### Welcome to the ECU Bulletin 10th November 2016

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**Conferences**
Policy

Consultation Outcome: government response to consultation on 30 hour free childcare entitlement delivery model
The government has published a response to the consultation on the delivery model for the 30 hour free childcare entitlement. This consultation ran from April 2016 to June 2016 and asked respondents for their views on:

- increasing flexibility of the free entitlement to better meet the needs of working parents;
- improving access to the free entitlement for disabled children and those with additional needs;
- making the local delivery model more efficient;
- improving parents’ access to information about childcare.

The published document summarises the responses to the consultation and outlines the government response to the issues raised.

New funding available to support victims of domestic abuse
The Department for Communities and Local Government has announced a new fund to increase refuge spaces and other accommodation for women fleeing domestic violence. The fund will support a range of services to help victims rebuild their lives, from ensuring that victims have somewhere safe to live and recover, to providing education, employment and life skills training. New ‘Priorities for Domestic Abuse Services’ are also being published, setting out how local authorities should be responding to domestic abuse in a collaborative and effective way. This means putting the victim first, providing flexible services that meet their needs and collaborating with other councils to open up services to victims from outside the local area. Clear and accountable local leadership should bring together all local services with a process for independent scrutiny to ensure care is informed by survivors’ voices and needs.

3 November 2016.

Practice

Untapped potential: how England’s nursery lottery is failing too many children
This report by Save the Children presents new evidence that attending a childcare setting with highly qualified staff has a substantial and positive impact on a child’s early development. Other findings include:

- In 2015/16, half of all three- and four-year-old children (50%) attended a private, voluntary and independent setting without an early years teacher or equivalent working directly with them;
- In the 20% of local authorities with the least teacher-led settings, 31% of children were attending a private, voluntary and independent setting with an early years teacher or equivalent, compared with 70% of children in the top 20% of local authorities;
- Local authorities with the fewest teacher-led childcare settings in the private, voluntary and independent sector were also more likely to experience higher levels of disadvantage than local authorities with the most teacher-led settings.
Recommendations include introducing a workforce quality supplement to incentivise settings to recruit early years teachers, investing in high-quality provision in the most deprived parts of the country and the publication of the childcare workforce strategy to set out how to tackle the challenges in recruitment, progression and continuing professional development across the workforce. This publication follows the ‘Lighting up young brains’ report by Save the Children and the Institute of Child Health (March 2016), looking at the science behind young children’s brain development and its relationship to children’s language development. The briefing made a recommendation to the government to support young children's language development by ensuring every nursery in England is led by an early years teacher by 2020.

Research

**Young children are researchers: Children aged four to eight years engage in important research behaviour when they base decisions on evidence**

Whilst young children are affected by educational policy decisions based on research evidence, their abilities to make decisions based on evidence are often disregarded by policymakers and professional adult researchers. This article reports on elements of the Young Children As Researchers (YCAR) project, an interpretive empirical study that sought social justice in the field of early childhood by conceptualising ways in which young children aged four to eight years are researchers and may be considered to be researchers. Adopting a principled approach framed by a ‘jigsaw’ methodology, the YCAR study engaged professional adult researchers ($n=34$), young children aged four to eight years ($n=138$) and their practitioners ($n=15$) in three English primary schools. Drawing on the study findings, this article argues that decision-making based on evidence is an important research behaviour undertaken by young children that deserves recognition by policymakers, practitioners and the academy as a potential vehicle for realising children’s participation rights.

**Argumentation in preschool: a common ground for collaborative learning in early childhood**

Argumentation has been widely explored in primary and secondary school as an important opportunity to promote learning through the development of processes that are both social and cognitive. However, less attention has been devoted to the way argumentation begins to take shape in the early years, especially during conversations which take place both between teachers and children and among peers. Adopting a sociocultural approach, researchers compared teacher–children talk and peer-talk in preschool to investigate how argumentation can help to create a ‘common ground’ for collaboration and problem solving through discursive practices. To this aim, collected data was analysed using both quantitative and qualitative methods. Results show that argumentation is an effective way of improving children’s ability to cultivate shared and critical thinking, provided that teachers are able to support them, paying attention to the role of leadership and involvement.

**Mastery approaches to maths teaching**

A one year randomised control trial (RCT) evaluation of the ‘Inspire Maths’ mastery approach to teaching mathematics for primary age children has been conducted at the Department of Education in Oxford. The research team found significant positive effects on young children’s achievement after two terms of using the programme. The mixed methods evaluation involved an intervention and delayed treatment group, observations of lessons and of professional development sessions, and interviews with teachers. The evaluation was funded by Oxford University Press, publishers of the programme.
**Families**

**Family & Childcare Trust launches parent-led childcare project**

This project aims to help parents take the lead in creating and delivering childcare where existing services do not exist or fail to meet their needs. Parent-led childcare involves parents volunteering their time in return for reduced childcare costs and the development of new skills. The project plans to refine a parent-led childcare model and explore potential sites for pilot schemes. If you are interested in getting involved please contact Gayle Baker on gayle@familyandchildcaretrust.org.

**Disability and Special Needs**

**Consultation on work, health and disability**

The Department of Health (DH) is seeking views on what it will take to transform employment prospects for disabled people and people with long-term health conditions. DH is consulting in order to understand why disabled people and people with health conditions might be unable to get a job or keep one, and to recognise the wide range of conditions and circumstances they face. The department is committed to financially supporting those with the most severe or life-limiting disabilities and conditions who are unable to work. DH is seeking views from a range of respondents including: people with health conditions and disabled people; large and small employers; employability professionals; health and care professionals; families, friends, teachers and carers; local leaders and commissioners in health, social care and local authorities; and voluntary and community organisations. Please see the Consultations section for details of how to respond.

**Ofsted**

**Serious incident notifications from local authority children's services 2015 to 2016**

This release covers data on notifiable incidents involving the care of children aged under 18 years. Notifiable incidents are those involving death or serious harm to a child where abuse or neglect is known or suspected, and also deaths of children looked after and children in regulated settings. Key findings from 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016 include:

- Ofsted received 379 serious incident notifications. The number of serious incidents notified to Ofsted was almost the same as the previous year (2% decrease);
- 171 cases of child deaths were notified, compared with 190 in the previous year;
- The number of notifications of child deaths from killing or non-accidental injury by a parent or carer has fallen, from 11% of all child deaths compared with 21% in 2014-15;
- Children under the age of one year were the subjects of 32% (123) of all incidents reported during 2015 to 2016.

Published 27 October 2016

**Early Years Provider non-compliance: action by Ofsted**

The ‘Early Years Compliance Handbook’ sets out what Ofsted does when a childminder or childcare provider does not comply with regulations. A summary of changes is available on the website by clicking on the above link.

Updated October 2016
Health and Wellbeing

Report on air pollution: clear the air for children
This report by Unicef looks at how children, particularly the most disadvantaged, are affected by air pollution. It points out that around 300 million children live in areas where the air is toxic – exceeding international limits by at least six times – and that children are uniquely vulnerable to air pollution, breathing faster than adults on average and taking in more air relative to their body weight. The report also notes that air pollution is a major contributing factor in the deaths of around 600,000 children under age 5 every year and threatens the health, lives and futures of millions more. It concludes with a set of concrete steps to take so that children can breathe clean, safe air.

National Child Measurement Programme: changes in children’s body mass index between 2006/7 and 2014/15
This National Child Measurement Programme report by Public Health England shows It provides high-level analysis of the prevalence of ‘underweight’, ‘healthy weight’, ‘overweight’, ‘obese’ and ‘overweight and obese combined’ children, in Reception (aged 4–5 years) and Year 6 (aged 10–11 years), measured in state schools in England in the school year 2015-16. Findings include:

- Over a fifth of Reception children were overweight or obese. In year 6 over a third were overweight or obese;
- The prevalence of obesity has increased since 2014/15 in both Reception and Year 6;
- Obesity prevalence was higher for boys than girls in both age groups;
- Obesity prevalence for children living in the most deprived areas in both age groups was more than double that of those living in the least deprived areas;
- The deprivation gap as measured by the differences in obesity prevalence between the most and least deprived areas has increased over time.

Published October 2016

Breastfeeding at 6 to 8 weeks after birth: annual data
Public Health England
Annual experimental statistics on breastfeeding prevalence at 6 to 8 weeks after birth. Information is presented at local authority of residence, PHE Centre and England level. The latest annual data covers the period 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016.
Published 26 October 2016

Report on Adverse Childhood Experiences and adult health outcomes
Public Health Wales
This report on health in adults in Wales says those who suffered four or more adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are more than twice as likely to be diagnosed with a chronic disease in later life compared to adults that have experienced none. These experiences range from verbal, mental and physical abuse, to being exposed to alcoholism, drug use and domestic violence at home.
Safer screening test for pregnant women
Following a clinical recommendation by experts at the UK National Screening Committee, a new non-invasive prenatal test for Down’s, Edwards’ and Patau’s syndromes, which is safer for women and their babies, has been approved. This additional test could reduce the number of women who choose to have an invasive diagnostic test which carries a risk of miscarriage. From 2018, women will be offered a safer screening test as an alternative to the invasive tests. A simple blood test will be offered which is then used to check for DNA fragments of these chromosomal syndromes.
2 November 2016

Survey on what measures, tools or indicators are used to assess the wellbeing of children in care
NCB Research Centre is currently undertaking research on what measures, tools or indicators are used to assess the wellbeing of children in care in England. The researchers are interested in finding out more about how such information is collected and used by those working with children in care, including foster carers, counsellors and residential home managers. Participants can share their thoughts and experiences of measuring the wellbeing of children in care by taking part in a ten minute survey: survey link. NCB Research Centre is also interested in speaking to managers and practitioners in more detail by telephone. If you would like to volunteer for a short telephone interview, then please contact Rebekah Ryder, Senior Researcher at NCB on rryder@ncb.org.uk, 020 7833 6811 or submit your details using this form: http://www.ncb.org.uk/measuring-wellbeing-children-care
This research is funded by John Paul Getty Junior Charitable Trust.

Safeguarding

First Aid: first nurseries awarded Millie’s Mark
Ten nurseries across England have become the first to achieve Millie’s Mark, the new quality mark for excellence in paediatric first aid for early years settings. The quality mark will be awarded to early years providers that meet a number of criteria, including: evidence of needs assessment for setting staff; evidence that all staff hold an appropriate in-date paediatric first aid certificate and evidence of classroom-based training for one-day courses. This is in addition to the legal requirements set out in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework. The scheme will be administered by NDNA. It has been developed in memory of a 9-month-old girl Millie Thompson, who died after choking on food while at nursery in 2012.

Consultations

NEW AND CLOSING SOON Level 3 Early Years Educator: Literacy and Numeracy requirements
The Department for Education is seeking views on amending the level 2 literacy and numeracy qualification requirements for staff with a level 3 Early Years Educator qualification. This consultation is an opportunity to better understand what knowledge, skills and appropriate qualifications in mathematics and English are required to perform an effective level 3 role. It also seeks to consider what literacy and numeracy qualification requirements can put level 3 staff in the best position to progress in their careers.
Launch date: 5 November 2016
Closing date: 28 November 2016
NEW: Women and Equalities Committee inquiry: end to discrimination against women and girls by 2030
The Women and Equalities Committee has launched an inquiry into the Government's plans for achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goal 5. SDG 5 requires UN Member States to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls by 2030. SDG 5 targets include ending all forms of discrimination against women and girls; eliminating all forms of violence against all women and girls; eliminating harmful practices, recognising and valuing unpaid care and domestic work and ensuring women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership. The targets and questions on which the committee would welcome views can be seen in full by clicking on the above link. The deadline for written submissions is Monday 5 December 2016.

NEW: Work, health and disability: consultation
The Department of Health is seeking views on what it will take to transform employment prospects for disabled people and people with long-term health conditions. See also the Disability and Special Needs section.
Launch date: 31 October 2016
Closing date: 17 February 2017

CLOSING SOON: Fostering inquiry
The Education Select Committee has launched an inquiry into fostering. This inquiry invites written submissions on points including: the recruitment and retention of foster carers, and the capacity of the fostering system; the stability of foster care placements, including the impact of the Staying Put initiative; the role of voluntary and independent foster care providers, and their relationships and cooperation with local authorities; the foster care market, including the costs of commissioning of services and financial incentives in the recruitment of foster carers; and the sufficiency of current recognition, support and recompense given to foster carers. For full details please click on the link. The deadline for written submissions is Friday 25 November 2016.

CLOSING SOON: Universal Credit and Child Tax Credit: consultation on exceptions to the two-child limit
Department for Work and Pensions and HM Revenue & Customs
The child element in Universal Credit and the individual element in Child Tax Credit will be payable to a maximum of two children from April 2017 (Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016). This consultation seeks evidence and views to inform the detailed design of the four exceptions that have been announced, and their implementation. It is not a consultation on the policy itself.
Launch date: 21 October 2016
Closing date: 27 November 2016

Providing a 'safe space' in healthcare safety investigations
Department of Health
This consultation seeks views on creating a balanced 'safe space' to allow NHS staff to speak up about incidents without the fear of being punished.
Launch date: 17 October 2016
Closing date: 16 December 2016
**Government consultation: school places**
The government has announced a series of proposals with the intention of increasing the provision of school places. The consultation covers proposals in four key areas:

- Independent schools directly assisting the state-funded sector, through creating more places, and giving more choice and control for parents;
- Universities playing a direct role in improving school quality and pupil attainment;
- Selective schools providing more school places, and ensuring that they are open to children from all backgrounds;
- Faith schools delivering more school places, while meeting strengthened safeguards on inclusivity.

The government is now seeking feedback on these proposals.
Launch date: 12 September 2016
Closing date: 12 December 2016

**Opportunity to propose new health screening topics to the UK National Screening Committee**
The UK National Screening Committee (UK NSC) has put out an annual call for the first time, which will enable any individual or organisation to submit a proposal for a condition to be considered for a population-wide screening programme. The call for new screening topics is being piloted this year. The pilot will measure the volume of work that the process may generate and assess its effectiveness. If successful, it is hoped the process can continue on an annual basis. Any proposals received will be evaluated against UK NSC screening criteria, but any condition previously considered by the Committee will not be included. The UK NSC will respond to each submission within 6 weeks after the annual call closes.
Launch date: 26 September 2016
Closing date: 9 January 2017

**Conferences**

19 November 2016, London
**Principled Early Years Practice: Valuing our past, debating our present, inspiring our future**
Organised by TACTYC, the key speakers for this event will be Julien Grenier and Jools Page.

25 November 2016, Leeds
**Leeds Early Years Conference**
Organised by Leeds City Council, the key note speaker will be Nancy Stewart on the subject of self-regulation. The day is an opportunity for early years practitioners to learn, reflect and share good practice. To book a place contact cct@leeds.gov.uk.

26 & 27 November, London
**A tangled web: conference and seminar in dialogue with Reggio**
A weekend for early childhood educators to encounter the work of Reggio Emilia and develop their own competencies in working across the range of expressive languges in supporting their children’s learning and meaning-making. Both days will feature educators from Reggio Emilia and their work. Please click on the link to register.
17 November, Bradford
28 November, Solihull
29 & 30 November, London

**Enabling Successful Futures: Developing a Reflective & Impactful Pedagogy in an Increasingly Challenging Climate**

The conference will focus on the need for educators who are informed, reflective and confident about providing a pedagogy that supports the reality of successful learning and development. Organised by Early Excellence, the keynote speaker will be Robert Winston.

7 December 2016, London

**Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation: Prevention and Protection**

Organised by Children & Young People Now Conferences, this conference will brief delegates on the evolving nature of Child Sexual Exploitation. Keynote speakers include Carlene Firmin MBE and Jonathan Taylor, formerly of the Metropolitan Police.

12 December 2016

**The right to a place in German early childhood provision - Are choice, quality and equity being realised?**

Organised by the International Centre for the Study of the Mixed Economy of Childcare at the University of East London. Since the summer of 2013 every German child aged between one and six in each of the 16 German federal states has had a right to a place in early childhood provision. This development has produced challenges for equitable access, service quality and parental choice. Key speakers are Dr Nina Hogrebe and Professor Peter Moss, to discuss issues arising from the new policy. This seminar is free of charge, but to confirm your attendance please email Eva Lloyd at e.lloyd@uel.ac.uk

PLEASE NOTE POSTPONED DATE FOR THIS EVENT
8 March 2017, London

**ENABLE 2017 conference**

This event aims to gather and galvanise professionals and parents who are passionate about the Early Years in order to effect positive change. Topics will include the creation of a new inclusive early years curriculum, leadership in the early years and the power of play.

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**ECU Bulletin**

ECU Bulletin is compiled and edited by NCB’s Early Childhood Unit (ECU). 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.