## Welcome to the ECU Bulletin 9 June 2016

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Policy

**Pregnancy and maternity discrimination**
The Commons Women and Equalities Committee held an oral evidence session on 24 May 2016. Caroline Waters, Deputy Chair, and Sue Coe, Programme Head, Economy and Employment, Equalities and Human Rights Commission; and Nick Boles, Minister of State for Skills, gave evidence.

**Dietary advice and childhood obesity strategy**
Urgent question for debate tabled by Keith Vaz (Leicester East) about the opinion paper from the National Obesity Forum and Public Health Collaboration which contradicts much of the health and lifestyle advice issued by the government and the NHS over the past decade. Mr Vaz also asked for a definitive date for the publication of the childhood obesity strategy.

Practice

**Infant mental health**
NSPCC is putting a spotlight on the importance of looking after the mental health needs of babies and young children in care. It has published a case for change which brings together a wide range of research and practice evidence which argues for the need to rethink our approach to infant mental health in the care system.

**Delivering the Healthy Child Programme for young refugee and migrant children**
This report, based on a scoping study undertaken by NCB, discusses the barriers and enablers refugee and migrant families experience in promoting the health of their young children (from pregnancy to age 5). It explores how local authorities, in shaping their Healthy Child Programme 0-5, are addressing the needs of these young children and their families. The report makes recommendations for how national and local government can promote a healthy start for young refugee and migrant children in England.

**Evaluation of Coping with Crying**
NSPCC has published the final evaluation report of the Coping with Crying programme, a short film which aims to show parents coping strategies they can use with a crying baby and explain the dangers of roughly handling an infant. The findings suggest that during times of stress parents who had watched the film were reacting in a positive way to their infant crying and were seeking help when it was necessary.

**Funding rates for 30 hours early implementers**
The Department for Education (DfE) has confirmed that it will be funding early implementers at their early implementer rate across the full 30 hours offer. This will mean childcare providers in these areas can start delivering the government’s offer as quickly and effectively as possible.

**Wraparound and holiday childcare: parent and childcare provider ‘rights to request’. Guidance for local authority maintained schools, academies and free schools**
This Department for Education guidance includes how to respond to parents who ask their child’s school to establish wraparound and/or holiday childcare, and childcare providers who ask to use school facilities for wraparound and/or holiday childcare at times when the school isn’t using them. ‘Wraparound childcare’ is childcare that schools provide outside of normal school hours, such as breakfast clubs or after school childcare. ‘Holiday childcare’ is childcare that schools provide during school holidays.
You can read the government’s response to the wraparound and holiday childcare consultation [here](#).

### Research

**Impact of compensatory intervention in 6- to 18-month-old babies at risk of motor development delays**

Research suggests that delayed motor development observed in the first years of life can be prevented through compensatory intervention programmes that provide proper care during this period of child development. This study analysed the impact of a 12-week compensatory motor intervention programme on 32 babies with atypical motor development, characterising and correlating risk factors for developmental delays between the ages of 6 and 8 months. The authors conducted play activities that involved muscle stretching, improving muscle tone, sight and sound tracking, posture control in different situations, handling objects and movement. Findings showed significant improvements in motor performance.

**The role of parents and parental mediation on 0–3-year olds’ digital play with smart devices: Estonian parents’ attitudes and practices**

This study analysed the attitudes and practices of Estonian parents who allowed their 0–3-year olds to use smart devices. The authors wanted to find out if there was an interaction between parental use of smart technologies, parents’ attitudes and the child’s age that would predict young children’s usage of smart devices. In addition, they wanted to ascertain what kinds of devices are made available for 0–3-year olds, how frequently parents allow the child to use them, the activities children are engaged in on smart devices and which apps they use during their digital play. Parental mediation practices were also analysed. Findings showed that parents give three main reasons when rationalising their child’s touch screen use, related to education, entertainment and behaviour regulation.

**The Foundation Phase in Wales – a play-based curriculum that supports the development of physical literacy**

In 2008, the Welsh Assembly Government started the implementation of a new holistic play-based learning continuum for children aged three to seven called the Foundation Phase. With growing recognition of the importance of physical literacy and the role that Physical Education plays in its development, a three-phase complementarity mixed methods study examined the impact of this new curriculum on pupils’ physical literacy, finding that the Foundation Phase makes a positive contribution to the development of physical literacy. This article reports on two phases of that study to examine what the Foundation Phase is and how it is enacted in schools that have been identified as showing good practice.

**Early years learning, play pedagogy and social class**

Despite 50 years and more of ‘progressive education’ in the United Kingdom, classed patterns of educational success and failure stubbornly prevail. So how, where and when does it all go wrong for the many children who continue to fail or underachieve? This paper draws on the work of Basil Bernstein and centres on processes within early years education which are claimed to help launch children into careers as either educational ‘successes’ or ‘failures’. The findings suggests that children within the progressive play pedagogies of early years education learn their position in social and ability hierarchies that help define their future careers inside and outside schools. The author argues that this is what early years education settings are legitimised to do: make children ‘school ready’, pliant and prepared for a lifetime of learning to ‘succeed’ or ‘fail’. 
**Widening the gap? The impact of the 30-hour entitlement on early years education and childcare**

In September 2017 the government will implement its 2015 election manifesto pledge to provide 30 hours per week of free childcare for working parents of children aged 3 and 4 years in England. This report by CentreForum uses new analysis of entitlement and take-up of government subsidies to examine the implications of the policy for children from the lowest income households and consider its potential impact on the gap in educational outcomes between children from higher and lower socio-economic backgrounds. Key findings include:

- Childcare under the current 15-hour entitlement does not automatically offer the high level of quality that would be required for the disadvantage attainment gap to be substantially reduced;
- Extending the entitlement to 30 hours per week for working families is therefore likely to exacerbate the current strain on quality;
- There is little evidence to support the government’s claim that the 30-hour entitlement policy will substantially improve maternal employment rates.

**Universal pre-school education: the case of public funding with private provision**

Children given free nursery places at the age of three gained no educational benefit, according to this study by Essex and Surrey Universities which examined the effect of free pre-school education on child outcomes in primary school. It says the policy led to small improvements in attainment at age 5 but there were no apparent benefits by age 11. There was “modest evidence” of a greater impact on poorer children and those with English as a second language but none that disadvantaged children were helped to catch up in the longer term. The open access findings are published in the Royal Economic Society’s The Economic Journal.

**Families**

**Staying on track: step-by-step guides to life’s big changes**

Gingerbread, the charity working with single parent families, has a dedicated website section featuring comprehensive guides on some of the big changes or stages a single parent might go through. Topics covered include: separation, starting work, bereavement, maternity, education, and moving in with a new partner.

**Disability and Special Needs**

**Children with SEND let down by system-wide failings, warn schools**

Schools in England are struggling to support the 1.1 million pupils with special needs or disabilities (SEND) in mainstream classrooms, according to The Key, which provides leadership and management support to schools. Its survey of 1,100 school leaders found that delays to assessments, insufficient budgets and cuts to local authorities were hampering the ability to cope.

**Statements of SEN and EHC plans: England, 2016**

This Department for Education statistical release gives data on: the number of statements of SEN and EHC plans in place in January 2016, the number of statements and plans made for the first time during 2015, the percentage of statements and plans that were completed on time, transfers from statements and learning difficulty assessments to EHC plans.
**Fathers: Contact a Family report**
This guide gives practical information that fathers may need to help them understand how other fathers have experienced having a disabled child.

**Ofsted**

**Early years provider non-compliance: action by Ofsted**
This Ofsted handbook sets out the policy and approach to its compliance, investigation and enforcement work for providers registered on the Early Years and/or the Childcare Register. It has been updated for changes due to the Small Business, Enterprise and Employment Act 2015.

**Health and Wellbeing**

**New baby brain workout launched**
Barnardo’s has launched a resource for parents to help babies develop a healthy brain with our fun, new activity programme. The ‘baby brain workout’ activities are based on ‘Five to Thrive’ building blocks of talk, play, relax, cuddle and respond. The building blocks help children aged 0-5 grow up healthy and happy by building their communication skills, learn how to get on with and understand others and manage their personal feelings.

**0-4 years: Missed opportunities: children and young people’s mental health**
This report is part of a comprehensive overview of mental health from ages 0-25. The review finds that mental health problems are common among young people (affecting one in ten, or an average three in every classroom), but that awareness is poor and most attempts by parents to get help are unsuccessful. The report on 0-4 years covers prevalence, risk factors, maternal mental health problems, parental substance misuse, abuse, neglect and trauma, poverty, and interventions. You can download the main report and reports covering the additional age groups here.

**Safeguarding**

**Wood report: review of the role and functions of local safeguarding children boards**
Alan Wood’s review into the role that local safeguarding children boards (LSCBs) play in protecting and safeguarding children sets out recommendations for making LSCBs more effective. It calls for fundamental changes to multi-agency arrangements for protecting children, recommending replacing serious case reviews with local learning inquiries and national serious case inquiries, and establishing a new national learning framework. You can read the government response to the report - which accepts its recommendations and sets out what the proposed new arrangements will look like and how they will be implemented - here.
### Consultations

**Childcare workers: changes to disqualification arrangements**  
Department for Education  
The DfE plans to revise arrangements for those disqualified from working with children because they live with a disqualified person. The aim is to improve the fairness of the current arrangements, particularly in respect of the ‘by association’ elements, which mean that a childcare worker can be disqualified because someone who lives or works in their household is disqualified. The arrangements apply to people working in schools and non-domestic registered settings (for example, private, voluntary and independent nurseries).  
Launch date: 6 May 2016  
Closing date: 1 July 2016

### Conferences

10 June 2016, London
**Annual Pre-School Learning Alliance Event**  
This members’ event will focus on the pivotal role that practitioners play in shaping the future of the sector. Confirmed speakers include Sam Gyimah, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Childcare and Education.

16 June 2016, London
**Healthy Children, Bright Futures - Addressing Key Health Issues for Under 5s**  
Organised by 4Children, this health conference will address key issues for the early years, including childhood obesity and oral health.

23 June 2016, Berkshire
**Festival of Education: What’s Next for Early Years: Challenges and Solutions**  
The Telegraph Festival of Education aims to bring together the very best of education’s most forward thinking advocates, practitioners of change and policy makers. This session will look at the introduction of the new 30 hours ‘free’ childcare offer, with a panel of high profile early years speakers discussing the challenges facing the sector and identify solutions. Panel members: Neil Leitch, CEO, Pre-School Learning Alliance, June O’Sullivan, CEP LEYF, Catriona Nason, CEO, NEYTCO and Laura Henry, Independent Early Years specialist. Chaired by Sue Cowley.

24 June 2016, Blackpool  
The **SPICE Early Years Conference**, organized by Alison Marron and Donna Thorpe of Marton Primary Academy and Nursery. Guest speaker, Peter Hannon, Emeritus Professor, University of Sheffield, interactive workshops, knowledge exchange.  
Contact: admin@marton.blackpool.sch.uk

30 June 2016, London  
**Self-regulation: the key to effective early learning**  
Organised by Nursery World, this conference will focus on the importance of self-regulation to academic achievement and ‘bridging the gap’; how research is developing our understanding of self-regulation; and how to promote self-regulation in an early years setting and the home.
1 July 2016, Milton Keynes

**New Ideas for Early Years**
Organised by the National Day Nurseries Association, this annual conference features academics and experts including Sam Gyimah MP, Sophie Walker of the Women’s Equality Party and Alice Sharp of Experiential Play. Discussions will focus on the latest changes affecting early years and how to lead teams through it all successfully. An awards and celebration dinner will be held in the evening for networking, music and dancing. To book, call 01484 407075 or [book online](#).


**Learn, Explore, Debate**
Organised by 4Children in partnership with the Department for Education. More information about the events, including how to book, will be available soon.

20 July 2016, London

**Working with families with multiple needs**
A one day course by the Health and Social Care team at NCB to support practitioners working with families affected by complex problems such as parental substance misuse and parental mental health problems and/or domestic violence. It has been trialled with multi-agency audiences and is designed for practitioners across a range of agencies and services from Early Help through to those in child protection teams.

16 September 2016,

**Early Years 2016 – Let's start with the child: developmentally appropriate practice in the early years**
Organised by EYE and Practical Pre-School magazines, this 15th annual conference will feature seminars and workshops, and will look at the different needs of children and teaching at all levels.

3-4 November 2016, Birmingham

**Baby friendly initiative annual conference 2016**
The UNICEF UK Baby Friendly Initiative's conference for health professionals and others involved in the care of mothers and babies is Europe's largest conference on infant feeding.

9 November 2016, Huddersfield

**Closing the gap: learning together in the early years**
The conference will include information on supporting families and raising outcomes for your most vulnerable children. There will be a presentation on how Ofsted inspect this element and individual case studies and materials to help develop your rationale for the use of early years pupil premium funding. The keynote speaker is Sir Al Aynsley-Green.

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.
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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.