



Ealing Early Years Development & Childcare Partnership Meeting

Date: Thursday 20th July, 2006, 1.30 p.m.
Venue: Queen's Hall, Town Hall, Ealing.

1. Welcome & apologies

In the absence of Jennie Shaw, Charles Barnard took the Chair. He welcomed a number of new members, especially Fran and Sinead Calver
Please end of minutes for apologise.

2. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed as a correct record.

3. Matters Arising.

There were apparently no matters arising.

4. Children's Centre Website Update by Laura Jay

Usage – Hits are averaging over **88** a day, bringing the total to **5532** in 9 weeks.

New Content – EYDCP Grants in the Red EYDCP Section, including criteria of the grant application form and contact information. The application form is to be printed and completed with a development officer for support.

Perfect Practice – the summer edition is now online in the EYDCP Notice Board.

Audit – the full 196 page Childcare and Early Years Audit document is now online & can be accessed on all Notice Boards. This will remain online and be continuously updated. However, a printed 50-page overview will be delivered to all children's centres, satellites and partners.

Children's Centre Update 5 online. This edition focuses on the achievements for Phase 1; members should look out for Update 6, which will focus on plan for Phase 2 and will provide a list of proposed provision.

Problems arising. Members were asked to regularly check that any information for which they were responsible had not gone out of date. Anything obviously out of date would be removed.

Content was being sought from children's centres and satellites – so far only 6 out of 18 questionnaires had come back. Laura would help if any centre needed support.

The new Content Management System should enable corrections and additions to be made more quickly online. A new simpler protocol would be released soon.

Partnership Minutes As from this meeting, the Minutes will be online in the EYDCP Notice Board.

Julia Senior-Smith asked about the purpose of cover sheets; Laura said that these may not be permanent, but their purpose was to prompt review.

5. Transformation Fund presentation by Jane Maltais

An investment of £250 million would develop the skills of those working with young children and to help settings raise the quality of early years education and childcare without raising fees to parents or risk

the sustainability of settings. This is a two year initiative ending August 08; the allocation for the second year will depend on how the funding was used in the first year, and this will be "robustly" monitored.

Funding priorities were towards producing a new graduate-level status of Early Years Professional,

providing recruitment incentives and quality premium for eligible daycare providers, and working towards parity between maintained and PVI sector.

Most of the Fund was allocated to local authorities to be used in areas not already receiving specific funding.

The aim was to lead to the professionalisation of Early Years work, with a leading professional graduate in every setting, to increase the number of Level 3 graduates, and to spend directly on enrichment of settings other than by capital spending or administrative costs.

Further details, under the headings: Who can Apply, How Ealing will implement the scheme, Recruitment Incentive, the Quality Premium, Early years Professional Status, Accreditation Standards and training routes, and Sustainability, are in an ATTACHMENT to these Minutes, under the heading Transformation Fund.

Questions – the big question was, how this would all be sustained after the 2-year period. It was hoped that better staff training should lead to efficiency gains, partly by reducing the constant turnover of staff. Jane referred members to the Every Child Matters website, where by searching for Transformation there was a full list of FAQ's.

The Children's Workforce Development Council and Training Development Agency had developed a prospectus of training routes, which is available on the CWDC website, and would also be put on the EYDCP website.

6. EYDCP Grant Criteria - presentation by Polly Bradley

Current OFSTED registered providers and those exempt from Ofsted registration providing services within LBE may apply once per financial year in each of four areas, which are Sustainability, Childcare Development, Quality Assurance, and Inclusion.

a) Sustainability. This is to help in marketing, business training and financial planning in childcare settings to ensure sustainability, NOT to support childcare costs in the long term, although it may allow for short-term tidying over so long as setting themselves identify and address longer-term issues as part of the application process.

b) Childcare Development Grant

Out of School – to assist with start-up costs of new childcare places for 3-14 year olds (and up to 16 with special needs) Potential providers must research local needs and link in with one or more schools, with input from the local development worker.

O – 5 years - to assist with start-up costs, with potential providers providing evidence of need.

c) Quality Assurance. To support providers to meet regulation & improve quality by undertaking a QA scheme.

Minor Improvements such as safety catches and locks on confidential records, for which LBE could provide up to 90% of cost.

d) Inclusion These grants would cover adjustments, adaptations, equipment or staffing to establish or maintain places for children with special needs.

EYDCP Grant Funding cannot be used for Loans & financial charges, consultancy fees, leases, any expenditure not directly related to childcare, undocumented expenditure or anything already getting EYDCP Revenue Funding.

Priority would be given to providers in danger of imminent closure who is otherwise capable of delivering quality childcare & has good longterm prospects, or is co-operating with local employers, or has Special Needs places.

Applications – first consult the local Development Officer and EYDCP Business Support Officer (Melanie Smith) at Hanwell Library.

N.B. A fuller version of this presentation is ATTACHED.

Samira asked whether it was a matter of 'first come, first served'. Answer – yes, but applications would be considered on merit. As there can be no carry-over to next year, spending decisions will have to be fairly prompt. Also, this year the limits are less generous, and the aim is to spread around smaller amounts.

7. **Early Years Foundation Stage Consultation** Presentation by Samira John

Opening with the historical perspective, Samira pointed out that traditionally the system had undervalued childcare and Early Years education and left it to private initiative; in UK this had changed in 1998 with the National Childcare Strategy, Sure Start Local programmes, Curriculum Guidance in 2000 and in 2003 Birth to 3 Matters. From 2005 this had hotted up, and it was planned to have implementation of the EYFS from September 2008 onwards, with a single quality framework in which all the different initiatives would be consistently linked to each other and to National Standards. It was intended that quality would be raised, needs identified earlier, and services integrated and regulated.

An overview of the kind of integration needed was shown on the draft poster of overall aims for Early Years introducing Section 3 (which Laura hoped to put on the Website) and the chart showing areas of learning and development in six overlapping periods.

Informal national consultation was taking place online at:

www.dfes.gov.uk/consultations/ or by email at EYFS.CONULTATION@dfes.qsi.gov.uk

and local consultation had taken place on July 18th in four sessions with 65 cross-sector participants, including childminders, parents, maintained and non-maintained staff, who were also encouraged to consult online.

Points raised at this local consultation were that messages need to be presented more clearly, that more detail was needed on children with English as a second language and cultural diversity, and that terminology on Special Education needs and SEN Code of practice needed clarification.

Overall, the Early Years terminology is complex, sometimes scary, and application depends on practitioners understanding it. Also, Early Years should run up to Key Stage 1 rather than stopping at age 5. It was difficult for any one practitioner to see the whole big picture.

Julia Senior-Smith pointed out that this had heavy implications for childminders, with a lot of standards to understand.

It was also unclear how standards could be applied when a child went from one setting to another during the day, e.g. from a Nursery to a childminder.

Samira commented that if the general principles were understood, people would be flexible and practice would fall into place.

Lesley Hunter commented that much support from EYDCP would be called for.

One matter of concern was that only 250 replies had been received to the Consultation document; members were urged to help get responses.

Polly asked if this would replace the Ofsted Standards. Samira replied that work was going on so that there would be a unified standard by 2008.

8. **Equal Access** presentation by Charles Barnard

Charles showed the meeting the Equal Access paper by Stanley, Bellamy & Cooke for the Institute for Public Policy Research (www.ippr.org) published this June. This gave a national view of current inequalities which contained many unsettling facts to be considered by Early Years policy-makers.

e.g. There are 1.8 million children in workless households. However, the Tax Credit system, on which other benefits often rely, only favours those in work.

With the support system in force, children in larger families are inevitably worst off.

55% of children with disabilities or SEN are living in poverty.

The emphasis on attainment of educational standards has raised standards but has not reduced the attainment gap.

The increase in female employment includes many less stable employments

The increase in part-time work for both sexes implies a larger role for fathers in childcare; however, much of the information and services are female-orientated.

The most vulnerable children are those who most need the highest quality Early years provision, but tend to be the ones who fall through the net.

Charles felt strongly that the need now is not to create more places so much as to target these more vulnerable children. He mentioned the change of local government which had now put Ian Green in charge of children's services, and it seemed likely that £800,000 would be available to run the Phase 2 strategy, targeting workless families, the marginally employed (on shiftwork, on low pay, etc), families with disability or SEN needs, single parents, ethnic minority groups (whose take-up rate was low) and large families with 3 or more children. He gave a summary of how this sum would be distributed round the Borough.

Comments – Lesley Hunter said that education money tends to be focussed on schools rather than the needs of individual children. There was a need to make contact with the aspirations of parents and get them to understand that education starts at birth.

Following on from this, Samira said it was important to make children aware of lifelong learning opportunities. This could be helped by schemes linking up the different educational settings.

Charles said that he hoped to bring in Berenice Miles, the consultant on equality.

Liz Shack felt that a common assessment framework would help.

Cathy Coyle said that there was a difficulty for young people in accessing services in unfamiliar territory; she referred to a recent initiative to discuss mental health issues with adolescent boys at risk of suicide. This had taken place at football grounds.

9. Any other business

- a) Polly drew the attention of Surestart's Work with Children workshop "Just for men" poster, which would also be in Ealing Times & going to 50,000 homes.
- b) Julia Senior-Smith reported that the session for childminders on 22nd June had gone well.
- c) Barbara Simpson showed CIS's summer activities brochure.
- d) Rajinder Jaswal thanked Committee members for their good wishes during her recent illness.

10. Date of next meeting

Thursday 21st September, 9.30 a.m.
Queen's Hall, Ealing Town Hall,
Uxbridge Road, Ealing,
W5 2BY

The meeting closed at 3.15 p.m.