

Manifesto for babies and young children

for the Senedd Election 2026



We are calling on all political parties to make babies and young children a priority in all facets of legislation spanning the short, medium and long term.

Every baby and young child in Wales deserves the **best start** in life. To be happy, healthy and have the care and attention they need to develop and grow.



"Here I am. A new life, full of potential. I'm my own person, but I rely on those around me to take care of me, protect me, and help me make sense of this big, wide world. Right now, my brain is developing faster than it ever will again. What happens in these early days shapes the rest of my life. That's why my needs must be recognised, understood, and met, so I can grow, learn, and thrive."

The first 1,000 days refers to a baby's life from the moment of conception until 2 years of age. It is a critical period of life, when the building blocks of physical and emotional development are formed. It also offers the greatest potential for impact in both improving outcomes and reducing inequalities.

The Early Years Action Group call on all political parties in Wales to:

Ensure children's rights are applied from birth

Invest in early support for families

Work to eradicate poverty for babies and young children

Put babies and young children at the heart of policy making

Ensure children's rights are applied from birth

- Full incorporation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) into Welsh law and a clear understanding of what it means for babies and young children and how rights apply to them.
- Commit to raising awareness of how children's rights apply from birth, through funded training for policy makers and professionals working with families.
- Use the *Pledge for babies in Wales* to make sure babies needs and voice are considered in policy development, decision making and all Senedd business.

Invest in early support for families

- Commit to invest in local community hubs for all families, so they can access a range of joined up services from conception to support the healthy development of babies and young children.
- Significant and sustained long term investment in the early years and childcare sector, ensure it balances the needs of babies, young children and their parents.
- Develop specialist parent-infant relationship services across Wales to support families most at risk of experiencing severe or complex difficulties in early relationships

Put babies and young children at the heart of policy making

- To ensure the appointment of a Cabinet secretary for babies, children and young people, who will provide strong leadership and ensure cross government partnership working.
- Retaining a cross-party Senedd scrutiny committee for babies, children and young people with a specific strand on improving outcomes in the first 1000 days.
- Welsh Government to routinely use the term 'babies, children and young people' in policy making and throughout Senedd business.

Work to eradicate poverty for babies and young children

- Ensure the Child Poverty Strategy Monitoring Framework reflects the lived experience and voice of babies and very young children.
- Ensure the most vulnerable families who are struggling to access basic necessities receive a baby bundle.
- Ensure families with babies and young children have an adequate income to lead a full and decent life and are made aware of financial support available to them.





Pledge: *I will champion for all babies and young children and ensure their needs and voice are considered in all decisions that are made for them.*

About the Early Years Action Group

The Early Years Action Group brings together third sector organisations who have a focus on Early Years, to establish a collective voice to motivate and activate positive change for the youngest children. The group is convened by Children in Wales and includes representatives from BookTrust Cymru, Children in Wales, Early Years Wales, Home Start Cymru, Mudiad Meithrin, Save the Children, NSPCC Wales, Play Wales, Parent Infant Foundation and NYAS.



PLANT YNG NGHYMRU
CHILDREN IN WALES



Early Years
Wales
Blynyddoedd
Cynnar Cymru



BookTrust Cymru
Ysgogi plant i ddarllen
Getting children reading



Save the Children
Achub y Plant



gwasanaeth eirolaeth
ieuenctid cenedlaethol
national youth
advocacy service



mudiad
meithrin
arbenigwyr y blynyddoedd cynnar
Welsh early years specialists

