



An Roinn Leanaí  
agus Gnóthaí Óige  
Department of  
Children and Youth Affairs

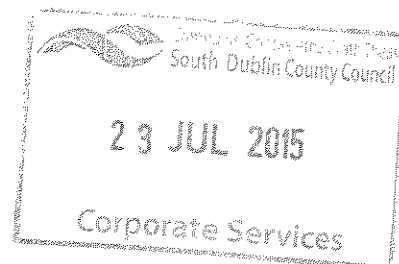
Oifig an Aire  
Office of the  
Minister



Your ref. M17/0615

22 July 2015

Mr Tom O'Neill  
South Dublin County Council  
County Hall  
Tallaght  
Dublin 24



Dear Mr O'Neill

The Minister for Children and Youth Affairs has asked me to refer to your letter concerning the motion carried at the meeting of South Dublin County Council on 8th June in relation to affordable childcare.

Funding of more than a quarter of a billion euro is provided annually by this Department to support the implementation of a number of childcare support programmes that assist parents, particularly those in low-income families, to access quality childcare services. This funding, which is in addition to the direct support provided to all parents in the form of Child Benefit, supports more than 100,000 children each year.

The most significant of these programmes is the Early Childhood Care and Education programme, which represents an annual investment of approximately €175 million and enables almost 67,000 children each year to benefit from free pre-school provision. Parents who qualify for support under this programme can have their annual childcare costs reduced by as much as €2,774 for each qualifying child.

The Community Childcare Subvention programme provides funding to community childcare services to support disadvantaged or low income families. In the region of 25,000 children benefit from this programme each year. In the case of full day care, parents can have their weekly childcare costs reduced by up to €95 per week.

Further childcare support is provided under a number of labour activation measures which support parents returning to the workforce or availing of education or training opportunities. These include the:

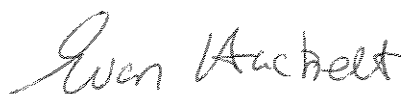
- Childcare Education and Training Supports programme for parents availing of training and education courses;
- Community Employment Childcare programme for parents in Community Employment schemes; and
- After-School Childcare programme for after-school care.

The high level of funding to support these childcare programmes has been maintained despite the difficult budgetary position that has prevailed in recent years.

To ensure that all the benefits of current (and future) investment are fully realised, it must be evidence-based and strategically coordinated. Accordingly, Minister Reilly established an Inter-Departmental Group to develop a coherent whole-of-Government approach to investment in childcare. This Group is considering the needs of children in their early years as well as the needs of school-going children. The Group will submit its report to Government shortly.

I hope that this information is helpful to you.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Evan Hackett".

Evan Hackett

Private Secretary to Minister James Reilly, TD