



Dalia Ben-Galim, head of policy and advice, Gingerbread

At Gingerbread, we hope that the cost of childcare no longer locks single parents out of work.

For too long the high cost and often patchy provision of childcare has been too big a barrier for many single parents, meaning that they are not able to work. This is a loss to families and to the economy. In 2019 the Government should:

- extend eligibility for the 30 hours for three- and four-year-olds to those parents working on zero-hour contracts and in education
- reform the Universal Credit childcare support offer so that parents don't need to pay their childcare costs upfront, and by removing the administrative burden on parents to provide receipts.

These steps would make a significant difference to single parents and their children in 2019.



Jess Tomlinson, spokesperson, National Save Our Children's Centres

I hope, in 2019, we see some real positive change in attitudes towards the importance of early years services like Children's Centres and nurseries.

2018 saw the start of that change with the *Stop Start* report from The Sutton Trust really opening people's eyes to just how important these services are.

Children's Centres up and down the country have been closed or have seen their opening hours massively reduced. This cannot be allowed to continue. My biggest dream for 2019 is for communities to pull together and join the fight to protect these much-loved services.

I hope that the Government recognises the value in early intervention and finally starts to adequately fund frontline services.

Children's Centres, nurseries and schools... we are shaping the minds of the next generation and there is no job more important than that. Let's all hope that 2019 is a positive year for children's services.



Catherine Maguire, community campaign network co-ordinator, ClientEarth

In 2018, parents and carers from across the country came together in Parliament to demand urgent action to protect children from illegal and harmful levels of air pollution on behalf of the Clean Air Parents' Network, which is supported by ClientEarth and the British Lung Foundation.

It's baffling that the Government can allow our children to breathe illegally high levels of air pollution where they learn and play. The scientific evidence that it harms their health, sometimes permanently, is overwhelming. We have to act.

My hope for 2019 is that we see measures to protect our children from air pollution while they are at school or nursery. Local action from councils is vital, but we can't solve this crisis completely without national action from central Government. So, I also hope politicians listen to parents and carers and make our towns and cities better and healthier places for families to live.

They need to support the call for new clean air laws that will provide greater protection for children's health by setting legal limits based on tougher World Health Organization guidelines.

A few years ago, this may have seemed like a dream, but it now feels eminently possible. We can all help make it happen by getting more informed and calling on our elected representatives to act.



Barbara Crowther, co-ordinator, Children's Food Campaign

My hope is that whatever happens with our

relationship with Europe in 2019, we maintain a commitment to creating a healthier, affordable food environment for children.

I want to see more Government action to reduce child obesity from the very earliest years onwards, including a 9pm watershed on junk food advertising and reducing relentless in-store promotions with chicanes of junk food in the entrances and aisles of our shops.

Wouldn't it be great to see companies like Disney, Nickelodeon or Cartoon Network pledge to only associate their characters, such as Minions, Peppa Pig, Paw Patrol and from *Frozen*, with healthy fresh food instead of sugary snacks?

Finally, following the 2018 introduction of the Soft Drinks Industry Levy, we're demanding money raised by the tax is invested once again in healthy schools initiatives, including tackling holiday hunger, not just in the summer but all year round.



Helen Prud'homme, nursery and Reception class teacher, Dr South's School, Oxfordshire

In 2019, I'd like children to be valued for what they are, not what they'll become. I hope that all those working within schools see the value of allowing children access to a broad range of opportunities and keeping children's interests at the heart of educational policy and practice.

I hope that those working in early years keep the EYF5 focused on the needs and interests of children, and protect their right to develop through play. I'd like to see school leaders and other stakeholders open to learning about this unique stage and embracing it.

My dream is that the early years philosophy is extended. I'd like to see a move away from teachers 'delivering' prescribed skills, thus reducing time spent interacting with children and exploring their interests and

motivations and increasingly focusing on externally applied targets.



Luke Page, head of Triangle Nursery School, Clapham

Our wish is that all children are encouraged to embrace their creativity and that their natural curiosities and passions are celebrated and cherished; that all children are encouraged to play, to take risks and attempt challenge, and to gain a balanced and open view of the world they are a part of. Let's let children be children!

My dream is that funding for maintained nursery schools is made secure and enables hard-working practitioners increased job security and peace of mind to allow them to continue to be the exciting, motivated and talented role models they are. At a time when funding is not certain, we must continue to fight for the rights of every child.



Helen Moylett, early years consultant, trainer and writer

A full consultation has been promised after the current new Early Learning Goals pilot. I have high hopes that it will involve the whole sector debating some really important issues, for example:

- What do we understand by 'an early years curriculum'?
- We cannot measure everything, and what is easily measured is not necessarily important. Measurement and assessment are not the same.
- The meaning and importance of emotional and cognitive self-regulation and how they are part of the characteristics of effective early learning.
- The importance of the prime areas.

I dream of Government policy based on a recognition that the early years of life are important in their own right and that early years settings are not just a minding service for working parents or a practice for Year 1.