

5 CAMPAIGN ASKS

1. Universal access to family support programmes

- Ensure that every parent in the country has access to a proven parenting programme as well as good quality and consistent information, advice and supports and in their area, throughout childhood.
- Redeploy, recruit and support 600 “child and family” Public Health Nurses dedicated to child health to work within HSE Primary Care teams, providing antenatal and early year’s preventative child health and family supports (at a cost of €17m per annum).¹

2. Build on and develop prevention and early intervention practice:

- Commit to sustaining and growing the prevention and early intervention practice, learning and experience developed across Ireland to date.
- Increase investment in Prevention and Early Intervention Programmes to €20 million a year, taking account of the withdrawal of philanthropic funding (Currently the annual government investment in the Area Based Childhood Programme is €5 million a year).

3. Increase the budget of Tusla, the Child and Family Agency by 10%:

- Tusla is currently operating at a deficit and requires a 5% (€31.75m) increase in funding to provide the absolute minimum level of services needed to fulfil its functions.
- To help Tusla fulfil its statutory responsibility to provide preventative supports to children and families a further 5% (€31.75m) is needed.

4. Bring investment in early years care and education services up to OECD average:

- Over the lifetime of the next Government incrementally increase the spend on high quality early care and education services from the current level of less than 0.2 % of GDP to match the OECD average of 0.8% in order to improve the quality, accessibility and affordability of early years provision for all children.²

5. Support Systems change towards Prevention and Early Intervention

The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform should introduce and oversee the following:

- A requirement that all Government Departments to agree a template for reorienting their planning and budgeting to incorporate prevention and early intervention approaches and report on this annually.
- The set up of a “transformation fund” of €20 million to incentivise Government Departments to integrate a prevention and early intervention focus to act as a catalyst for change in decision making and resource allocation processes. (E.g. workforce development, capacity building and effective service implementation and review).

¹ DCYA (2013) *Right from the Start: Report of the Expert Advisory Group on the Early Years Strategy*. See recommendation on page 5. The suggested figures are based on the recruitment of an additional 300 PHNs, and the redeployment of 300 PHNs, with an average caseload of 500 child health families per PHN. Ireland has approximately 300,000 families with children, and over 480,000 children under 6 years (Census of the population 2011)

² “OECD (2014) OECD Family Database. The published OECD figure for Ireland (0.5%) includes the infant classes of primary schools (nearly 0.4% GDP). Excluding this, pre-school spending in Ireland is around 0.15% GDP.”