



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

Mr Mervyn Storey
Chairperson, Committee for Education

Ms Caitríona Ruane
Minister of Education
Department of Education
Rathgael House
Balloo Road
Bangor
County Down
BT19 7PR

Ref: 206/10/I/03

24 June 2010

Dear Minister,

Draft Early Years Strategy

The Committee for Education received a presentation from your officials on the draft Early Years Strategy at its meeting on 9 June 2010.

As you will be aware the Committee and others in the Early Years sector have waited some considerable time for this Strategy and Members had an expectation that it would address the key issues with clear proposals for the way forward with an appropriate evidence base. Unfortunately the Committee found the draft Strategy as presented lacking on all those counts. Following the question and answer session with officials – where answers to many of the Committee’s questions were not forthcoming – the Committee agreed that I should write to you to question whether or not this draft Strategy should be launched for public consultation by ‘*late June*’ in its present form.

The Committee also agreed to list the main areas/concerns which were raised by Members during the session where the Committee’s concerns that the draft Strategy was deficient were not allayed by officials’ responses. This is attached as an Annex to this letter.

I would be grateful for an early reply to this letter as the Committee views the Early Years Strategy as a particularly important policy area for education.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mervyn Storey'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.

Mr Mervyn Storey MLA
Chairperson, Committee for Education