

Letter to Editor submitted to Irish Times, Independent, Examiner, Sunday Business Post, Sunday Tribune and Sunday Independent

October 8th, 2009

Dear Editor,

We, the undersigned national childcare organisations, formed as the National Voluntary Childcare Collaborative (NVCC,) are calling on Minister Lenihan to highlight the outcry we are aware of from our close contact with a very large number of families and children in a wide variety of settings, including pre-schools, community and private childcare services and hospitals. We acknowledge the seriousness of the current economic situation and the difficult decisions that arise for Government however we are very concerned that many of the savings contained in the McCarthy report will have a detrimental impact on children and families.

While welcoming the introduction of the free pre-school year for every child, we are very concerned that broader government investment in childcare should not be reduced until the necessary provision for high quality childcare services can be assured for children throughout the country. Childcare is a crucial support to families, particularly vulnerable families. It is essential that Government funding for schemes such as the Community Childcare Subvention Scheme be ring-fenced at the present level, otherwise many community services will not be sustainable.

We are also concerned that many of the cuts proposed in the McCarthy Report relating to education, health and social welfare will have a lasting detrimental impact on children and families, if implemented. Even in these difficult times, it is important that the real life impact of proposed cuts on children and families are seriously taken into consideration before decisions are made. Cuts to family supports such as Child Benefit, the Qualified Child Increase and Family Income Supplement will inevitably impact severely on many children's welfare.

We urge you the Minister of Finance, Mr Brian Lenihan to do all in his power to protect children when reviewing the McCarthy Report and framing Budget 2010.

Yours sincerely,

Patricia Murray, on behalf of the following organisations in the NVCC:

Barnardos,
Childminding Ireland
Children in Hospital Ireland
Forbairt Naíonraí Teoranta
IPPA – the early childhood organisation
National Children's Nurseries Association
Steiner Kindergarten Association
St. Nicholas Montessori Association of Ireland

Should you require any further information please don't hesitate to contact me

Kind Regards,

Siobhan

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