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Dear Lady Passey,

I promised to write to you following your question during oral questions on 6th June and to send further information on the various childcare offers; also to direct you to the information available online to help parents make informed choices about which offer best suits their circumstances.

The government provides a range of childcare support to parents and carers. In summary, this includes:

- 15 hours of free childcare a week for 38 weeks of the year for all three and four-year-olds, worth around £2,500 a year on average, helping them develop social skills and preparing them for school.
- 15 hours of free childcare a week for 38 weeks of the year for disadvantaged two-year-olds, those from low income families, or children with a disability or special educational needs, and those who are looked after or who've been adopted from care.
- 30 hours of free childcare for 38 weeks of the year for working parents of three and four-year-olds, making it easier for parents to work; saving parents up to £5000 per year in total if they use the full 30 hours.
- Help with up to 85% of childcare costs for people on low incomes through Universal Credit, subject to a monthly limit of £646 for one child or £1108 for two or more children.
- Tax-Free Childcare - for every £8 parents pay their provider via an online account, the government will pay £2 – up to a maximum contribution of £2,000 per child each year (up to £500 every 3 months), for children under 12. Parents of disabled children receive extra support (worth up to £4,000 per child, each year and until their child is 17) and
- Help for those who are studying via the Care to Learn scheme or Childcare Grants.

As you know, parents with young children may have many different childcare needs and it is important that we are able to offer a flexible package of support to meet a diverse range of preferences.

We encourage all parents to seek information via the Childcare Choices website at: <https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/>. Childcare Choices provides a brief summary of the key elements of all the government's offers in one place. It also incorporates a navigation tool which allows parents to enter details of their circumstances and subsequently directs them to the most appropriate offer.

We also provide detailed information to childcare providers so that they are in a better position to advise parents. To help them, we publish a range of information including a step by step guide on how to apply, and advice on which entitlements may be claimed together. This is available at: <https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/communications-toolkit/>

You referenced in your question the valuable work carried out by the Select Committee on affordable childcare. I know the Committee's findings stressed the importance of government departments working jointly to ensure that our offers are joined-up and easy to understand. I hope you will be encouraged to know that Department for Education and HMRC have been working closely to continuously improve the content on both Childcare Choices and Gov.uk. This includes ongoing work to clarify and simplify the start dates and give parents advice on when best to apply in order to obtain maximum value from the entitlements.

I hope you find this information helpful. A copy of this letter will be placed in the House of Lords library and sent to all Peers who spoke.

With best wishes,

James Younger

VISCOUNT YOUNGER OF LECKIE