

Parents who currently receive Working Families' Tax Credit will need to complete a new claim form, but this will be sent to them automatically. If you are applying for the first time, need help completing your claim form or want to check the progress of your claim you can call the Tax Credit helpline on 0845 300 3900. You can also apply online at www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/taxcredits

new look website

Daycare Trust has just launched its new look website. Full of information on childcare, Daycare Trust's work and advice for parents, it is a really useful resource. Visit the website at www.daycaretrust.org.uk



Have your say

Have you heard of your Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership, but aren't quite sure who or what they are? Ever wondered how funding for childcare is being spent in your area? Want to find out how you can be involved in those decisions and make sure childcare really meets the needs of parents and children?

Have Your Say is a collection of new materials produced by Daycare Trust for the Sure Start Unit, which aim to encourage parents to get involved with their local Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP). Have Your Say uses interviews and discussions with parents and local authority staff to illustrate models of good practice. The resources include introductory leaflets, guides and videos, and they can be used as campaign materials by local authorities and EYDCPs, or simply as a resource for parents.

Free copies of the Have Your Say leaflet, guide or video can be obtained by calling the Department for Education and Skills publications line on 0845 602 2260, and quoting HYS/leaflet (guide, video).

dear childwise...

My daughter attends nursery three days a week while I work. I've heard about free nursery places. How do I know if my daughter should get a free place?

Currently all children aged four are entitled to a free part-time nursery place. In many areas this has been extended to children from the age of three, and by 2004 it will be available to all three year olds. Children become eligible for free places from the term following their third or fourth birthday.

The Government funds the part-time childcare places through an initiative called the Nursery Education Grant. The part-time place comprises up to 5 sessions of nursery per week. A session is usually one morning or afternoon period lasting 2-3 hours. Nurseries, pre-schools, playgroups, nursery schools and approved childminding settings (those who are meeting early years education goals) can provide Nursery Education Grant childcare places. The grant is paid directly to the childcare provider.

As your daughter is already attending a nursery you will receive a reduction in your fees from the time she becomes eligible for the grant. To find out more about the Nursery Education Grant, and to find out from what age your daughter will become eligible for it, you can contact your local Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership or local education authority. ChildcareLink, 0800 096 02 96 / www.childcarelink.gov.uk can provide you with contact details of your local Partnership.

Yours, Childwise

Childcare's Changing Britain

Daycare Trust was delighted with the success of its annual conference, Childcare's Changing Britain held last November. Chaired by broadcaster Anna Ford, and with keynote speakers from Wales, Denmark and the USA, it was a real opportunity to share good practice and see how other countries develop and put into action their childcare strategies. Childcare has the potential to change lives, change communities and change Britain. The conference set out how to maximise that change so that childcare really does change Britain for all children and parents.

**Do you have two or more children with disabilities or special needs?
Does your income cover your additional financial needs?**

Disability Alliance aims to break the link between poverty and disability by providing information on benefit entitlement. They are gathering evidence on the extra costs families who have two or more disabled children face. If you would like to participate in their campaign, you can fill in an on-line questionnaire (www.disabilityalliance.org/campaign.htm), or contact Gabrielle Preston for further information on 020 7247 8776 or policy.da@dial.pipex.com. Any information provided will be treated confidentially.

GET CHILDWISE

For your free subscription to Childwise please fill in the form and post it to Daycare Trust at 21 St George's Road, London SE1 6ES, or fax it to us at 020 7840 3355, e-mail us on info@daycaretrust.org.uk or phone our helpline on 020 7840 3350 between 10am and 5pm to request a free subscription

We may occasionally contact you about other publications and services offered by us. If you do not wish to be contacted please tick

Name _____

Address _____

Contact number _____

How did you hear about Daycare Trust? _____

