



Equal childcare
rights for all

Background

- ▶ NHS nurses for over 10 years. Both have children who have additional needs/disabilities.
- ▶ Struggled to get appropriate childcare in order to be able to go out to work. Experiences include a creche contract for a 3 year old, being terminated with no notice given.
- ▶ Told by a creche they couldn't accommodate the child who was disabled.
- ▶ Career breaks/ reduced hours taken as no other options available.

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- ▶ In England the childcare Act 2006 requires all local authorities to ensure there is enough registered childcare places for children aged 0-14, and reduce inequalities.
 - ▶ There is no childcare sufficiency duty in NI requiring the government to ensure there are sufficient childcare places to appropriately meets the needs of all families, including those who have a child with a disability. Families in Northern Ireland can face a range of barriers to accessing quality early learning and childcare (Employers for childcare).

Creches

- ▶ Untrained staff for children with additional needs.
- ▶ Poor ratios e.g. 1 staff member for 8 children in the 3-5 room. This is unsafe for a child with additional needs.
- ▶ Creches unwilling to change ratios /accommodate 1:1's/ make reasonable adjustments.
- ▶ Appears to be extreme lack of or no funding available for children in creches that require extra support.
- ▶ Refused creche place due to disability.
- ▶ Contract terminated as unable to facilitate needs of the child.
- ▶ Told prices would be increased for all children if additional funding was not provided by us as parents.

Registered childminders

- ▶ Previous experience of registered childminders stating they would have to reduce overall numbers of children to ensure a safe ratio, so therefore refused a place.

Private Childcare

- ▶ No Government supplement assistance, therefore more expensive.
- ▶ No obligation to give notice and can terminate at any given time.

Social Work support

- ▶ Spent weeks contacting social workers to seek assistance with help for childcare. No social worker able to provide support.
- ▶ Health visitor had submitted a unocini (Professional report to highlight an issue) but again this was declined.
- ▶ Social worker in creche setting providing inappropriate and unprofessional advice.
- ▶ No response from complaints lodged to early years team within southern trust.

Parents

- ▶ Unable to access safe and appropriate childcare due to child having a disability.
- ▶ Relying heavily on family support which isn't always available.
- ▶ No advice/support given
- ▶ Having to stop work/reduce hours despite increased cost of living therefore causing financial strain.

Discrimination

- ▶ Able to access childcare for siblings but Child with additional needs left out and unable to be provided for.
- ▶ Children with disabilities are being isolated and left behind.
- ▶ Entitled to same opportunities as any other child.

Suggestions for the future

- ▶ Despite disability legislation there appears to be no legal obligation for creches to accommodate a child with additional needs.
- ▶ Safe childcare facilities to include children with disabilities.
- ▶ Local government funding for creches to facilitate children with disabilities.
- ▶ Childcare costs currently highlighted on a daily basis in the media. What about children with additional needs?
- ▶ Highlight awareness of these issues
- ▶ Policies/procedures implemented in childcare facilities.
- ▶ Social work support
- ▶ Stop discrimination against children with additional needs.