



Nursery– where the best start happens

The National Day Nurseries Association (NDNA) has launched a new campaign 'Nursery: Where the Best Start Happens', to champion the role that private, voluntary and independent (PVI) nurseries play in giving children from birth to five the best start in life. NDNA said it was in reaction to 'misleading' Government messaging about 'cheaper childcare' and school nurseries 'being necessary to help transitions to school and school readiness.'

We are writing to you to share how we ensure that we provide the best possible start for your children. The Government has a national strategy for 'Giving Every Child the Best Start in Life' and we wanted to share how we are already doing the things set out in this.

Better Support for families

Private settings like us provide support for families in every community. We offer rich, play-based learning environments tailored to the needs of each individual child.

When it comes to being embedded in the community, as you know we support The Grace Kelly Childhood Cancer Charity, provide wraparound care for Inkberrow School, support and visit the local church with the children, and invite families into nursery and the village hall to join in with various activities and events throughout the year.



We also support children and families with additional needs by investing in resources, appropriate training for staff, providing additional staffing for children who need 1-2-1 support. Our Senior Lead SENDCo, Toyah, is highly experienced and deeply committed to ensuring all children receive the care and access to learning opportunities to help support their development whilst in our care.

Unfortunately, support for children with additional needs is becoming increasingly stretched. Private and voluntary nurseries like ours are providing more places for children with additional needs than any other part of the early years sector but often we do not get the financial support to do everything that children need in ways that we would want to.

The Government has started a national conversation on SEND provision and we would encourage you to find out more including how you can be involved here

- <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-launches-national-conversation-on-send>

More accessible early education and childcare

Nurseries/ pre-schools like ours are proud to be part of the private, voluntary and independent (PVI) sector which is working hard to deliver the majority of the Government's funded childcare expansion. We have increased our capacity to offer funded places by adding in The Acorns room within pre-school, allowing us to accept more babies and toddlers which has enabled us to make sure families can get their funded places.

We are only closed at Christmas and open 10.5 hours a day to make sure the early education and care we offer is supporting families while also offering the vital continuity of care for our



children. That's how nurseries like ours are delivering **early education and care that works for everyone**.

However, we also need the funding system to work for nurseries. The National Day Nurseries Association (NDNA) has found that nurseries make an average loss of £2 per hour on funded places for three and four year-olds. The Government's own research says that only 42% of nurseries across the country have enough income to cover their costs and for school-based nurseries only 23% say they can cover their costs, so the whole system is clearly underfunded.

The Government says it's hourly funding rate "*is not intended to cover the costs of meals, other consumables, additional hours or additional services*". This is why we have charges in place for meals, early starts at 7.30am and why we ask that parents provide snacks and nappies.

We know the range of funding options and support can be difficult to navigate, which is why we are backing calls for changes to the way early years funding is allocated to make it simpler for you, us and our local authority. If we could spend less time doing paperwork and admin for the funded hours, we could spend more time with your children.

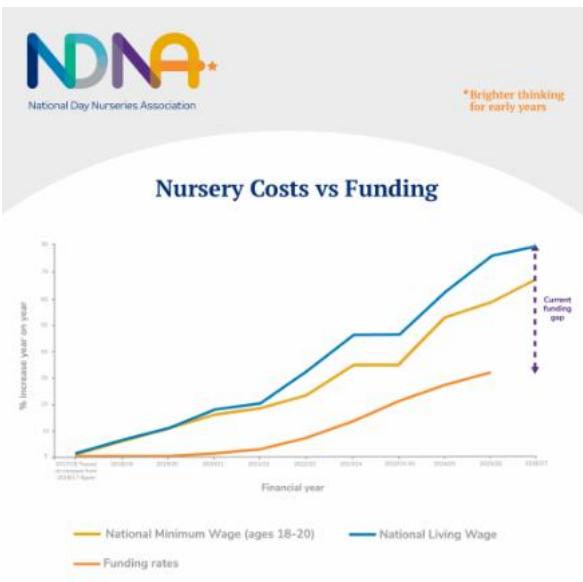
Improving quality in early years

We are proud to be providing your child with the **inspirational early experiences** that we know make a difference to learning and development in those crucial first five years. The Government's national target is for more children to be reaching a good level of development in the Early Years Foundation Stage, up to when they start school at five.

We take a wider view here. Inclusive education and care in nursery means no child is

left behind and our quality starts with skilled, experienced early years educators. Our team contains qualified staff who have expertise in child development, as well as specialists in SEND, qualified teachers, Forest School, Yoga, Baby Yoga, and we pay for Delta Sport to help with physical activities at preschool.

With growing costs across the board and funding failing to keep pace with these costs every year, we are doing this in a very challenging environment. In the coming weeks the Government will announce new funding rates for our area but as you can see from this chart, there is a significant and growing gap between our staffing costs and the funding we receive.



For context, the average funding rate for three and four-year-olds only increased by 4.6% last year when we saw statutory wages rise by around 10%. This year the statutory wage increases will be between 4.1% and 8.5% and we need that to be reflected in Government funding.

We will be supporting NDNA's national campaign **Nursery – where the best start happens**, to showcase the amazing things that are happening in our nursery and nurseries and pre-schools like ours across the country.



I hope this information helps you to understand the challenges we face as early years providers and the difficult choices we are faced with. We also hope you will be able to support us in contacting your MP to ask for the support early years providers need and to minimise the increased costs we have to pass on to parents.

Many thanks

Tina, Claire and the team at Little Bo Peep Ltd