Let’s give our children the best start in life as EU members

As a parent I’ve been considering what implications the EU referendum outcome could mean for my children’s future. I’ve a six year old boy who quite rightly is more interested in re-enacting Star Wars than contemplating his future, so it’s a judgement that falls to parents!

It’s going to be a huge risk walking away from our biggest single trading market. North East businesses clearly see the benefits of being in the European Union and over 130 of them have just put their name to a letter in The Journal backing a vote to remain. I’d love it if my children had the chance to work for one of the many firms prospering with the EU.

Perhaps my son’s love of train sets will evolve into a desire to work in train manufacturing at Hitachi? His love of Lego could lead to architecture, although European health and safety laws will be crucial given some of his early ambitious construction efforts. His bossiness and exhausting attention to detail could be useful qualities within event management. Who knows? Employers speaking out on this topic aren’t just thinking of the here and now, but thinking of their ambitions for the future – just as many parents will be.

My wife and I are expecting another child in just over a month. There’s enough for families to worry about when you are bringing a new child into the world without worrying about whether mum will lose her job. EU law gives women protection at work against any employer sacking them just for becoming pregnant. Mums-to-be also benefit from paid leave for ante-natal appointments – these are all thanks to rights won by trade unions within the EU.

I don’t know if my next child is to be a boy or a girl. If it’s a daughter then as well as wanting her to have as many career choices as possible when she grows up we’ll value equal rights for women even more. Equal pay for equal value of work came into law as a result of the European Union. What parent wants their daughter to be treated unfairly?

As any working parent of young children knows, they have an unerring knack of becoming ill at the worst possible time. Having EU law on your side so you can have parental leave to care for your sick child can be a godsend and gives parents peace of mind.

European employment rights are at risk if we leave the EU especially given leading lights in the Leave campaign openly admitting they want to halve social and employment protection. Parents as well as grandparents should be worried about the potential impact on families.

Every parent wants their child to have more opportunities than they had when growing up. The outcome of the EU referendum will help decide if that’s going to be the case. For new jobs, vital rights and opportunities in life, I’m one of many parents who will be voting to remain in the EU.

Given how potentially busy we’ll be on 23rd June, my wife and I have registered for a postal vote for the referendum. You can do the same at [www.aboutmyvote.co.uk](http://www.aboutmyvote.co.uk).

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