

Early Years Policy Advice: TACTYC/BERA (EY SIG) collaboration

We are very pleased to announce that the policy advice documents and future research agendas for early years are now completed and available on our website. The briefing document is grounded in findings from national and international research evidence, government reports, and cumulative wisdom on high quality early years provision. It also incorporates a research agenda to guide future scholarship in the field. We are very grateful to all of our members for their involvement and support.

Background to the project: TACTYC had approached Professor Elizabeth Wood, Convenor of the Early Childhood SIG, to suggest a new project that would build on previous BERA/TACTYC collaborations. The new project began with two seminars, the first at the University of Winchester, 30th April, 2013, in which over 50 academics and leading early years professionals shared research findings in posters and discussed recent research and policy developments in the four nations of the UK. Presentations were made by Professor Denise Hevey, University of Northampton; Dr Christine Stephen, University of Stirling; Dr Glenda Walsh, Stranmillis University College; and Dr Jane Waters, University of Wales Trinity Saint David. Key themes for the policy guidance were developed from group discussions.

Further work was carried out on those themes at the second seminar at the University of Sheffield on 6th July, 2013, following presentations from Professor Cathy Nutbrown and Wendy Scott (President of TACTYC). The work to formulate and refine the guidance continued in small groups over the following months and the complete draft document was made available for consultation to TACTYC membership (528 members), to SIG members, and The Canterbury Christ Church Baby Room Network (NING), whose membership currently consists of 150 settings/professionals from across the UK and beyond. Following consultation, one detailed overview document was produced, comprising all six themes together and individual summaries of the themes.

The six themes that were agreed include:

- i. Professionalism – Early Years as a Career
- ii. Parents and Families
- iii. Play and Pedagogy
- iv. Learning, development and Curriculum
- v. Assessment, Transitions and School Readiness
- Broader Policy Issues

The project has drawn on the expert knowledge of TACTYC and BERA SIG members, who have given generously of their time and contributed considerable cumulative wisdom and experience. Both TACTYC and BERA have supported the production and dissemination of the documents and have lent their organisational strengths to our joint advocacy.

The next stages are as follows.

1. We intend offer the document to the education policy leaders of the main political parties, and offer to meet them to discuss the key points and recommendations. The document will then be distributed widely to key organisations, and through existing networks of TACTYC and BERA SIG members.
2. We will convene collaborative groups who are able to give more of their time to developing academic and user reviews based on the six themes to update the 2003 BERA Review '*Early Years Research: Pedagogy, Curriculum and Adult Roles, Training and Professionalism*'.
3. Two research reviews – an academic review and a user review, will be completed during 2014-15. These documents will be published via the TACTYC and BERA websites, and we hope will be valuable resources for students, practitioners and scholars.