# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE** | **The Early Childhood Play Learning and Care in Wales Plan** |
| **DATE** | **15 March 2024** |
| **BY** | **Julie Morgan MS, Deputy Minister for Social Services,**  **Jeremy Miles MS, Minister for Education and Welsh Language** |

Today we are publishing [our Early Childhood Play Learning and Care in Wales Plan](https://www.gov.wales/early-childhood-play-learning-and-care-ecplc). This is a cross-sectoral plan that brings together, for the first time, all our policies and programmes relating to early childhood play, learning and care from across Welsh Government.

We want every baby and young child in Wales to thrive through enriched opportunities and experiences. Babies and young children live in the moment and should enjoy the many wonders and fun that brings. And in doing so we are supporting them to build a more fulfilled future.

The First Minister announced the Welsh Government’s approach to implementing an integrated, high-quality, rights-based approach to early childhood play, learning and care in October 2019. Our plan places the child and child development at the heart of everything we do in respect to early childhood play, learning and care in Wales.

It is important to be clear that early childhood play, learning and care is not about creating a new type of early years setting. It is about developing and delivering a consistent approach to nurturing, learning and development, through the provision of high-quality, inclusive, play-based education and childcare opportunities, for all babies and young children aged 0 to five-years-old.

We are committed to breaking down barriers to ensure babies and young children are supported to have fulfilling and happy childhoods.

The plan has been developed around three themes:

* Quality of provision: We are seeking to provide all babies and young children with high-quality stimulating learning and care experiences in every nursery education, playwork and childcare setting they attend.
* Access to provision: Provision of support should be flexible, inclusive and responsive to individual circumstances which support children and their development as well as enabling their parents to understand the wide range of support available to them which may help them to be able to work.
* Supporting and developing the workforce: All professionals working within early childhood play, learning and care, should be equally valued and have a package of learning and support.

Early childhood play, learning and care has a significant contribution to make in mitigating the impact of inequalities – whether that’s racism, poverty, or other societal factors such as a lack of opportunities – which can have lasting effects on people’s lives.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all those partners involved in the co-development of the plan. Throughout its development, we have been clear we cannot achieve our ambition for Wales alone – we need everyone working in the early childhood play, learning and care sectors to play a significant role and to undertake collective action to enable, all babies and young children in Wales to have an opportunity to thrive, be happy and healthy.