



Equal Access to Quality Pre-Primary Education

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SDG 4.2

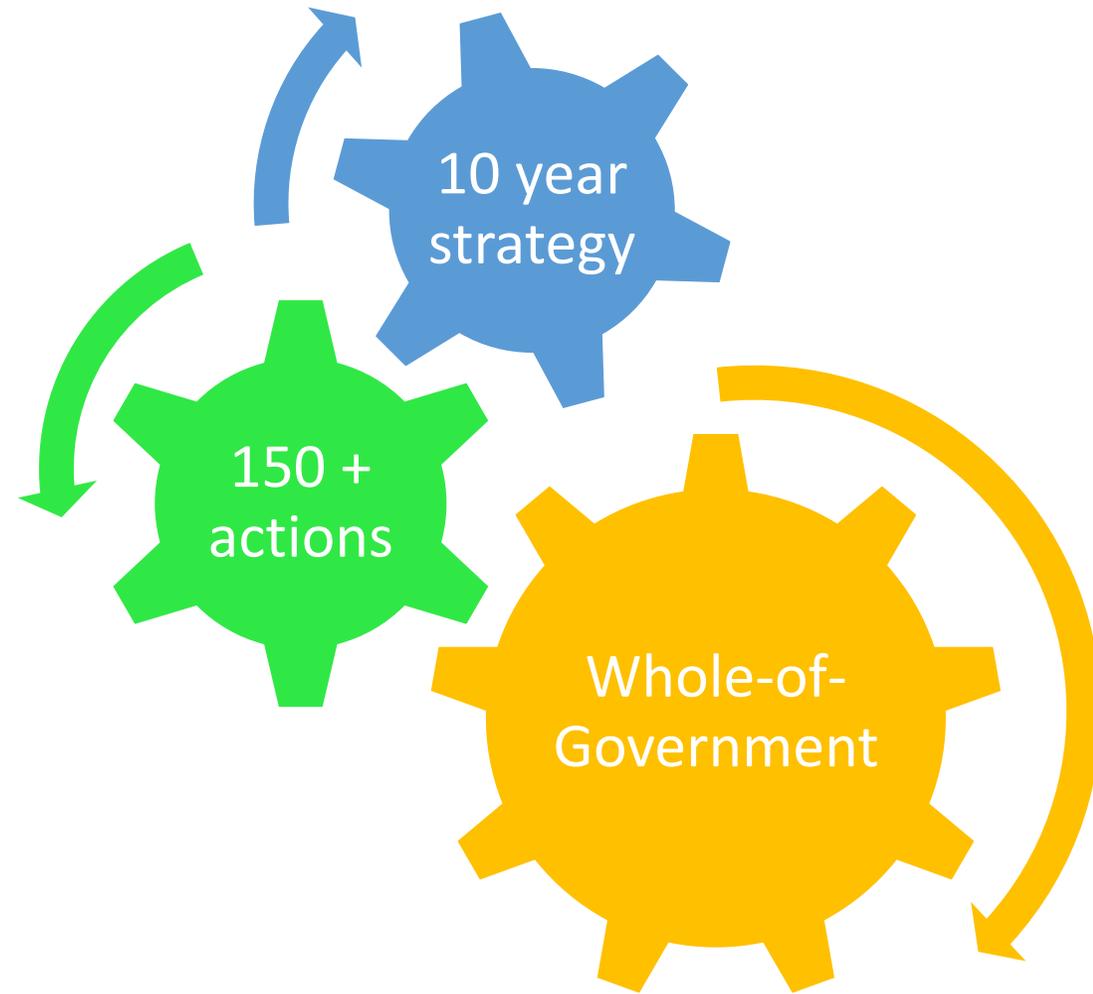
By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education

Indicator:

Percentage of children (36-59 months) receiving at least one year of a quality pre-primary education program



- Strategy for babies, young children and their families in antenatal to age 5 age range
- Launched by Taoiseach Nov 2018
- Implementation Plan published May 2019
 - Identifies outputs and annual milestones for each action for 2019, 2020 and 2021
 - Biannual updates, annual reporting
- Supported by Inter-Departmental Group





All babies' and young children's **early years** will be valued as a critical and distinct period which should be enjoyed.

Families will be assisted and enabled to nurture babies and young children and support their development, with additional support for those who need it.

Those providing **services** for babies, young children and their families will be equipped to contribute to their learning, development, health and wellbeing.

Community contexts will help babies and young children make the most of their early years and fulfil their potential.

Positive Play Based Early Learning

Objective 8: Babies and young children have access to safe, high-quality, developmentally appropriate, integrated ELC, which reflects diversity of need.

- Make high-quality ELC for babies and young children more affordable
- Maintain and extend the supply of high-quality publicly subsidised ELC to best serve the developmental needs of babies and young children, ensuring that it also reflects the needs and preferences of parents and families.
- Ensure that ELC provision promotes participation, strengthens social inclusion and embraces diversity through the integration of additional supports and services for children and families with additional needs

Affordable, High-Quality Early Learning and Care

Evidence

- The benefits of high-quality ELC are both immediate and long-lasting.
- High-quality ELC leads to significantly higher educational attainment and earning
- Children who attended high-quality ELC had better learning and socio-emotional outcomes on entry into primary school.
- ELC allows parents to participate in training and employment. Labour force participation increases family income and reduces the risk of poverty.

Affordable, High-Quality Early Learning and Care

Recent Achievements

- Unprecedented increase in investment in ELC – 143% in the last 5 years
- Doubling in the numbers of children in receipt of State-funded ELC
- Extension of the ECCE Programme
- Introduction of the National Childcare Scheme
- Introduction of the Access and Inclusion Model
- Suite of quality raising measures, including regulatory reform

Affordable, High-Quality Early Learning and Care

Some remaining challenges

- High cost of ELC to parents
- Lower than average participation rates among certain groups
- Meeting the needs of an increasingly diverse cohort
- Variable quality of ELC provision

Affordable, High-Quality Early Learning and Care

Make high-quality ELC for babies and young children more affordable.

Action

Progressively increase the number of families eligible for targeted subsidies through the **National Childcare Scheme** to publicly subsidise the cost of high-quality regulated ELC.

Develop an appropriate mechanism to **control fees** charged to parents in return for **increased State investment** in affordability and quality.

Affordable, High-Quality Early Learning and Care

Ensure that ELC provision promotes participation, strengthens social inclusion and embraces diversity.

Action

Consider enhancements to, and/or extension of, AIM to, for example, all ELC services, and/or to children with additional needs other than a disability.

Oversee and evaluate the Therapy Support Demonstration Project and consider the model for national rollout.

Introduce mechanisms through the National Childcare Scheme to ensure that children with specific vulnerabilities have access to high-quality ELC.

Informed by the DEIS model, develop a programme for the delivery of ELC in the context of concentrated disadvantage.



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Thank you

