

## **5.2 The Deputy of St. John of the Minister for Education Sport and Culture regarding charges for early years education:**

Since the introduction of the 20 hours a week free nursery education for children, can the Minister advise whether up to 30 hours per week had been given free for children, and if so, how this has been funded? How many children have received longer free care and what is the total annual cost for children receiving 20 hours and 30 hours and will charges for early years' education be reviewed?

### **Deputy J.G. Reed of St. Ouen (The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture):**

Prior to September 2009 only half of all eligible children in Jersey were lucky enough to access up to 30 hours early years' education delivered in school nurseries attached to our States primary schools. The remaining children were accommodated in the private sector and the parents were left to pay the full cost. To address this inequity the States approved an amendment to the 2009 Business Plan to extend the opportunity for all children to access 20 hours free education per week during term time in the year before entering statutory education. Additional funding was allocated to the department, and from September 2009 the States began funding 20 free hours in private nurseries. There are presently 529 children in States school nursery classes out of a cohort of about 1,000. Annual staff costs total £1.95 million. The budget for the nursery education fund set up to finance the private sector provision was £1.45 million in 2010. Since the introduction of the new and universal provision the early years' partnership has been set up and their work has focused on improving standards across the service. This has been a great success. A review has been undertaken and expert advice sought over the suitability of the provision of early years' education. Furthermore, after listening to concerns raised by parents, it has been acknowledged that the amount of free hours available in States nurseries is more generous than that in the private sector and this will be addressed by the introduction of a charge for the additional hours.

### **5.2.1 The Deputy of St. John:**

As it has been assessed and agreed that there is additional hours been given to early years' education, my question did ask how much it has cost the Island in the additional hours given to these families; could I have the answer please?

### **The Deputy of St. Ouen:**

The cost relating to the States nursery provision for 2010 was £1.95 million and the budget for the nursery education fund - that is a separate fund to provide for provision in the private sector - amounted to £1.5 million in 2010.

### **5.2.2 The Deputy of St. John:**

I asked for a breakdown of those who received the additional 10 hours per week and that has not been given. Could he give that as a breakdown of those figures please?

### **The Deputy of St. Ouen:**

I presume the Deputy did not hear me. There are presently 529 children in States school nursery classes, out of a cohort of about 1,000. Thank you.

### **5.2.3 Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:**

In his answer, the Minister said that the States provision was £600,000 more expensive than the private sector's provision. I know it is difficult to compare like-for-like; what is the reason for that cost, and does it include pensions?

[11:30]

**The Deputy of St. Ouen:**

The Deputy is quite right to raise the question. The cost that I announced of £1.95 million amounts to staff costs only. It does not account for premises and capital expenditure, heating, lighting and other matters that would be included in the overall costs of each separate primary school. Therefore there is an additional cost over and above the £1.95 million of what I would call direct staff costs.

**5.2.4 Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:**

I do not know if it is supplementary; it is the same one. Does this include pensions, through the Chair? Does this £600,000 include the pension element?

**The Deputy of St. Ouen:**

Yes, Sir.

**The Bailiff:**

Final question, Deputy of St. John?

**5.2.5 The Deputy of St. John:**

Well, I do not think we are going to get an answer. If I read the last line and a bit of the question. I asked the annual cost for children receiving 20 hours and 30 hours and will charges for early years be reviewed? He told us it was to be reviewed. Have they been charged for that additional 10 hours? That is what I need to know.

**The Deputy of St. Ouen:**

It would be entirely wrong to introduce charges halfway through an academic year. It is our plan to introduce the charges and provide the fairness of choice to a parent from September 2011.

**5.2.6 The Deputy of St. John:**

Sir, supplementary. How can it be wrong when the law was specific that we would give 20 hours and from there on anything extra would have to be charged? Why can it not be backdated now? It is nothing to do with fairness. Fairness to the taxpayer; that is what I am looking for, the people who are supplying the money, they need this justified, not change the goalpost because the Minister has some other ideas. Will the Minister please answer the question? Why does he consider it fair?

**The Deputy of St. Ouen:**

It is not a case of changing the goalpost, it is allowing parents proper and sufficient time to adjust to the new changes.