



EARLY YEARS POLICY ADVICE:

BROADER POLICY ISSUES

IMMEDIATE CONCERNS

- Extend EYFS to age 6/7 to support a better transition from early years to primary in line with the majority of developed countries.
- Reinstate termly entry to the Reception class to safeguard the interests of younger children, retain role models of older children in nursery provision, and acknowledge the value and impact of a coherent programme of early education.
- Finance education and care from birth to seven in line with funding for pupils from 7-18, and vice contributions from health and social services budgets so that universal Children's Centre services can be reinstated; cuts are a false economy and targeted services stigmatise families. Reconsider the appropriateness of delivering early childhood education and care under market conditions, which disproportionately favour the richest quintiles of the UK under-fives population in terms of service access, affordability and quality.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage Profile is an inaccurate measure of developmental progress, administered under inappropriate conditions. Its use as an indicator leads to some misdiagnosis of SEN due to expected standards that most summer born children and many boys cannot reach. The Early Years Foundation Stage Profile should instead be applied to children in the term when they reach *statutory* school age. The Phonics Check in Y1 should not be compulsory, but made available for teachers in Y1 and Y2 to use on a voluntary basis.
- Develop multi-professional work with parents from conception onwards.
- Ensure that children's views are taken into account in service provision and evaluation.
- Revisit the government response to the Nutbrown Review of qualifications:
 - Implement 'specialist Early Years teacher' from birth to age 6/7 and general status of QTS across the board (NOT Early Years Teachers as currently conceived).
 - Recognise Early Years as a specialism at all levels of training, with the same status as a subject specialism in primary and Secondary ITE.
 - Make urgent provision in all forms of early years training, including QTS, for a focus on the needs of children under three in early years settings
 - Include explicit reference to care and to work with families in professional standards and course content
 - Explicitly promote children's emotional and social well-being in training and practice

- Secure sustainable HE and FE courses to link with work-based placements in line with OFSTED findings; School Direct cannot provide adequate preparation for early years work.
- Review Ofsted's role
 - Clarify Ofsted's role as an independent monitor and one of several arbiters of quality; enforcement should be based on expert knowledge of effective birth to seven practice, not politics. As well as identifying problems and grading the quality of provision, experienced inspectors should provide professional support.
 - Align criteria for Section 5 and PVI inspections.
- Acknowledge the democratic and strategic role of Local Authorities in early years, as well as community interests and influences, rather than centralising policy. Take account of what can be learned from developments in Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland.

MID-TERM ISSUES

- Disseminate information about how children learn in the early years and the implications for practice to address the different knowledge bases and priorities of policy makers, Ofsted and practitioners in relevant services.
- Consolidate the future of specialist early years courses in FE and HE.
- Secure CPD for all working in the early years.
- Ensure that schools are ready for children. Any pupils not reaching 'a good level of development' at the end of the EYFS should continue to benefit from its underpinning principles.

One of six documents from:

BERA/TACTYC (2014) Early Years: policy advice and future research agendas

For further information and the full document see:

www.tactyc.org.uk • www.bera.ac.uk

References

- Alexander, Robin J., and Michael Armstrong. *Children, their World, their Education: final report and recommendations of the Cambridge Primary Review*. Taylor & Francis US, 2010.
- Moss P. ed (2013) *Early Childhood and Compulsory Education: reconceptualising the relationship*. Abingdon: Routledge
- National Institute for Clinical Excellence (2012) *Social and Emotional Well-being: Early Years*. Available online at <http://www.nice.org.uk/nicemedia/live/13941/61149/61149.pdf>
- Nutbrown, C. (2012) *Foundations for Quality, the independent review of early education and childcare qualifications. Final report*. <http://www.education.gov.uk/nutbrownreview>
- Rose, Jim, and Schools and Families Department for Children. *The independent review of the primary curriculum: Final report*. Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2009.
- The Wave Trust (2013) *Conception to age 2 – the age of opportunity*. Available at <http://www.wavetrust.org/key-publications/reports/conception-to-age-2>
- UNICEF Post-2015 Development Agenda. Available online at <http://www.unicef.org/post2015/>