



Jersey Child Care Trust Welcomes Early Years Education Funding for 2–3 Year Olds and Encourages Collaborative Design

The Jersey Child Care Trust (JCCT) welcomes the Minister for Education's announcement of 15 hours of term-time early years education funding for all children aged 2–3, starting January 1st, 2026. This universal offer represents a positive investment in Jersey's children and families. We support its aim to improve access and reduce inequality.

While the implementation timeline is tight, JCCT sees an opportunity to contribute insights and experience to inform the design process. This builds on previous work, including the *ISOS Early Years Roundtable Series 2023–2024: Messages to Policy Makers in Jersey*.

Supporting Universal Access

JCCT supports:

- Universal investment in early years education, promoting inclusion and equity.
- Financial support for families already accessing nursery or childminder services.
- Developmental benefits for children aged 2–3, a critical stage for social, emotional, and cognitive growth.

Key Considerations for Design

1. Optimum Number of Hours

The Study of Early Education and Development (SEED) offers robust, evidence-based insights into the optimum hours of early education. A large-scale, longitudinal study, running since 2015, tracked more than 5,000 children from age two to Key Stage 1 and included quality assessments of 1,000 early years settings. This study indicates that:

- Around **15 hours per week** of early education is associated with positive cognitive outcomes for disadvantaged children.
- Increasing hours beyond this does **not consistently improve outcomes** and can be linked to some socio-emotional drawbacks (e.g., externalising behaviours) for more advantaged children.

2. Term-Time Limitations

- **Additional costs:** Families new to childcare may face financial strain covering care outside of the offer, i.e. over and above 15 hours and outside of term time, unless using a preschool model.
- **Pressure on providers:** Year-round settings may experience increased demand for term-time-only places, affecting sustainability.
- **Fragmented care risks:** JCCT has already received enquiries from working parents seeking 'wraparound care' for 2-year-olds. ¹'Wraparound care' is typically designed for school-aged children and does not meet the developmental needs of very young children.

¹ Wraparound care refers to childcare services provided outside standard school hours, including before and after school and during school holidays, to ensure continuous support for children and enable parental workforce participation.

Very young children thrive in consistent relationships with a small number of trusted adults. Research shows that stable, continuous care supports secure attachment and emotional wellbeing.

3. Inclusion of Accredited Nannies

JCCT encourages the Minister to consider including Accredited Nannies in the funded offer. These qualified professionals provide flexible, home-based care that supports strong attachment relationships and meets the needs of many families.

Benefits include:

- **Equity and choice:** Enables families to choose home-based care, particularly those with non-standard working hours or specific needs.
- **Sector capacity:** Helps alleviate pressure on nursery places by offering an alternative accredited option.
- **Continuity of care:** Mainly one-to-one or one-to-two care which supports emotional development, especially for children who thrive in quieter, personalised environments.
- **Quality and safeguarding:** Accredited Nannies meet JCCT's rigorous standards, aligning with the Government's commitment to high-quality early years education.
- **Workforce development:** Recognises the profession, supports retention and strengthens sector resilience.

JCCT currently supports 26 Accredited Nannies, with 4 additional applicants in process. Nannies are paid an hourly rate, which is a cost-effective option for families with more than one child. The hourly rate of £11 could be paid to employers to contribute towards their childcare costs to support this model.

4. Workforce Quality and Stability

Finally, the success of this offer depends on a qualified, valued workforce delivering high-quality early years education in settings designed for 2–3 year olds.

JCCT advocates for:

- Delivery by early years qualified professionals.
- A living wage as a minimum, with employment terms that support recruitment and retention.
- Nurturing, quality settings tailored to the developmental needs of 2–3 year olds.
- Collaborative and creative approach to investment in training, career pathways and sector recognition.

Research consistently links workforce qualifications and stability to positive outcomes for children.

5. Informed Childcare Choices

JCCT urges the Minister to prioritise *Policy Imperative E* from the ISOS Roundtable Report, which recommends engaging parents to understand whether they need more or different information about early years providers.

Working Together

JCCT supports a model that:

- Reflects the needs of all families.
- Supports consistent, high-quality care.
- Recognises the diversity of early years provision in Jersey.

We remain committed to contributing to the development of a funding model that gives every child the best possible start.