

Irish Independent

IRELAND'S BEST-SELLING NEWSPAPER

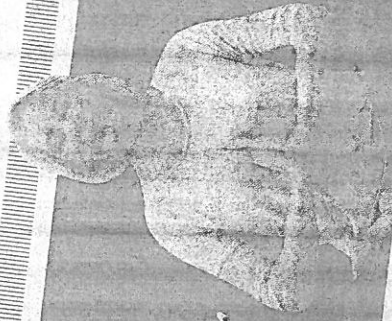
GAA can't play Russian roulette with players' lives
Eamonn Sweeney Sport

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Yoga

Why you're never too old to start Health & Living



Monday, May 4, 2020

€2.20 (€1.50 in Northern Ireland) C

Minister admits some crèches will close permanently

Anne-Marie Walsh
INDUSTRY CORRESPONDENT

A CHILDCARE shortage and others will not reopen after the Covid-19 crisis.

Children's Minister Katherine Zappone said the Government was doing all it could to

avoid widespread closures. However, in an internal department briefing document, she warns that capacity will be lost in the sector due to the coronavirus crisis.

Ms Zappone said the current crisis is a blow to parents, providers, educators and children who use early years services.

In the document drawn up last week, she also said that although a lot had been done to improve the childcare sector, a lot more remained. Many parents have been left wondering how the economy can be reopened and they can return to work without functioning childcare.

When Covid-19 restrictions are lifted, private-sector workers won't get pay if they do not return up for work because they have no childcare. Parents may face a harsh economic landscape as the lockdown ends if they have to return to work before crèches and schools have reopened.

Employment solicitor Richard Grogan said the issue of childcare and the eventual return to work was likely to pose a huge problem for private-sector workers in the months ahead.

"There is a really serious issue that nobody has addressed," he said.

He said that without childcare supports it would be mainly younger women who may end up being dismissed. They will not be entitled to redundancy payments and will have to wait longer to qualify for welfare payments.

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Still no hugs

Green deputy leader