



Youth Work Ireland

Press Release
Youth Work Ireland
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“Critical After School Projects for the Most Disadvantaged Children set to Close due to Childcare Payment Change” Says Leading Youth Organisation

After school projects dealing with literacy, homework support and personal development to children in crisis are set to close affecting the most vulnerable children and young people later this year according to Youth Work Ireland, some of whose members offer these crucial supports around the country. Local providers of after school projects for some of the most disadvantaged young people will be forced to charge prohibitive amounts to parents of extremely disadvantaged children because their parents are not working! The organisation has described the approach as bizarre and contradictory to the purpose and philosophy of early childhood education, which is to focus on the quality of the provision for children rather than the employment status of the parent. The organisation wants all after school projects targeted at the most disadvantaged young people exempted from this change. The organisation does not believe some of the reasoning provided by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs that schools and others will make up for this change in their own referrals as existing projects currently receive the same referrals but will be forced to close.

“It is clear to us that projects providing for some of the most disadvantaged children and young people will have to close this year. These often provide critical support for those in crisis, those with literacy issues and those whose parents really struggle. The fact that a parent does not work is not the sole factor in assessing the needs of children for this type of support. Youth Services providing this support have built up critical relationships with parents and young people, these are vital in assisting the transition from primary to secondary school for many children, a critical transition highlighted in Government policy and research on child welfare” said Kathryn Wall of [Carlow Regional Youth Services](#)

“In some respects, this change lets the cat out of the bag on the purpose and focus of early childhood education. It now seems clear that the labour market status of the parent is the key determining issue rather than the quality and impact of the provision. It seems the purpose of early childhood education funding now is exclusively to facilitate people back to work and associate the Government with this rather than providing the best educational experience for all children. We need to distinguish these changes from others happening in relation to ratios and payments for other working parents. These after school projects deal with the most disadvantaged children who do not have the necessary support at home, these projects are crucial to the welfare of these children regardless of their parents” added Michael Mc Loughlin of Youth Work Ireland

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