



**Association of Childhood Professionals**  
The Professional Body Representing Practitioners in  
Early Years and School Age Care & Education

25th September 2013

**Responses to consultation on the issues that are negatively impacting on the quality of service in  
Early Years and School Age Care & Education**

1. Increase capitation and subvention rates to enable services to offer proper pay and terms and conditions of employment
2. Training fund to enable practitioners to up skill to FL5/6 as required
3. Mentoring & training support to services to enable staff to effectively implement the practice frameworks
4. Training and mentoring supports made available and accessible locally through CCC and ETB (formally VEC) infrastructure

Capitation is too low, providers are finding it too hard to stay in business

The ministers own dept has said the capitation is too low.

If a provider gets the higher capitation it must pass it onto the staff, this has not happen. I must be one of a few who does this my staff are on €16.50 and €14.50 per hour. use my name please Daddy Daycare,( my name was used in the higher capitation discussions last year and we won that one)

Why are to government hell bent on the word free pre-school (primary and secondary school are free and they don't advertise this) The word free depreciates what we do, it means cheap childcare.

Why are the Government so against us having longer than 3 hour sessions?

1. Place at the table for ACP – for everything including inspections
2. Professionalism – what other profession if any has a CE scheme been a gateway into?
3. Garda Vetting –Australia's 'Working with Children' card, where the professional applies for and keeps their own licence to work with children rather than the setting applying for it. It should be applied for once the person starts as a student
4. Preschool year – 38 weeks – should be 50. Businesses (coz that's what early years settings are) have to pay rent, rates, insurance, etc., for 52 weeks of the year yet they are being funded by government for 38 weeks and then have to change their business model for the remaining 14 – what other business does this? Parents have to make

alternative arrangements for their children. If they can't afford to pay for the extra weeks they have to impose on family, friends (unregulated). Whereas it is easier for children 6+ to slot into the routine of family/friends it is harder for the younger child who thrives on routine and is a ball of energy.

Tina McCarthy: Eligibility of parents for CCS /ECCE schemes should be done by the Dept of Social Welfare. Pobal representative told me information sent in by us is sent there anyway. It would free up Supervisors time to concentrate on providing quality care and education.

Secondly; I have two workers who had to take on another part-time job this year to make ends meet. Working with children is very labour intensive, and those that are qualified and experienced are being paid minimum wages and expected to do more observations, and reports, and are walking away from careers in childcare due to the huge responsibilities expected from them for poor remuneration.

I myself am paid for a 25hour week, but in reality end up working a 35hour plus week, having to take paperwork home on many occasions. I know I am not alone in this, and it is because childcare is also a 'vocation', that dedicated staff remain in it, but it is getting more difficult to attract new people to this otherwise rewarding career.

Without the 'motivated dedicated' childcare worker we cannot deliver the quality service expected of us.

Tina Dunstan 1. Administration hours capitation, filling out forms and returns.

2. Non-contact hours in order to plan, document, hold parent meetings.

3. Holiday hours, how can they justify paying capitation for 38 weeks when staff must be paid for 42 to cover holidays.

4. Training fund, staff wish to increase qualification levels.

5. In-service professional development training days.

6. Standardized training for HSE inspectors (for those inspectors currently employed) and the need to hire Early Childhood Professionals as opposed to public health nurses to fill new inspection team positions.

7. Need for serious investment in the 0-3 years.....

8. The need for the early intervention sector for early years to be under the remit of DCYA, as opposed to the HSE.

9. Garda vetting

10. Register within county CHILDCARE's of panel of qualified, experienced, vetted early childhood professionals for relief work, cover holidays, sick cover.

[Karen Clifford](#) Wages based on level of qualification. People with degrees able to apply for preschool inspector jobs. More emphasis put on aistear and siolta for fetac students

[Aimee Leahy](#) It's been suggested already but just to reiterate there should be a pay-scale in line with qualifications, and a professional career path developed. I feel this needs to be put in place before funding for training as we already have a lot of highly trained and qualified people who have/or are leaving the sector due to poor pay and working conditions. So to actually increase qualifications across the sector this needs to be improved first, thus providing an incentive to stay in the sector (reducing the problem of high staff turnover) and also motivation for others to up-skill because it will actually benefit them in the long run rather than just getting initial funding while training. Also time for planning needs to be incorporated into practitioner's daily practice if Aistear and Síolta are to be implemented fully (without practitioners giving up huge amounts of their free time).

[Jennifer Kennedy](#) Pay for childcare workers. I love my job and have paid myself through collage with 3 kids and a home to run but I'd have more money in aldi

[Patrice Mcneill](#) Yes me too Jenifer and my hubby is unemployed

[Geraldine Doran](#) Minimum age. Beginning primary school at 5 years, lots of parents struggle with deciding on age 4 or 5, particularly with the choice of either with the ECCE scheme.

[Gill Gannon](#) Agree with all the suggestions made. Most importantly a training fund or allow part-time degree course under Back to Education or Student grant. Garda vetting needs to be for the person not the setting so they can carry a card between jobs & not need to reapply or wait for vetting to be issued again. Increment system for wages based on qualifications. Can currently be degree qualified but paid minimum wage. Early childhood experts on inspection teams and better links between preschools & national school to aid transitions and have a continuity of approach in to infant classes

[Deborah Reynolds](#) Totally agree with your point, Inspectors should be Early Childhood experts without exception. Since the outcry from the prime time programme earlier this year and the publication of inspections online, I have heard ridiculous stories on how regulations have been misinterpreted by inspectors and how there are some inspectors who have very limited knowledge on early childhood approaches and from that services have unnecessarily failed! Change is needed here

[Deborah Reynolds](#) Hi, don't know how plausible this suggestion is but I'll suggest anyway! Could there be a fund put in place for Childcare workers pursuing Level 5, 6 & 8 part time with proof

you are working full time. Where upon completion of your course you could be guaranteed a sizable percentage of your fee back i.e. 50% or more. I would love to pursue level 8 but finances are holding me back. A financial incentive like this would definitely help. My issues are very similar to others in the sector, we could do with a guaranteed minimum wage system with fixed increments after attaining each Fetac level. Also would love to get paid for non contact time, 7 weeks on SW benefits each summer is another financial challenge. Another gripe is similar to Sinead Gunning in another comment, I am a playschool leader and regularly have Level 5 students for experience, they haven't a clue about Aistear. There needs to be a stand alone module for Aistear especially for anyone delivering ECCE year.

[Kate Heneghan](#) profit making needs to be abolished... working hours need to go down, we need to be paid twice as much as we get now, we need a trade union, we need more holidays as it stands being at work for 45hours per week not including commute times for 9euro an hour with a level 8 and after tax getting 7ish euro an hour with no chance of a wage increase then all the paperwork/planning extra for the weekends with 20 days off a year.... seriously ask the minister to do our job for a week and then ask her what should change..I think it would be a no brainer...

[Deborah Reynolds](#) 'profit making needs to be abolished' well said!

[Johanna Lambe](#) The crazy length of time that services are being forced to wait for Gardai Clearance is something that really needs to be addressed! An approximate 16 week wait in this technological age is madness!!!

[Pamela Purcell](#) Early Childhood Care and Education expert appointed to head up implementation of The National Early Years Strategy. Early Childhood Care and Education trained mentors to facilitate the roll out of Aistear. Early Childhood Care and Education specialists on inspection teams. Having just attended GUI's conference in Trinity College last week, international research advises starting anti bullying techniques at Pre-school level. I feel we need a specific programme at this Early stage.

[Una Curran](#) An Early years curriculum that goes from 2.5 yrs to 6 to ensure junior infants are not repeating what has been done already with the emphasis on play based learning. Greater link ups between schools & pre schools from April to June to ensure a smooth transition to junior infants especially children with SEN. Junior infant teachers should have the opportunity to visit all new students in their pre school setting & a home visit in school hours. This would benefit the child, teacher & the school.

[Deborah Reynolds](#) We already have the Aistear curriculum framework, which is world class. I believe the problem lies with lack of training and mentoring in Aistear, and the lack of understanding of play based learning, some services are still providing Junior Infant type activities like worksheets/letters/numbers/colours which is not play based and inappropriate for the age group. . Aistear is a brilliant source of information but as a visual learner I have always found the layout quite awkward to navigate. Playschools shouldn't have any crossover with the formal Junior infants curriculum, to be honest I would like to see Junior infants have

more play based learning and less book learning, I have heard that Junior Infants teachers will have to bring in 1 hr of free play each week using Aistear curriculum from 2014, but if you have 25+ in your class with no help this will be challenging. But if play based learning was brought into Juniors imagine how wonderfully their play abilities and sense of self would blossom.

[Clodagh Burke](#) Also please could you ask her to look at age limits for ECCE? I have three year olds in my class now along side children over a year older and they are all going to school together in Sept 14?!?!? Maybe she could talk to Ruari Quinn about putting some general rules about the age children begin junior infants.

[Clodagh Burke](#) More early learning experts to spread the word about Siolta and Aistear. Why are Siolta and Aistear not covered in the Fetac Level 5 course?

[Laura Murphy](#) Garda vetting. It's a nightmare. I would be very grateful for improvements

[Mgt Brady](#) When can we expect increase in ECCE fees. We are a small sessional preschool with mostly Ecce children so thereby our income is determined by DCYA fees. This makes paycales redundant as no increase in income means no room for any increase in expenditure.

[Louise Bourke-Lacy](#) Agree with everything put forward by Gill Gannon & wish to second it!!!!

[Geraldine Doran](#) Garda vetting, support for services to support children with special needs. I agree with Sinead about Aistear & Siolta too, recognising the value of play is there in the documents but did you notice when submitting ECCE returns that 'Play-Based' approach doesn't even get a mention?

[Sinead Gunning](#) Childcare training should be on agenda. I deliver fetac 5 and 6 and am so mad that my level 6 students learned nothing about siolta or aistear in the level 5??arghh!! gardai vetting needs sorted for sure! thanks

[Patrice Mcneill](#) regulation on the oversupply of services in areas

[Kentstown Montessori School](#) Holiday Pay and Non-contact time pay to say the least!!

[Tina Harte Foster](#) Non Contact time and a guarantee that the ECCE payment will not be reduced any further as well as more PRSI hikes for business people in the next budget. It's a lot to mention but as a small business the government do not make it anyway easy to maintain a business that is employing staff and keeping people of the live register.

[Lorraine Farrell](#) Garda vetting and non contact Time as a matter of urgency. High quality services cannot be maintained without these issues being addressed and resolved

[Glenda Conyard](#) If preschool leaders are expected to have level 6 by 2015, I think the higher capitation should come with it

[Mary Moloney](#) Regulation and inspection. The child and family services advertised for six PHN posts last week to serve as per-school inspectors. A look at the online inspection reports alone indicates that this warrants immediate attention. The sector needs people who understand quality in early childhood provision specifically to undertake inspections. Why are we perpetuating a system that clearly does not work?

[Lilliput Montessori](#) Higher staff ratios when dealing with a high volume of children with limited English. And capitation to pay for the staff. More one to one is needed when there is a language barrier and this needs to be addressed.

[Nicola Wilson](#) Funding for training, the minister wants all staff highly trained in highly priced courses etc and most staff receive just over the minimum wage!

[Orla Cronin](#) Child/staff ratios need to change!!

[Bernadette Mc Gillicuddy](#) Assurance that the ecce scheme will not be reduced when our contracts are due for renewal. Higher capitation to remain for level 7 & 8, if given to level 6 I believe it would be reduced with no incentive for anyone to go above level 6 thus providing a ceiling to qualifications in the sector that would not match those of our European counterparts. Guarantee that the new proposed registration fee will go back into the sector and not gov purse. Some commitment that the gov will sit up and recognise that we are a valuable sector re our input into the formative years of children in our care.

[Imelda Graham](#) Non-contact time [perhaps suggest an amount - say 3 days per year to be used as determined suitable to each professional and team]; Child Protection Card to travel with the person - as in the Oz Blue card System.

[Jane O Sullivan](#) I would love if you could question the Minister as to why the government refuses to acknowledge that the private market cannot create the 60% graduate led workforce, as called for by the Workforce Development Plan and the OECD.

[Sinead Gunning](#) Gardai vetting pleasseee

[Sonya Duggan](#) Mary Moloney. Well said Mary, I concur 100 percent. Imelda Graham. I agree, but no way is 3 days enough per year. A minimum of ten hrs a week to cover administration. Observations, emerging interests, wky planning and daily prep, short term planning, general developmental records for all curricular/developmental areas, individual scrap books and all the cleaning that is done after each session. Not to say about the early arrivals and late collections that we have to be there for. Lastly for all the other administrative work we have to do for the dept / HSE.

[Karin Ahlers](#) The standards of the staff qualifications!!!

[Catherine Delaney Kelly](#) I agree with all of the suggestions here especially the non contact time and a training fund for people in the sector as training is very expensive on our wages. Thanks for all your hard work on our behalf!

[Sinead Molloy O'Donnell](#) Funding streams and accessible third level training programmes for long standing people of the sector.

[Cora Gillic](#) all of what has been said so far especially regarding pay and staff ratios

[Maureen Walsh](#) All of the previous comments are very valuable to bring to the ministers attention.

[Sonya Duggan](#) Sorry Lastly, To be paid for at least the five /6 non contact wks to June. Its a disgrace and very disrespectful to our sector. Also the New Registration Process the Government are setting up. Are we not regulated enough? How much is that going to cost us?. More money! More paperwork , creating more pen pushing & ticking boxes and giving more jobs and using public funds to those sitting in Dublin. Why? Get the bloody basics right first. Stop allowing facilities to open with no planning permission and hence undercutting those that are paying rates, water charges, development charges etc. Are those in the public/ civil service/community , DCYA, Pobal, or County Childcare Committees on the minimum wage upwards and not paid for sick leave, decent holidays. I think NOT. OK sorry I will get off my soap box now. Thank you

[Sonya Duggan](#) Lilliput Montessori. Totally agree. We have ten non English speakers. We have to work off 7 or 8: 1. Even at that it can be tough going .

[Johanna Lambe](#) Would it be at all possible to include a childcare professional on the inspection team?? It seems to me to make perfect sense to have a childcare professional inspect childcare facilities!!

[Johanna Lambe](#) Would really love someone to answer the issue of the ridiculous 16 week waiting time for Garda clearance too, it's madness in this day and age!!

[Tina Dunstan](#) I think Garda clearance could be done similar to police vetting in the UK where it is done for the individual not the centre. Therefore staff would be responsible for getting it before getting a job and updating it every 3 years like a 1st aid cert. At present centre gets it, if they are CE participant both centre and dept social protection get it, if they are involved in ladybirds, football that's 2 more applications for the same person whereas the amount of applications would be greatly reduced if a streamlined system existed.

[Jacinta Hourigan Sullivan](#) I would agree with that, with a lot of experience of working in the sector.

Also I feel there is a great need to address accessibility for up grading qualifications for those already working in the sector who do not have easy access to courses in the city ie Cork or

Dublin.

[Tina Harte Foster](#) Id like to see if anything can be done with regard to funding for special need children who are waiting to be assessed

[Catriona O Connor](#) Hi, I just wanted to say that I think its worth mentioning that the 'headoffices' of the big childcare companys should be expected to have a minimum qualification in Early Childhood Education, as from my experience it is not the "underqualified" staff who are working with the children (although I do believe in the importance of qualified staff) that are the problem. I found that many of the staff who work in headoffice of big companys such as Giraffe and Links are qualified in business and have no real knowledge of best practice in Early Childhood Education and their only interests are to save money. This means that these are the people who are sending out the orders to their staff. I feel a lot of emphasis is being put on training staff, but for us to really tackle the problems I feel we have to work from the top down. Managers of Early Years Services should be expected to hold minimum qualifications, along with regional managers etc. Just something that has really struck me and I felt was worth mentioning at your next meeting with Minister Fitzgerald.