



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

10<sup>th</sup> December 2013

Dear Minister Fitzgerald,

We are delighted to hear that the recruitment of additional pre-school officers is currently underway however we are appalled and dismayed to read that:

*“Each candidate must have at the latest date of application: -*

*Be registered in the Public Health Division of the Register of Nurses & Midwives maintained by Bord Altranais agus Cnáimhseachais na hÉireann (Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland) or entitled to be registered*

*and*

*Have not less than 5 years satisfactory experience as a Public Health Nurse in the Irish Health Sector or in an analogous post in another jurisdiction, or an aggregate of five years such experience”*

Obviously these criteria exclude childhood professionals and thus are in direct contradiction to your quality agenda as there can be no meaningful inspection of early years care and education by individuals who are not qualified and experienced in this area and whose qualifications would not allow them to deliver the ECCE Scheme.

Not including qualified and experienced childhood professionals demonstrates a complete lack of respect for the individuals in this profession and is a missed opportunity for improving quality in early years care and education. These professionals are expected to deliver quality supports for children and their families yet they are not considered appropriate for inspecting and supporting their own profession. This would not be acceptable in any other profession.

The position of pre-school officer calls for the candidate to *“Demonstrate excellent knowledge of nursing and evidence based practice.”* Would it not be more appropriate for this person to demonstrate excellent knowledge of early years care and education and evidence based practice?

We realise that systems are currently in place and that changing these take time. However, offering permanent positions does not indicate that change will be occurring in the near future and this is disheartening.

Please find attached comments from childhood professionals so that you can appreciate the level of frustration, disgust, bemusement, dismay and anger that is being experienced.

We trust that these will encourage you to make meaningful changes that will be of benefit to early years care and education rather than continuing to support systems that have proven to be inefficient and ineffective.

We look forward to hearing from you on this matter.

Regards,  
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Chairperson  
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