

Child's Play. Child care centres and primary schools hand-in-hand

Current child care facilities are not providing what parents or children need. The Education Council therefore believes that pre-school playgroups and child day care centres should be remoulded as child care centres that work together with primary schools.

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Parents should have more choice in development-oriented facilities for their young children. The current facilities need to be better tuned to the demand from parents. The facilities also need to be improved greatly in terms of quality. Key improvements need to be made to levels of care, the quality of development programmes, pedagogical programme differentiation and skill levels of nursery staff.

Work towards a new generation of child care centres

The Education Council proposes a new generation of child care centres for newborns to four-year olds, to ensure an uninterrupted development of children in all areas. Child care centres and primary schools should work together in certain areas. They could learn a lot from each other and will need each other in the future.

Supervision is needed

The Education Council recommends that supervision of child care centres should be made a responsibility of the Education Inspectorate. The creation of a centre of expertise for cooperation with primary schools is desirable. Its role would be to take responsibility for developing knowledge, programmes and new partnership models.

Young children who need extra encouragement to overcome learning delays would need to have access to additional programmes at the child care centre. To finance this, the Education Council proposes that the weighting system used to finance primary education is expanded to cover children under four years. The criteria within the weighting system determine which children entitle their school to extra funding.

It is the Education Council's view that a period of four to six years will be needed to reshape the current facilities to the envisaged new generation of child care centres.