

issue 19
Spring 2004

childwise

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



**Value children,
value childcare**

National Childcare Week 2004

Are you a childcare champion?

**Free early education for
all three year olds**

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

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INVESTING IN QUALITY

Welcome to the latest edition of Childwise, Daycare Trust's newsletter for parents.

This June will see a big celebration of services for children and families. And during National Childcare Week, Daycare Trust will be putting the spotlight on the benefits of quality childcare, particularly for children.

welcome to Childwise

Every child deserves a good start in life. We know from research how quality childcare can help children develop and grow. The Chancellor's announcement in the Budget of funding for

1700 children's centres provides a great building block for creating affordable childcare for all families.

Quality is key. We must continue to invest in childcare and the childcare workforce to deliver quality services for every child and every family.

Please join us in June to 'value children, value childcare'.

Stephen Burke
Director, Daycare Trust

JUNE IS NATIONAL SURE START MONTH

Once again it's time to celebrate services available to families – childcare, early education, health and family support. National Sure Start Month in June is the perfect opportunity for providers of these services and families to join together and raise the profile of services, raise funds and simply have fun.

'Starting early' is the theme for National Sure Start Month, which is organised by five major childcare organisations; National Day Nurseries Association, Daycare Trust, National Childminding Association, Pre-school Learning Alliance and 4children (formerly Kids' Clubs Network), and will be supported by the Sure Start Unit. It will be a real opportunity for providers and families to celebrate and get children and parents involved.

More information on National Sure Start Month, including an event pack, is available at www.nationalsurestartmonth.com or by calling 0870 774 4308.

Childcare costs still rising



Childcare costs have continued to rise according to Daycare Trust's most recent survey. The 2004 Childcare Costs survey published in January shows that the typical cost of a full-time nursery place for a child under the age of two has now reached £134 per week. Many parents are paying much more, with the highest nursery cost identified as £338 per week, over £17,500 a year.

The survey of Children's Information Services (CISs) across England also show the average cost of a full time place with a childminder is £120 per week, over £6200 a year. 73% of CISs say parents report a lack of affordable, quality childcare in their area.

Parents cannot afford to pay any more, but childcare providers are not in a position to charge less and still deliver good quality care through experienced and qualified staff. Investment in childcare by the Government and by employers is essential, says Daycare Trust.

BUDGET NEWS ON CHILDCARE

There was good news for childcare in the Budget in March, when Chancellor Gordon Brown pledged to create 1700 children's centres around the country by 2008, with a longer term goal of a children's centre in every community.

Spending on childcare and early years education is to be increased by £669 million by 2008 and some of this new investment will extend free part-time early education places to 6000 two year olds living in disadvantaged areas. Child Tax Credit will increase by £180 per year, equivalent to a £3.50 weekly increase for many families.

Thanks to all of you who supported Daycare Trust's 'childcare challenge' postcard campaign and returned your postcard calling on the Chancellor to create a children's centre in every community to improve life for your family. We'll keep you posted of any future updates.





Summer's coming

It may seem like summer is still a long way off, but now is the time to start planning for your childcare during the school summer break.

Contact your local Children's Information Service (ChildcareLink – 0800 096 02 96 www.childcarelink.gov.uk) for details of holiday clubs and playschemes running during the summer and find out when the providers will be available to take bookings. Speak to your childminder to confirm their availability over the break and let them know about any holidays you have planned as far in advance as possible. You may also want to check with your employer, whether you can make any alterations to your working hours during the school holiday period.

If you receive help with childcare costs through the Working Tax Credit, don't forget to let the Inland Revenue know about additional childcare costs. If your costs go up by more than £10 per week, for four weeks or more you could be eligible to get more help. You can register changes to your claim at www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/taxcredits or by calling 0845 300 3900.

Would you like your say?

With National Childcare Week fast approaching, Daycare Trust is preparing to raise the profile of childcare in the media and we'd like to give you the opportunity to speak out too. Are you interested in letting people know the difference finding good quality childcare has made to you and your children? Perhaps finding good childcare that is affordable is the one thing standing in the way of your dream job or a training opportunity. If you would like to join the childcare campaign and you are happy to speak to the media about your experiences, good or bad, we want to hear from you. You can contact us by e-mail at ereid@daycaretrust.org.uk or by calling our Policy and Campaigns team on 020 7840 3350.

MONEY MATTERS - CUT OUT AND KEEP



Childwise's regular feature to keep you updated on financial support for childcare.

Free early education for all 3 year olds

All three and four year olds are now entitled to a free part-time early education place. From April this year the free provision currently available to all four year olds and some three year old children will become universal. The free part-time place consists of at least five 2½ hour sessions per week, for thirty-three weeks of the year. These are usually delivered in three eleven-week slots, similar to the three terms for nursery schools and classes. However it is not nursery schools and classes alone that can provide children with a free early education place. Other options include day nurseries, pre-schools and playgroups, and childminders who are working as part of an approved childminding network.

The part-time place will be entirely free for parents, and providers will no longer be able to charge parents and offer them a reimbursement of the costs later. If parents require more childcare than is offered through the part-time early education place, they can pay the childcare provider a top-up fee for any additional hours of care.

For more information speak to your local Children's Information Service – contact ChildcareLink on 0800 096 02 96, www.childcarelink.gov.uk

Value children, value childcare

Daycare Trust is all set for National Childcare Week and the theme for 2004 is 'Value children, value childcare'. Running from 14-20 June, during National Sure Start Month, the Week will focus on what makes quality childcare and how this benefits children and parents alike.

Activities for 2004 will include:

- A children's art competition, 'What I like best about my childcare'
- A MORI poll on parents' perceptions of quality childcare
- A Quality Charter for parents and childcare providers
- A policy report on quality in childcare
- The 'Childcare Champions' awards (see details over)
- 'Starting Early', a conference with the British Urban Regeneration Association (BURA)

You'll find more details about National Childcare Week and all the events on our website www.daycaretrust.org.uk



Are you a Childcare Champion?

Daycare Trust is encouraging parents who have campaigned for better childcare in their community to enter the first ever Childcare Champions awards. If you are a parent who has been campaigning for childcare in your area we want to hear from you. Perhaps you've been highlighting the need for high quality provision, fighting for more support for children with disabilities or demanding more investment in out-of-school care.

The awards aim to highlight the importance of parental involvement and why childcare is key to building strong communities. The winner will be announced during National Childcare Week (14-20 June). The deadline for nominations is 30 April and you can find more details at www.daycaretrust.org.uk or by calling 020 7840 3350.

dear childwise...

I'm interested in working in childcare but I'm not sure what qualifications I'll need and how to get started. Can you help?

A career in childcare is rewarding and offers a variety of experience. There are a number of options open to you depending on which type of childcare setting you want to work in and the age of children you would prefer to work with. A great source of information is Childcare Careers at www.childcarecareers.gov.uk or on 0800 99 66 00 which will introduce you to the range of jobs there are in childcare, the types of experience and qualifications that might be needed and gives case studies of how other people have developed a career in childcare.

Your local Children's Information Service (CIS) can provide you with information and may also be running taster courses – call ChildcareLink on 0800 096 02 96 or visit www.childcarelink.gov.uk for details of your CIS.

The Council for Awards in Children's Care and Education (CACHE) have developed professional qualifications in all areas of childcare and can provide information on the range of qualifications and the particular types of childcare work they are suited to. You can order their booklet 'Summary of CACHE Awards' from www.cache.org.uk or 01727 847636.

If you would prefer to be self-employed and to work from your own home, you can become registered as a childminder. You will be required to meet a set of national quality standards and will be registered and inspected by Ofsted. Childminders need to complete an introductory training course and first aid course within 6 months of starting childminding – contact the National Childminding Association 0800 169 4486, www.ncma.org.uk for more information.

And lastly, all the best in your future career.

Yours, Childwise

STAYING SAFE

'Check it, don't chance it!' is the message for Child Safety Week this year. The event organised by the Child Accident Prevention Trust is running from 21-27 June and highlights how simple safety checks can prevent many childhood accidents. An ideas booklet and other resources are available from www.capt.org.uk or 020 7608 3828.

New commitment to complaints

Ofsted has announced that parents will receive more information about complaints made against childcare providers. Its new Childcare Complaints Commitment will mean that information about complaints made will be shared with those who have a direct relationship with the childcare provider - predominantly the parent of a child who made the complaint and also other parents using the particular provision. This will make clear whether complaints were about minor issues which needed no further action, or will detail any measures that have been put in place to improve a service following a complaint.

David Bell, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools, said: "Ofsted's Childcare Complaints Commitment will provide parents with greater peace of mind. From now on, any parent who complains about a provider will be told how we investigated that complaint and what action was taken as a result."

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 020 7840 3355, e-mail info@daycaretrust.org.uk or phone our helpline on 020 7840 3350.

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?



Daycare Trust is the national childcare charity, campaigning for quality affordable childcare for all and raising the voices of children, parents and carers. We advise parents and carers, providers, employers trade unions and policymakers on childcare issues.

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