

Rascals Day Nursery - Circular Rd
121a Circular Road
Belfast
BT4 2GE

28 November 2007

Caitriona Ruane **MLA**
Minister for Education
Rathgael House
Balloo Road
Bangor
BT197PR

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**, Rascals Day Nursery - Circular Rd 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



ROGER DALLY - JOINT MANAGING DIRECTOR

Rascals Day Nursery - Circular Rd

SIGNED ON BEHALF OF THE 225 STAFF AT RASCALS, ON OUR 7
SITES IN BELFAST + L'DERRY