

Introduction to the e-learning resource from Christine Davies CBE, Director, C4EO

Welcome to C4EO's new e-learning resource on the theme of 'early years' – the first of 8 themes that the centre is focusing on as part of our unique remit to gather and share local, regional and national evidence of 'what works' to improve outcomes in services, especially for the most vulnerable children, young people and families in our communities.

Early Years, so crucial to children's long term development also presents an ideal opportunity to develop positive relationships with families and other carers. This e-learning resource captures the main findings from the research reviews relating to the three priority areas that the sector identified for us as the most pressing:

- 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.

The main messages from the academic research will not surprise you. They link to strands of policy and practice that are already well-embedded by local authorities and partners in response to the 2007 Children's Plan and reinforce the importance of an ecological perspective whereby early years services are targeted to the needs of the child within the family.

However the *weight* of evidence concerning the impact of poverty on children's outcomes underlines the importance of eradicating child poverty through systemic reform and the need to engage early years services in this endeavor.

These summaries of the academic research – presented here through the e-learning format - are being enhanced through the collation of examples of validated effective local practice and the work of Sector Specialists who are supporting individual local authorities and their Children's Trusts partners.

Our commitment is to make sure that the sector is kept in touch with the developing evidence base through our updated Progress Maps and the regional events so that everyone who works with children and young people and families understands the difference they can make to children and young peoples' lives and their outcomes.