

10th June, 2013

Dear Deputy Prime Minister,

Continuing concerns over More Great Childcare

I am writing to express our sincere thanks for your intervention in the planned changes to permitted adult to child ratios for babies and very young children in nurseries. These proposals were not in the best interests of children's care, learning and development, staffing and retention or economic considerations. We are particularly pleased that you emphasised the need to take note of research evidence and to listen to experienced experts when planning changes. We hope that this approach will be taken towards other early years initiatives.

We remain concerned about several other announcements made in More Great Childcare. These include:

- loss of local authorities' role in improving quality in early years settings through the provision of professional development and support strategies for staff;
- inconsistencies with regard to plans for changes to qualifications. In particular, there are anomalies in the introduction of the Early Years Teacher qualification without Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) for children from birth to five years, while other early years teaching qualifications for children from three to seven years do have QTS, and the introduction of an Early Years Educator qualification which extends from birth to seven. An early years teacher qualification with QTS for work with children from birth to seven years would be a more coherent plan, as suggested by Professor Cathy Nutbrown.

We met with Baroness Walmsley earlier in the year to discuss our concerns and would be glad to work with the Liberal Democrat Party as you continue to develop your policies on early years. We are currently working with the British Educational Research Association and will be producing briefing papers on early years research evidence to inform policy. Copies of these will be sent to you as they become available.

We would welcome any opportunity to discuss these issues further with you or your office. Yours sincerely,

Dr Jane Payler
Chair of TACTYC
Faculty of Education, Health and Social Care,
University of Winchester
West Hill Winchester
Hants SO22 4NR
jane.payler@winchester.ac.uk