



**Questions for Submission to the
Special Covid 19 Response Committee
Education
June 25th 2020**

ISSUE

On June 5th, the Minister for Education & Skills, Mr Joe McHugh, opened the Summer Provision programme for this year to include children with Down syndrome, making no distinction between those attending pre-school, primary school and those attending post primary school.

Question:

Can the Minister explain how, over the course of the following week, officials in his department produce guidelines for a Summer Provision Programme which discriminate against certain cohorts of students with DS, and are certainly not in keeping with the declaration made by him on June 5th?

ISSUE

The Summer Provision programme, proposed by the Department of Education & Skills, is becoming more and more shambolic every day. Many parents report that, even though their child at primary school may be eligible to participate in this programme, they will not be able to avail of the opportunity as schools are not running the programme due to:

- Lack of Guidelines
- Teacher/SNA unwillingness to participate

Issues such as these are not new, and have been the experience of parents over many years. In this regard, the programme, as a whole, needs to be completely overhauled and remodelled.

Question:

Can the Minister provide data on:

- a) **The number of children who were deemed eligible for the programme in past years?**

b) What % of these children actually availed of the July Provision?

ISSUE

Parents are experiencing difficulties this year with a shortage of tutors willing to participate in the programme, with teachers in receipt of full salary, without undertaking any additional work over the months of July /August.

Question

Can the Minister outline the incentives for teachers to participate in summer programmes, given that they are already in receipt of a full monthly salary?

ISSUE

Schools have indicated a lack of clear guidelines to be one problem they have in providing a Summer Provision programme in July / August 2020.

Question

Can the Minister give an assurance that such guidelines will be issued, and if so, when can schools expect to have them?