

Using the Early Years Evidence

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The first C4EO theme

Early Years: 2008-2010

Successfully completed in March 2010 but will continue for a further 12 months due to demand.

How can we best use this time?



Early Years priorities

Important that these were ‘for the sector – from the sector’ but also informed by policy concerns:

- Narrowing the gap in outcomes for young children through effective practices in the early years
- Improving children’s attainment through a better quality of family-based support for early learning
- Improving development outcomes for children through effective practice in integrating early years services.



What: the C4EO processes

- Identifying and collating knowledge about effective practice (ie. 'what works').
- Disseminating this knowledge to those who can make a difference e.g strategic managers in LAs and Children's Trusts.
- Offering them tailored support to help them use this knowledge (and generate new learning at the same time).



Knowledge Gathered:

Main findings and implications from the reviews:

Direct ways of reducing children's risk of poor outcomes

- Reduce incidence of low birth weight; foetal and post-natal injury
- Ensure preventive health care (e.g. immunisations and diet)
- Lower the risk of poor bonding and attachment
- Reduce child neglect and abuse

More direct ways of reducing children's risk of poor outcomes

- Improve the quality of the early HLE
- Provide high quality pre-school and encourage attendance
- Language and literacy interventions
- Child protection
- Parenting education



Indirect ways of reducing children's risk of poor outcomes

- Reduce childhood poverty (improve employment opportunities)
- Reduce teenage pregnancy
- Reduce maternal anxiety and depression
- Improve maternal education
- Encourage a good social mix in pre-schools



More indirect ways of reducing children's risk of poor outcomes

- Promote parents' involvement and interest in education
- Work with parents to improve the early HLE
- Encourage fathers and wider family members to be involved
- Support parents of children with behaviour problems.

Recommended practice for early childhood services

- Collect data on poverty, other risk factors and outcomes
- Combine approaches for both the child and the family
- Focus on the quality and duration of interventions
- Invest in training, leadership and service coordination

Other important issues for the Theme

- **Some significant areas missing from the evidence base**
- **Validated local practice: not easy to get examples with good evidence of effectiveness and this is being addressed**
- **Sector specialist work takes time to be embedded as a process**

For the future: what will be needed by local authority planners and managers?

- In a time of recession
- In a time of changed political priorities
- In a time of growing evidence of the importance of the early years
- In a time of greater integration across children's services management
- In a time when local authorities may have less money and more autonomy

What will work best to improve outcomes for children?

contacts

- Register for regular email updates at www.C4EO.org.uk
- Early Years Theme will continue for an extra 12 months in collaboration with ECU

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