



Sam Gyimah MP

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Childcare and Education

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Sam Gyimah MP
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Dear Colleague,

Autumn is a good time to reflect on all we have achieved in education and the early years and to look forward to the year ahead. I have spent my first months in my role as the Minister for childcare and education seeing the range of great work going on across the country and I wanted to thank you for everything you do to make sure that every child gets the best start in life.

Over the last few weeks, I have visited several nurseries and each time I have been impressed by the dedication of everyone working there. I hope to visit many more providers in the coming months to see what you do, listen to your experiences and learn from your expertise. I want to engage with you as much as possible.

The new Provider Survey results show a market that is providing early education and childcare to more children than ever before, with an increasingly well-qualified workforce. The latest Ofsted inspection results show that the early years sector continues to deliver for children and families. All early years professionals deserve recognition for the work they do, so whether you are a local authority lead or a day nursery manager; a Children's Centre practitioner or a childminder; a charity working with young children or a teacher in a school nursery; thank you for your hard work.

I know the last month has been especially busy with new policies coming in to force, particularly the extension of the two-year-old learning entitlement and the SEN reforms which includes the early years. I want to take a moment to celebrate together what we have achieved in the early years world. In recent years, we have:

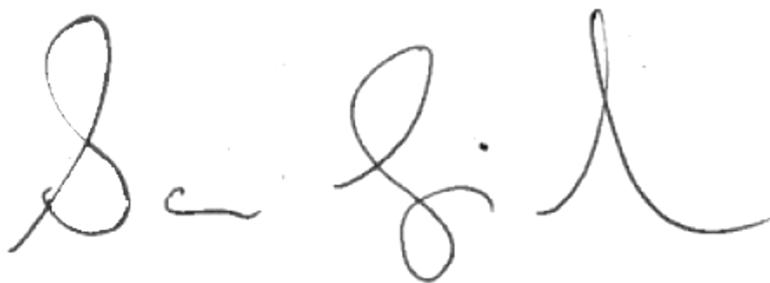
- extended the early learning entitlement from 12.5 hours to 15 hours each week for all three- and four-year-olds and extended this to around 40% of all two-year-olds;

- committed to introducing Tax Free Childcare from Autumn 2015. This will be open to almost 2 million families, and will provide support of up to £2,000 a year for each child;
- enabled organisations to register as childminder agencies which will support new childminders as they start their business and offer more choice for parents;
- raised the skills and status of early years professionals and created more opportunities for people who want to work in the early years through the introduction of Early Years Teachers and Early Years Educators;
- seen Children's Centres reaching more than 90 per cent of families most in need with over one million parents accessing their services last year; and
- announced an extension of the schools pupil premium into the early years that will be worth £300 each year per eligible child.

Of course, there is always more that we can do. In the next few months, I want to see more children, particularly two-year-olds from poor backgrounds, accessing high-quality early education. Giving all children at every age and stage the best opportunities is part of the government's plan for education and something I know the Secretary of State, Nicky Morgan, also feels very strongly about. I am committed to pushing that work forward.

Thank you for everything you have already done to give children the high-quality early education and support they need in those first few critical years. I believe it is one of the best investments we can give to the future generation.

With very best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sam Gyimah', written in a cursive style.

Sam Gyimah MP