

Recent statements from Westminster regarding Play

Department for Education has provided the following answer to your written parliamentary question (226700):

Question:

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 26 February 2019 to Question 223144, which Minister is responsible for policy on play services for children aged six and over which is not part of the early years foundation stage statutory framework; and how much funding the Government allocated in support for play for children in (a) after-school clubs, (b) holiday play schemes, (c) adventure playgrounds and (d) play-ranger services in the last three years for which that information is available. (226700)

Tabled on: 27 February 2019

Answer:

Nadhim Zahawi:

I am the minister responsible for children and families. The information on how much government funding is allocated in support of play for children in (a) after-school clubs, (b) holiday play schemes, (c) adventure playgrounds and (d) play-ranger services is not held centrally.

As outlined below, the department has invested millions of pounds in enabling all children to access and benefit from a range of enriching activities outside of school.

In the 2018 summer holidays we awarded £2 million to 7 organisations to ensure that disadvantaged children in some of the most deprived areas in the country could access free healthy food and enriching activities. In the 2019 summer holidays we will invest up to £9 million to explore how the local coordination of this sort of provision can help more disadvantaged children to access high quality programmes during the school holidays.

We have invested £22 million for the academic years 2017/18 and 2018/19 to enable disadvantaged children and young people living in some of the most deprived parts of the country to participate in regular extra-curricular activities (including after school and holiday provision) which will enable them to develop essential life skills and get the best start in life.

This Essential Life Skills (ELS) programme is targeting disadvantaged children and young people aged 5-18 across 12 Opportunity Areas. Within each Opportunity Area, local authorities are receiving grants to develop their own ELS programme to meet the needs of pupils and young people in their communities. It is up to the local partnership board in each Opportunity Area to decide what programmes and activities best meet the needs of children and young people in the area.

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) is formally responsible for ensuring local authorities secure services for young people over the age of 13 as set out in the section 507b of the Education Act (1996) (below that age local authorities have

discretion). However, a number of DCMS programmes such as #iwill and the Youth Investment Fund do support organisations that provide 'youth and play' programmes to a broader age range than that provided for in the act.

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The answer was submitted on 04 Mar 2019 at 16:20.

The Department for Education has provided the following answer to your written parliamentary question (223144):

Question:

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, which Minister is responsible for children's play services; and what steps the Government is taking on ensuring that the UK upholds Article 31 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child on the right to play. (223144)

Tabled on: 19 February 2019

Answer:

Nadhim Zahawi:

I am the Minister responsible for early years and childcare policy.

The UK government remains fully committed to children's rights and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and I reaffirmed our commitment in my Written Ministerial Statement on 20 November 2018.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework sets the regulatory standards for 'learning and development' and 'safeguarding and welfare' requirements for all early years providers caring for children from birth to 5. The framework defines 7 areas of learning and development and is clear that each area must be implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activity.

The EYFS Statutory Framework is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework-2>.

The answer was submitted on 26 Feb 2019 at 16:05.

Nadhim Zahawi, Ministerial speech in Manchester, 28 February 2019

Of course, the most important people in a child's life are their parents. Which brings me onto the second area I want to talk about – improving the Home Learning Environment. Because the evidence is clear that what happens at home in the early years is absolutely key to outcomes later in life.

That is why, in November, the Department held a summit, at which we brought together a coalition of over 120 businesses, voluntary groups, community and public sector organisations. These organisations all share a common goal – to help parents kick start their child's early communication, language and literacy development at home.

We want to get across that there are really simple, everyday things that every parent can do more of to help their children's language and literacy.

Since the summit, I have been working with some of these organisations to bring their commitments to life, and it is no surprise to me to find that there is some excellent, innovative practice here in Manchester. Today after this summit, I am visiting Manchester City Football Club, to observe one of their sessions that uses physical activity to enhance children's communication and language.

Our next steps are to launch a public campaign to encourage parents to chat, play and read more with their children. I recognise that it is important to get this message out there in local communities if we want to see a change in parental behaviour, and for this to work, I will really need your help and expertise.