

### ***More Great Childcare: continuing concerns***

While TACTYC is delighted that planned changes to childcare ratios have been dropped, we remain concerned about several other plans included in *More Great Childcare*, which threaten to undermine quality:

- **Qualification plans:** confusion over Early Years Teachers with and without Qualified Teacher Status, depending on the course and age group of children (birth to five or three to seven), but with the same entry requirements to the courses. It appears that caring for and educating the birth to threes as part of the new Early Years Teacher course equates to not being awarded QTS. This is hardly likely to ensure that work with birth to threes has the status it deserves and needs. Further, the new level 3 Early Years Educator standards require training for work with children from birth to seven on the basis that early years educators need to know what comes next. Surely that is also true of Early Years Teachers. The anomaly needs to be pointed out;
- **The loss of local authorities' roles in training and support to raise quality:** this is particularly important with regard to facilitating and championing interprofessional practice, important for children and families facing different types of disadvantage and need. Local authorities, with their links to health and social care, are best placed for this. Local authorities support quality development through an assessment of starting points, always linked to planning and support for improvements. They do this on the ground with in-depth knowledge of settings over time. There is a danger in shifting the role to Ofsted that dubious judgements will be made on the basis of one-off visits, followed by offering limited, long-distance, non-customised development opportunities. Although LAs are not forbidden from continuing in training and quality improvement, as the DfE no longer requires it, the funding will not be there. Posts are going around the country at an alarming rate. A terrible outcome of this is the loss of institutional knowledge and expertise held by the early years consultants in LAs who are disappearing rapidly from the scene.
- **OFSTED's extended role:** there are concerns about Ofsted's approach to early years inspection and the extent of early years knowledge and experience of 'early years' HMIs as they take on the quality improvement role. This is not simply a matter of structural reorganisation linked to 'efficiency'. In reality, the whole focus on school readiness by Ofsted risks losing sight of the holistic child and family with a narrow focus on and view of 'education'. The perceived lack of early years expertise from Ofsted can only exacerbate this tendency, alongside the shift towards school readiness apparent in the draft Early Years Teachers standards.
- **Childminder Agencies:** local authority intelligence tells us that childminders are not keen to join an agency as most prefer to keep their independence with support and training from their local authority. This doesn't necessarily mean that they expect it to be fully funded.
- **Funded places for two year olds:** there is a danger that these will be based on targets, rather than on ensuring children receive high quality early education and care. This is further exacerbated by insufficient funding to cover the real costs of high quality early education and care, which impacts most particularly on the maintained nursery schools.

***20 June, 2013***