

How to Solve the Childcare Funding Maze London's Childcare Strategy

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2003 – The Mayor’s Childcare Strategy for London

14 proposals to support and help London’s parents to access quality, affordable childcare to help them train and work

Childcare costs in London 25% more expensive than elsewhere

Lack of flexible provision to meet the needs of parents in 24/7 city

Childcare Affordability Programme (CAP) launched November 2005

£33M, three year pilot

Jointly funded by LDA and DCSF

Delivered by the LDA and managed by GLE

Phase 1 – full day and flexible care

Phase 2 – more innovative pilots

- Transition to Employment
- Home Based
- Emergency
- SEN

Has CAP been successful?

'I could go straight back into a job rather than wait until Antonio is in school'

MARRIED MOTHER of four, Amanda Cary has had plenty of practice juggling children and work.

Her kids are aged 13, 10, Eve and two – with the youngest, Antonio, currently in full-time nursery in White City.

And she said that it is thanks to getting cheaper childcare through the childcare affordability programme that she has been able to go back to work as a sales assistant.

She added: 'The childcare affordability programme has been really good for me as getting cheaper childcare has meant that I can go straight back into a job rather than wait until Antonio is in school.

'And this has been a great help as otherwise I would have had to rely on benefits. I'm a lot more comfortable now than I was before.'

Amanda from Shepherd's Bush found that qualifying for child tax credit in order to get cheaper childcare wasn't the problem she thought it might be.

'It was quite easy really. I phoned the helpline, gave them my details, and they sent me a form to fill in.

'When I had a problem with a couple of the questions the people on the helpline helped me fill them in.

'I then sent the form back and within two weeks they told me that I had qualified. 'And it's all been worth it,' she added.

'I pay cheaper childcare, I'm able to work, and Antonio absolutely loves nursery. As soon as he sees the nursery door he's ready to jump out of his buggy.'



Photo: Colin White

CHEAPER CHILDCARE
Amanda Cary with son Antonio

- Phase 1 - 42% overall take up
- Take up varies borough to borough
- Additional supported required to deliver
- Political will required
- Phase 2 – 83% take up on Transition to Employment
- Age range extended 0-14 years

What has been learnt so far from the programme?

Childcare providers are enthusiastic for supply side funding but some see the programme as too difficult to administer

Parents are reluctant to apply for Child Tax Credits

Parents are reluctant to share CTC award letter with providers

Age limit of CAP (0-5) is still a barrier

CAP is just another funding stream to add to existing plethora of funding streams

Need to simplify – oyster card

If we knew then what we know now!

Oversupply v Demand

Childcare providers are service providers and must meet customer demand

- Flexibility

- Work in partnership with other providers and childminders

Corporate v Quality

Looking forward, next steps.....

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