

Ballinderry Bridge Playgroup
The Parochial Centre
Ballinderry Bridge Road
Coagh
Cookstown
BT800AY

28 November 2007

Caitriona Ruane **MLA**
Minister **for** Education
Rathgael **House**
Balloo Road
Bangor
BT19 7PR

Dear Minister

Following **the** launch of the Executive's Draft Programme for Government and Draft Budget for 2008-11 and **as a member of Early Years - the** organisation for young **children**, Ballinderry Bridge Playgroup is **asking** for your **support** for the introduction of a Transformation **Fund** here, similar to the one already operating in England and Wales.

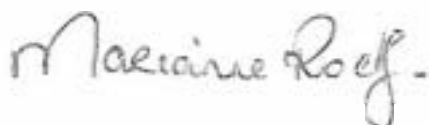
Staff in the childcare sector are keen **to** update their qualifications to ensure their knowledge and practice is up-to-date, reflecting current research on what is best for **young** children. This will guarantee that all children in Northern Ireland get the **best** possible start in life. Recent research has reinforced **the** importance of the education of early childhood educators as the study found that children fare significantly **better** in language skills **development** with teachers who have achieved a higher level of education.

However currently staff working in community or voluntary pre-schools **and** day care **services here** **who** want to further their careers are having **to** pay for their own training and professional development, at the cost of several thousand pounds per **year**, **and** also face a significant disparity in levels of pay with the statutory sector. In England **and** Wales **£200** million has been allocated for this type of training.

We know **that** you **supported** the motion for a Transformation Fund in the debate that took place on the 26th June 2007 **and we now** urge you to work with your colleagues in other departments to allocate the necessary **resources for** a Transformation Fund.

I look **forward** to hearing your response to this **matter**.

Yours sincerely



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