



start strong

Advancing Children's
Early **Care & Education**

A young child with light brown hair is focused on playing with a wooden toy. The child is wearing a grey hoodie over a long-sleeved shirt with pink, blue, and white horizontal stripes. They are holding a long, light-colored wooden rod vertically, with their hands positioned near the bottom. The background is a blurred nursery or playroom, featuring a wooden shelf with various colorful toys and a wall with a grid of colorful squares. The text 'Childcare' and 'Business or Profession?' is overlaid in a purple font on the right side of the image.

'Childcare'

Business or Profession?

Childcare is a profession ... I do not like to see this referred to as a business, a sector or an industry. Unfortunately for some, that is what it has turned into.

An Taoiseach, Enda Kenny T.D.

Speaking in the Dáil on 29 May 2013, the day after the Prime Time investigation, *A Breach of Trust* was broadcast.



A new model of early years services for our young children

- Use public funding as a lever to improve quality
- With greater public investment
- Making public funding conditional on quality

... focused on quality

In doing so, the Government should also

- Form a new Early Years Inspectorate
- Move progressively towards graduate-led provision
- Introduce salary scales
- Introduce the regulation and support of childminders
- Invest in national supports for quality
- Carry out a regular national quality audit
- Move towards the introduction of ceilings on fees

... that is accessible and affordable to all families.

- Continue progress to a Second Free Pre-School Year
- Open up public funding schemes to regulated and inspected childminders
- Ensure access to quality services for all children
- Local structures meeting local needs

