

The Daily Telegraph

Keep childcare vouchers

SIR – I applaud the female Labour MPs who are standing up against Gordon Brown's plans to axe childcare tax breaks (report, November 11). Aside from the financial implications for families that stand to lose substantial savings on the essential cost of their childcare, this move would also have a detrimental effect on quality within this sector.

As it stands, parents who opt in to a childcare salary-sacrifice scheme can only redeem their vouchers with fully qualified, registered providers. This ensures that childcare providers are policed and vetted at all stages, enabling parents to be reassured that their child is receiving the appropriate level of care. As a father of five, I can assure Gordon Brown that this is not something that should be open to compromise.

Should the Government's proposals go ahead, however, the support that these salary-sacrifice schemes provide in regulating the system would be removed. At best, parents will be faced with a far greater concern over the professional care of their children while, at worst, a non-vetted system leaves the door open for irresponsible childcare management.

Gordon Brown must listen to his party and question whether this is really an area where corners can be cut.

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