



Early Childhood Unit



Welcome to the ECU Bulletin 15 October 2015

Contents

Policy

- Childcare Bill: policy statement
- Parliamentary Briefing on the Childcare Bill 2015 Report stage
- Sam Gyimah visits Paris to share best practice in childcare
- Extending the early years entitlement- costings, concerns and alternatives
- Funding for disadvantaged pupils
- Investing in flexible childcare
- Low pay Britain 2015
- Understanding the improved performance of disadvantaged pupils in London

Practice

- The Integrated Review: Follow-Up report
- Early years foundation stage profile results: 2014 to 2015
- Children looked after in England year ending 31 March 2015
- Pre-School Learning Alliance Listening Week 12-17 October 2015

Research

- Bullies in the block area: the early childhood origins of "mean" behaviour
- Bullying in early childhood and the construction of young children as premoral agents: implications for practice
- Exploring play and creativity in pre-schoolers' use of apps

- Tackling inequalities in the early years: key messages from 10 years of the Growing Up in Scotland study
- Growing Up in Scotland: comparing the circumstances and experiences of 3-year-old children living in Scotland in 2007/08 and 2013

Ofsted

- Become a childcare provider: pre-registration briefing
- Become a childminder: pre-registration briefing

Families

- Birth characteristics in England and Wales, 2014
- Family Friendly Week 19-26 October 2015
- Tax-free childcare update

Disability and special needs

- CDC Digest Autumn 2015

Health and wellbeing

- Health visitor and 0 to 5 transfer programme: case studies
- Dental caries and obesity: their relationship in children

Consultations

- Diabetes in children and young people: Topic engagement
- Local area SEND consultation

Conferences

Policy

Childcare Bill: policy statement

This document by the Department for Education, which provides further details on the extended entitlement to free childcare for parents of children aged 3 and 4, has been updated and two accompanying documents have been added: 1) The cost of providing childcare: analysis of responses, shows the analysis of responses to the call for evidence on the review into the cost of providing childcare; 2) Review of the cost of providing childcare in England terms of reference, outlines what the review into the cost of providing childcare will cover. In the analysis of responses to the cost of providing childcare, the government admits that it is "unable to understand" the true cost of delivering the free entitlement and this may "indicate a lack of clarity around what government funding should pay for".

Parliamentary Briefing on the Childcare Bill 2015 Report stage, 14 October 2015

Early Education and TACTYC have published a briefing that outlines their concerns about a number of issues in the Childcare Bill.

Sam Gyimah visits Paris to share best practice in childcare

The Education and Childcare Minister spent two days in Paris to exchange ideas on expanding access to high-quality childcare.

Extending the early years entitlement– costings, concerns and alternatives

This briefing by the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) investigates how best to deliver the proposed extension to the free offer of childcare hours, and gives recommendations for more strategic alternatives to the extension. IPPR expresses concern that the government will significantly underfund the planned extension, and that this will result in a poorly-delivered policy with negative outcomes for families and for the sustainability of the sector. The two main concerns are underfunding and loosening regulations.

Recommendations for improving childcare provision within the government's own fiscal rules of the Spending Review include:

- Targeting the free hours at 2-year-olds by universalising the current 15-hour offer to cover all 2-year-olds. This would have a greater impact on child development, maternal employment and gender equity.
- Extending the free offer from 38 to 48 weeks of the year in order to cover holiday care. As a step towards full holiday coverage, the government could provide an additional 10 weeks for the 40 per cent most disadvantaged 2–4-year-olds.

Funding for disadvantaged pupils

The Commons Public Accounts Committee warns that urgent steps are needed to ensure more effective support for two million disadvantaged pupils in England who risk losing out if the early success of the Pupil Premium is not spread more widely. It advises that there is a lack of consistency in funding and levels of support – with some schools receiving about £3,000 a year more than others per disadvantaged pupil – and calls for a better understanding of what works to close the gap between rich and poor pupils. Specific recommendations include reviewing the level and effectiveness of the Early Years Pupil Premium after its first year of operation.

Investing in flexible childcare

The Family and Childcare Trust has launched a new campaign, Investing in Flexible Childcare, calling on the government to reaffirm its commitment to parents to help them with childcare costs and use the £535 million savings from the delay to the roll out of Tax Free Childcare to invest in a capital spending programme to make childcare more flexible. In its new [report](#), the Trust highlights the reasons why too many parents are struggling to return to work as a result of the current rigidity in childcare access. Its proposal, which would see capital funding directed at local authorities and childcare providers - would help up to 933,000 children with working parents access flexible childcare each year.

Low pay Britain 2015

The fifth annual report by the Resolution Foundation on the prevalence of low pay in Britain uses the latest data available to map out the scale of low pay (defined as £7.67, or two thirds of the average hourly UK wage) and the groups that are most affected. Among the key findings are that little progress has been made in reducing the prevalence of low pay across the country, with 5.5 million people on low pay, around the same level as 20 years ago. There are no specific figures on the prevalence of low pay in childcare but the gender bias nationally means 26 per cent of women are low paid as opposed to 17 per cent of men and childcarers are particularly likely to be hit by low pay as there are relatively high numbers of women and young people in the early years workforce.

Understanding the improved performance of disadvantaged pupils in London

This report by the Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion London School of Economics concludes that the improved performance in London schools largely reflects gradual improvements in school quality over time. Improvements in primary schools played a major role in explaining later improvements in secondary schools. In 2002 less than a quarter (22%) of children on free school meals in inner London obtained five or more A*-C grades at GCSE or their equivalent (including English and Maths). In 2013, this had risen to almost half (48%). Gains were much smaller among disadvantaged children outside London (17%) to (26%). The report establishes that the "London effect" for poor children began in the mid-1990s – well-before many of the high-profile policies in secondary schools previously credited with London's success, such as the London Challenge, Teach First, and the growth of academies. It is possible that recent changes reflect London's status as an economic powerhouse. To check this the researchers followed a group of children born around the year 2000 from preschool to age 11. They found that that disadvantaged pupils in London are not ahead at age 5, but instead make faster progress once they get to school compared to their peers outside the capital.

Practice

The Integrated Review: Follow-Up report on practice in two local authority areas

From September 2015, local authorities, health visiting services and early years providers will be expected to bring together health and early education reviews for young children at the age of two to two-and-a-half. NCB's Early Childhood Unit was commissioned by the Department of Health to provide [supporting materials](#) for health and early years practitioners carrying out integrated reviews for children aged two to two-and-a-half. This follow-up study shows how the Integrated Review has been put into practice within two local authority areas: Islington and Warwickshire. These local authorities have implemented two different models for structuring the review. In Islington, a joint meeting structure is used where early years and health practitioners come together to deliver their own parts of the

Integrated Review in one meeting with the parent and child. In Warwickshire, early years and health practitioners have separate meetings with the parent and child, and share information with each other.

The report will be of great use to local authorities implementing the Integrated Review and to practitioners themselves.

Early years foundation stage profile results: 2014 to 2015

This DfE statistical first release covers the percentage of pupils achieving each assessment rating in the early learning goals; the percentage achieving at least the expected level in the prime areas of learning and in the specific areas of literacy and mathematics (good level of development); and the average total points score across all the early learning goals (supporting measure). Key findings: Percentage of children achieving a good level of development continues to increase, with 66.3% of children achieving a good level of development - an increase of 5.9% points from last year; Girls continue to do better than boys, but the gender gap has decreased for 2 of the 3 key measures; The gap between all children and the lowest 20% of attaining children has narrowed very slightly by 1.9% points from last year and stands at 32.1%.

Children looked after in England (including adoption and care leavers) year ending 31 March 2015

This DfE statistical release gives figures on looked-after children at both national and local authority levels for the financial year 2014 to 2015. One of the findings show that the age profile of children looked after has been changing slightly over recent years. There has been a fall in the last two years in the numbers of 1- to 4-year-olds looked after at 31 March reflecting higher numbers ceasing to be looked after (around 8,500 each year) than starting to be looked after (just under 6,000 each year).

Pre-School Learning Alliance Listening Week 12-17 October 2015

The need to listen to the views and experiences of children, parents, staff, volunteers and sector partners is at the heart of delivering effective early years provision. Listening Week 2015 will focus on the importance of listening to children to support their emotional development. It will have three elements: listening to children in the home; listening to children in the setting; and listening to children in the community. The resources developed for last year's Listening Week has been supplemented with resources to support and encourage practitioners and parents to listen to children's words and body language, to carefully interpret children's drawings and paintings, and help clarify what makes them feel safe /not safe through the use of different strategies.

Research

Bullies in the block area: the early childhood origins of "mean" behaviour

This Child Trends report summarises factors in early childhood that appear related to later bullying, and what can be done to buffer those factors. It also looks at specific programmes that are designed to address and prevent risk factors for bullying in young children, and summarises the programmes' evidence of effectiveness. Key findings include: Research suggests that a child's relationship with his or her caregivers is absolutely critical to consider when exploring the roots of later involvement in bullying (in some cases, as either victim or bully); Research on the role of non-parental caregivers and settings on later bullying is limited, underscoring a substantial gap in the literature. Nevertheless, the role of peers, neighbourhood characteristics, socio-economic factors, media exposure, and prejudice have all been identified as correlated to bullying.

The research literature shows that effective, evidence-based early childhood interventions primarily used a curriculum-based approach with specific strands of content to support the classroom teacher, the child, and the parents/caregivers in addressing aggressive behaviours. Key themes among these approaches included using a mix of educational materials with a tailored interactive approach, and using goal setting and action planning.

Bullying in early childhood and the construction of young children as premoral agents: implications for practice

There is little research on bullying and early childhood, however, there are indications that more research is needed to establish the different mechanisms related to direct and relational victimisation in young children. This article analyses parents' and early years practitioners' talk in relation to bullying in early childhood in the light of notions of young children's agency, intentions and morality. Findings reveal that in their narratives, early years practitioners and parents move from discussing examples of bullying in early years, to suggesting that young children 'don't understand' and are incapable when it comes to deciding about right and wrong behaviour.

Exploring play and creativity in pre-schoolers' use of apps

This research is a collaboration between academics at the Universities of Sheffield and Edinburgh, the BBC (CBeebies), Montenevy Primary School and two children's media companies. It examined preschool children's use of apps on tablets, to identify how far apps for preschool children promote play and creativity. The research found that a third of pre-school children in the UK have their own tablet that they use for an average of one hour and 19 minutes every weekday, often on their own without a parent or guardian. In children aged between three and five, 37% have their own tablet, and are most likely to use them from 4-6pm during the week. Many children are allowed to play independently, with more than a third (35%) of pre-schoolers using their tablet on their own; they're most likely to be left on their own at the beginning and end of the day, but 57% of pre-schoolers play on the tablet with a parent or guardian. The study found that some apps could help children with play and creativity, however, others were less helpful, in particular those aimed at older children. The report calls for further support and guidance for parents, and are proposing "family digital literacy programmes" in early years settings and schools, to help parents support their children's use of apps and tablets.

Tackling inequalities in the early years: key messages from 10 years of the Growing Up in Scotland study

This report by the Scottish Government compares outcomes for and experiences of children in households with higher and lower incomes, summarising what the GUS study has revealed about inequalities up to age 8. It also explores whether there is any evidence that the socio-economic gap has narrowed or widened in recent years and highlights some key messages from the study about how to improve outcomes for all children and to reduce inequalities: A rich home learning environment can improve cognitive development for all children, regardless of their socio-economic background; High quality early learning and childcare can help to reduce inequalities in cognitive development; Being born to an older mother makes children more resilient to a range of negative outcomes; Improving the physical and mental health of mothers is likely to have a positive effect on the health and development of their children; Supporting parenting skills can help protect against the impact of adversity and disadvantage; The role of the health visitor, in providing one-to-one advice and support to parents, should be central in the efforts to tackle inequalities in the early years; It is important to ensure that messages about positive parenting practices are understood by grandparents as well as parents.

Growing Up in Scotland: comparing the circumstances and experiences of 3-year-old children living in Scotland in 2007/08 and 2013

This report compares the circumstances and experiences of children aged 3 in Scotland in 2007/08 with those at the same age in 2013. It looks at key outcomes and behaviours such as child health; child development; child television viewing; support provided to parents and parental health and how these vary by socio-economic characteristics. The report also explores whether the level and nature of change varies amongst children and families with different characteristics and whether there has been any progress in closing any gaps in outcomes between children from different socio-economic backgrounds. Compared with three year olds in 2007/08, three-year-olds in 2013 were more likely to be living in households where at least one adult was educated to degree level but less likely to be living in a household where at least one parent worked full-time. Three-year-olds in 2013 were also more likely to have a long-term health condition, to have higher vocabulary ability and to watch television more frequently and for longer. Parents of three-year-olds in 2013 found it less easy to arrange short-notice childcare and had higher mental wellbeing scores than parents of three-year-olds in 2007/08. Twenty four per cent of parents in 2013 smoked compared with 28 per cent of parents in 2007/08 but smoking in both cohorts is still more common amongst parents from less advantageous circumstances.

Ofsted

Become a childcare provider: pre-registration briefing

This is a presentation of the pre-registration briefing for those wishing to become childcare providers. It has been updated for use from October 2015.

Become a childminder: pre-registration briefing

This is a presentation of the pre-registration briefing for childminders. It has been updated for use from October 2015.

Families

Birth characteristics in England and Wales, 2014

This Office for National Statistics publication presents statistics on live births by sex, month and quarter of occurrence; maternities with multiple births and by age of mother and place of birth; stillbirths by age of parents and quarter of occurrence; and birthweight data for live and stillbirths. Headline findings include: There were 695,233 live births in England and Wales in 2014, of which 338,461 were girls and 356,772 were boys; the stillbirth rate remained at 4.7 per 1,000 total births, unchanged from 2013; 7 per cent (48,547) of live births were low birthweight (under 2.5kg) in 2014, the percentage of low birthweight babies has remained unchanged since 2011.

Family Friendly Week 19-26 October 2015

Family Friendly Weeks is organised by the Family and Childcare Trust. The aim of the week is to increase recognition of the issues faced by families, including the struggle to find a work-life balance. To mark the week and celebrate all families, the chosen theme for this year is 'Get Creative'.

Tax-free childcare update

Tax-free childcare was announced by the government in 2013 as a way of supporting families with meeting the cost of childcare. The scheme is due to launch in 2017. Aimed at helping working families, the scheme will offer eligible families 20 per cent support towards the cost of their childcare - the equivalent to basic rate tax relief - up to an annual limit of £2000 per child, or £4000 if the child is disabled. The scheme will be available for children up to the age of 12, or 17 if they are disabled. PACEY (Professional Association for Childcare and Early Years) is involved in implementation forums to help ensure that the new scheme is workable for childcare professionals, and it will share more details of the scheme, including how to sign up, when the information is available.

Disability and Special Needs**CDC Digest Autumn 2015**

The Council for Disabled Children (CDC) has published the Autumn edition of the CDC. It features contributions from Contact a Family, Nafen and NNPCF, and is looking back on the first year of the implementation of the SEND reforms.

Health and Wellbeing**Health visitor and 0 to 5 transfer programme: case studies**

The Department of Health has updated the examples of good practice in the transformed Health Visitor Programme, divided into the 6 high impact areas (HIAs). It has added further case studies for 'Evidence of service transformation for 0-5s'.

Dental caries and obesity: their relationship in children

This Public Health England evidence summary of dental caries and obesity explores whether they are found in the same individuals and populations; reviews and summarises what is currently known about their relationship using the published literature and routine public health monitoring data; and supports the dental public health and obesity teams, who may be asked about the relationship between these two outcomes.

Consultations**Diabetes in children and young people: Topic engagement**

National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE)

NICE is seeking information from stakeholders to inform a quality standard on diabetes in children and young people.

Launch date: 9 October 2015

Closing date: 23 October 2015

Local area SEND consultation

This is a consultation on Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission's proposals for inspecting how effectively local areas fulfil their responsibilities towards children and young people who are disabled and/or have special educational needs under section 20 of the Children Act 2004. The consultation document sets out the principles under which the 2 inspectorates propose to undertake these joint inspections.

Launch date: 12 October 2015

Closing date: 4 January 2015

Conferences

19 October 2015, London

The 30 hours childcare entitlement – planning for success

The Department for Education and 4Children are holding a free early engagement event on the 30 hours childcare entitlement. The event will help childcare providers network and get to grips with some of the challenges and solutions in delivering the new 30 hours funded entitlement.

21 October 2015, London

Supporting SEND in the Early Years: Regional Seminars

Following the release of the 4Children and the Council for Disabled Children (CDC) toolkit for SEN and disability in the early years, this series of seminars will introduce you to the toolkit and give you the opportunity to hear from those who have used it in practice.

30-31 October 2015, Birmingham

TACTYC Conference: Children's and practitioners' experiences of early years care and education

3 November 2015, London

5 November 2015, Leeds

Early Identification in early language and communication: Supporting and upskilling the early years workforce

Organised by 4Children, these seminars provide an opportunity to hear from experts in early language and communication, and to find out about some good practice case studies.

5 November 2015, London

Enable 2015

A visionary conference designed to bring together leading experts in early years.

11 November 2015, London

Business Summit: Moving with the Times

The government is making progress on doubling the 'free' hours for three- and four-year-olds, while the two-year-olds programme and the Early Years Pupil Premium are still bedding in. Meanwhile, the new Ofsted inspection framework launches in September, as does the Baseline. This conference brings together an expert line-up of speakers from government, business and academia to discuss new directions for the early years sector. Policy keynote from Childcare and Education Minister Sam Gyimah.

23 November 2015, London

Children's Centres Conference

This conference will explore the future purpose of children's centres and how allocated funding can best be maximised to ensure the continued delivery of both targeted and universal interventions. Key topics covered include:

- Clarity on the role of children's centres in a changing financial landscape;
- Demonstrating 'outstanding' practice in your centre;
- Improving school readiness and the transition between early years and primary schools;
- Encouraging the use of volunteers and promoting community outreach in reducing stigma;
- Engaging hard to reach groups and enacting effective and timely intervention.

ECU Bulletin is compiled and edited by NCB Information Centre. Any communications about the ECU Bulletin should be sent to: ecuadmin@ncb.org.uk

Please note that there may be a charge to download or view some documents featured in the Bulletin.

The Early Childhood Unit (ECU) works to sustain and improve the quality of services for young children through direct work with children's services and settings, and through its national networks. This fortnightly bulletin provides up to date news and information for the Early Years sector, including research, policy and resources.