



House of Commons
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Press Release – For immediate release

Sarah Champion
Member of Parliament for Rotherham
Shadow Minister for Preventing Abuse and Domestic Violence
Tuesday 12th July 2016

Sarah Champion demands Government address failings that are leaving parents in her constituency unsupported and children unprepared for school.

In a speech today in Parliament, Sarah Champion MP demanded the Government do more to support children in Rotherham, who are in the lowest 25 per cent of Parliamentary constituencies for good child development.

Statistics from the children's charity Action for Children show that nationally one in three children is starting school without meeting the Government-recommended level of early year's development.

In Rotherham, the situation is much worse where 38 per cent of children, almost 4 in 10, are not reaching a good level of development at the age of five.

Research has demonstrated that the way in which a child develops in early years has a huge influence on their future economic wellbeing, educational attainment, health and emotional development.

Sarah Champion MP used her speech to demand the Government to do more to support parents by providing them with the knowledge and confidence to support their child's early years' development. She called on the Government to ensure that parents have access to well-funded Sure Start Centres, targeted provision for parents who may be struggling to cope and regular support from health visitors.

Commenting on today's speech, Sarah Champion MP said:

"The earliest years of a child's life are fundamental in shaping that child's future. Yet this government is content to stand by and watch 4 in every 10 children in Rotherham arrive at school on their first day unprepared to thrive."

"How can this Government have failed our children to such an extent that their future chances of success have already been determined before they even begin formal education?"

"There seems to be an assumption that people innately know how to be parents and have all the necessary parenting skills to help their child develop. Instead of taking proactive measures to support parents in the early years of parenting, the State often intervenes when it is too late and a child is already failing behind."

"This Government must do more to provide parents with the knowledge, tools and confidence they need to best support their children. Fundamentally, this Government must do more to ensure every child has a good start in life and is prepared for a successful future."

Chloe Hardy, Head of Campaigns and Public Affairs at Action for Children, said:

“What happens in the earliest years affects our later lives – from our ability to do well at school, have a career, and even our future relationships. That’s why we’ve launched Fair By Five, our campaign to make child development a national priority by 2020.

“It is vital to focus on tomorrow’s adults. We can’t afford to let down thousands of children who could and should be getting a better start in life. We need the Government, and all political parties, to commit to doing more. It’s time to close the gap in child development in the early years.”

ENDS

Notes to Editor:

1. The full transcript of Sarah Champion’s speech can be found on Hansard - <https://hansard.parliament.uk/search/MemberContributions?memberId=4267&type=Spoken>
2. Statistics referenced are from Action for Children analysis of Department for Education (2015) Early years foundation stage profile results in England
3. Action for Children’s Fair by Five campaign, is calling on the Government to make child development a national priority, help families overcome the barriers that hold children back, and give every child the best start. More information is available here - <https://www.actionforchildren.org.uk/how-you-can-help/campaign/fair-by-five/>