Early Childhood Unit



Welcome to the ECU Bulletin 2nd November 2017

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The NCB 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. To find out more about the work of the NCB Early Childhood Unit please visit www.ncb.org.uk/ecu.

The fortnightly ECU Bulletin provides up-to-date news and information for the Early Years sector, including research, policy and resources. Please click on the title link to see more details of each item. However, in some cases, external websites, such as academic journals, may charge to download or view some documents featured in the Bulletin.

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NCB Early Childhood Unit

Transforming Infant Wellbeing: Research, policy and practice for the first 1001 days

Transforming Infant Wellbeing brings together science and policy to highlight the critical importance of the first 1001 days of infancy: the period from conception to the second birthday. Edited by Penelope Leach, the content of this publication thematically supports the work of NCB partner A Better Start and has contributions from authors connected with the programme. A 20% discount is available to ECU Bulletin readers by entering the code IRK71 at checkout.

Policy

Early Years Foundation Stage Profile Results 2017

The Department for Education has published the results of the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile 2017. Key points include:

- At a national level, 70.7% of children achieved a good level of development, an increase of 1.4 percentage points on 2016;
- Children achieving a good level of development are those achieving at least the expected level within the following areas of learning: communication and language; physical development; personal, social and emotional development; literacy; and mathematics.
- Girls continue to do better than boys, but the gender gap has decreased for three key measures.

Published 19 October 2017

An analysis of trends in first time entrants to the youth justice system

This Ministry of Justice report explores some of the possible societal, policy practice drivers associated with changes in the number of first time entrants to the youth justice system. The number of youth first time entrants peaked in 2006/07 at 110,784.
This rise was followed by substantial year-on-year falls, so that in 2014/15 there were 20,544 first time entrants. Possible policy and societal drivers behind the fall in the number of first time entrants may include prevention programmes to support vulnerable families, such as Sure Start and Family Intervention programmes.

However, the researchers concluded that while these factors and programmes (e.g. Sure Start) may all have made some contribution to the reductions in the numbers of first time entrants, they were not implemented on a sufficient scale to account for the overall change.

Published October 2017

Practice

Case studies from A Better Start on diet and nutrition

A Better Start is a £215 million, ten-year strategic investment funded by the Big Lottery Fund and focused on developing and testing new approaches to promoting good Early Childhood Development. This work is taking place through five partnerships with local services in Blackpool, Bradford, Nottingham, Southend and Lambeth (in partnership with NCB). A Better Start has produced some case studies of innovative practice in supporting diet and nutrition as follows:

- Case study: HENRY (Bradford)
- Case study: Community Activity and Nutrition Programme (LEAP)
- Case study: Cook and Play (SSBC)

To read the case studies and other material on diet and nutrition please click on the title link and scroll down the page to the relevant section.

Research

Please note that academic journals may charge to download the papers featured in this section. We will also link to free sources when these are available.

Visual rhythms: facilitating young children's creative engagement at Tate Liverpool

This paper sets out to demonstrate the creative engagement of a group of three- and four-year old children at Tate Liverpool art gallery and how this was facilitated. The paper starts by providing background on the project at Tate Liverpool and to a pedagogy of engagement. It progresses to show how artworks were used as provocations for encouraging children's creative engagement as part of workshops in the gallery space and the creative engagement signs that were observed.

Vignettes of children's spontaneous responses are used to illustrate and analyse their engagement, and how this was facilitated by artists. Through a facilitation of curiosity and self-discovery over sustained periods of time, children's engagement was observed as they expressed themselves through their 'visible rhythms'. See also the work from King's College London published in 2016: 'My Primary School is at the Museum'.

Investigating the association between children's screen media exposure and vocabulary size in the UK

This research tested whether exposure to screen media is associated with children's early language development. One hundred and thirty-one highly educated caregivers of UK children aged 6–36 months completed a media exposure questionnaire and vocabulary measure.

Amongst the study cohort, 99% of children were read to daily, 82% watched television and 49% used mobile touchscreen devices daily.

Regression analyses revealed that time spent reading positively predicted vocabulary comprehension and production scores at 6–18 months, but time spent engaging with television or mobile touchscreen devices was not associated with vocabulary scores. Therefore there is no evidence from this study that television and mobile touchscreen device use has either a positive, or a detrimental, effect on language learning in highly educated samples with moderate media use. In contrast, reading with children was positively related to vocabulary size.
Thus, as long as time spent reading is not reduced in place of television and mobile touchscreen activities, children's media exposure should not adversely affect their vocabulary size. However, due to existing studies showing that socio-economic status influences the quantity and variety of parents' speech with their children, accessing a sample with lower socio-economic status will be essential for further investigating the relationship between screen exposure, storybook reading and children's language development in the population more broadly.
The full article is currently available online via the title link. Please also see a summary page on the LuCiD website.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

Local Area SEND Inspections: one year on
Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission were commissioned to work together to develop and deliver a programme of 152 local area inspections over approximately a five-year period. Together, the two inspectorates designed a new framework to inspect the effectiveness of local areas in fulfilling their new duties in the SEND Code of Practice, which provides statutory guidance relating to Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014. Key findings include:

- Children and young people identified as needing SEND support had not sufficiently benefited from the implementation of the Code of Practice.
- Children and young people who have SEND were found to be excluded, absent or missing from school much more frequently than other pupils nationally.
- School leaders had used unofficial exclusions too readily to cope with children and young people who have SEND.
- Access to therapy services was a weakness in half of the local areas inspected. Typically, therapy services were of high quality. However, too many children and young people who have SEND experienced long waiting times as well as limited contact with the therapists that they needed.

There are further significant findings in the report. To read these and for more information, please click on the title link.

Published 18 October 2017

Education, Health and Care Plans: our first 100 investigations
This report by the local government and social care ombudsman explores the first 100 investigations into complaints into Education, Health and Care plans, which were introduced in the Children and Families Act 2014 with the aim of providing better joined-up support for children with SEND from birth to 25 years. Common issues include:

- Delay is an overriding feature in most complaints about SEN**:** less than 59% of new EHC plans were issued within the 20 week limit last year.

- Not consulting with families about what evidence should be gathered to inform an EHC assessment, or not carrying out this consultation early in the process. This can lead to delays later, when parents challenge the absence of up-to-date evidence, or the draft EHC plan does not reflect the child's current needs.
- Cases where discussions about placement happen too late in the EHC needs assessment process, leading to disagreements and appeals. This can also mean that families don't have enough information about the costs of different options, or miss out on the opportunity to consider if a personal budget or direct payments might be suitable.
- The use of panels to make decisions about SEN placements meaning that families can feel excluded from the decision-making process.

For full details please click on the title link.

Published October 2017

Rochford Review: request for schools to pilot new assessments

The Council for Disabled Children (NCB) has published a request from the Department for Education for schools to pilot new assessments. This follows the DfE response to the Rochford Review on assessment for children who are working at a level that is below the standard of National Curriculum tests. The Standards and Testing Agency (STA) will be working with schools to run two projects to prepare for these changes:

- The pre-key stage standards will be reviewed, to ensure that they are fit for purpose. Schools are needed to take part in piloting in spring term 2018 and an evaluation in autumn term 2018.
- Pilot of the seven areas of engagement for cognition and learning. This will involve approximately 50 schools assessing their pupils not engaged in subject-specific learning against the seven areas of engagement for cognition and learning.

If a school would like to volunteer to take part in either of these pilots, or request further information, please contact Rochford.Review@education.gov.uk.

Parents' experiences of SEN & disability support for young children post-adoption

The Council for Disabled Children (CDC) would like to hear from parents who have adopted a child aged 0-5 since 2010, where the child's physical disability, learning disability or autism became evident after being placed with the family.
Through a focus group in London on 10th November, as well as some individual phone interviews, CDC is seeking parents' views on what coordinated support from health, education and social care services should look like, as well as positive examples. For more information visit http://bit.ly/2ynB9Q7.

Ofsted

Childcare Providers and inspections as at 31st March 2017

This release includes registered childcare providers and places, inspection outcomes, and joiners and leavers as at 31 March 2017.

Early Years Providers who left the Early Years Register, June 2016 to September 2017

This publication lists the number of providers who have left the Early Years register in each month between June 2016 and September 2017. The information is broken down by type of provider and their most-recent inspection outcome.

Health and Wellbeing

National Child Measurement Programme

This report presents findings from the Government's National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP) for England, 2016-17 school year for children in Reception (aged 4-5 years) and Year 6 (aged 10-11 years) in state schools. Key findings include:

- Almost a quarter of Reception children (1 in 4) were overweight including obese. In Year 6 it was over a third (1 in 3).
- The prevalence of obesity has increased since 2015/16 for Reception but remained similar in Year 6.
- Obesity prevalence was higher for boys than girls in both age groups.
- Obesity prevalence for children living in the most deprived areas was more than double that of those living in the least deprived areas for both Reception and Year 6.

Published 19 October 2017

Measles, Mumps and Rubella vaccination coverage in the UK

Recent NHS figures on vaccination coverage show that the UK is deemed to have eliminated measles for the first time. National coverage figures reported for the Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) 1st dose vaccine as measured at five years show that, for the first time, coverage is at the World Health Organisation recommended target level of 95 per cent. That figure is considered to ensure herd immunity, meaning the disease cannot spread because of the high level of vaccination rates. However, there are still reported clusters in the UK and outbreaks of measles across Europe.

The complications of measles can include infections of the lungs (pneumonia) and brain (encephalitis). If parents would like to take up childhood vaccinations (including catch-up vaccines for older children who may have missed them at an earlier age) practitioners can signpost them to their health visitor or GP as appropriate. Please click on the following link for information about the NHS childhood vaccination programme.

Medical conditions at school

The Health Conditions in School Alliance has a website site offering guidance and tools to schools who are looking after children with health conditions. This includes:

- A template medical conditions policy
- A sample individual healthcare plan and advice on what it should contain
- Guidance on the legal situation across the UK
- A process for children who receive education in different settings

Consultations

CLOSING SOON: Reformed Functional Skills Mathematics and English Subject Content

The DfE is seeking views on proposed subject content for revised Mathematics and English functional skills qualifications. Since April 2017, those taking Level 3 Early Years Educator qualifications can have Level 2 Functional Skills in Maths and English as an alternative to GCSEs at grade C or above.

Launch date: 12 September 2017
Closing date: 7 November 2017

CLOSING SOON: Short inspections of good schools: maintained schools and academies

This Ofsted consultation follows on from Short inspections of good schools, a consultation that ran between 15 June and 18 August 2017. Ofsted is seeking views on further proposals for changes to short inspections of maintained schools and academies from January 2018.

Launch date: 21 September 2017
Closing date: 8 November 2017

National Audit Office report on Ofsted's inspection of schools: call for evidence

This NAO study will examine the extent to which Ofsted's approach to inspecting schools is providing value for money. NAO will assess if Ofsted is well-placed to inspect schools efficiently and effectively; inspects schools in an efficient and effective way; and knows if its school inspections are having a positive impact.
If you would like to provide evidence for the study please email the study team on enquiries@nao.gsi.gov.uk putting the study title in the subject line. For more details please click on the title link. The report is scheduled for Spring 2018.

Conferences

3 November, Canterbury
Working with Families Conference
A one-day event to explore innovative ways of working with families and hear from leading practitioners in the field.

3 November, London
Safeguarding & Protecting Every Child 2017
This one-day early years safeguarding conference has been organised to enable educators to work proactively in a solution-driven and collaborative environment with children and their families.

4 November, Birmingham
Conference and AGM of the Association for Professional Development in Early Years (TACTYC)
A one day conference with conference themes including 'Young Children's Worlds'; 'Early Childhood Professionals for 21st Century Children'; and 'Challenges and Opportunities in Early Childhood'.

8 November, London

Business Summit: Priorities and Prospects

This Nursery World conference includes the new children and families minister Robert Goodwill MP speaking on policy priorities for the early years sector.

14 November, Maidstone

Key Issues for Early Years - Building Workforce Capacity and Extending Free Childcare

This conference from the Kent Early Years and Childcare service is focused on the changes set out in the government workforce strategy. Guest speakers include Penny Tassioni. Please note that this conference is open to delegates from outside Kent.

16 November, London

Key issues for children's services in England

This seminar will assess the future for children's services in England, looking at managing funding pressures, priorities for improving services and the next steps for inspections.

22 and 23 November, Telford

Baby Friendly Initiative Annual Conference

Bookings are now open for the annual conference of the UNICEF Baby Friendly Initiative, which has an aim of protecting, promoting and supporting breastfeeding and close, loving parent-infant relationships.

28 November, London

Improving Outcomes for Looked After Children

This conference offers an opportunity for professionals working with looked-after children to examine the Children and Social Work Act, review the progress made, address the most pressing issues, and build strategies on how to improve outcomes for children in care.

6 December, London

Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation: Vital Insights and Effective Practice

This conference will bring you up to speed with the latest intelligence, evidence, and examples of effective practice in tacking CSE and keeping young people safe.

7 December, London

Reforming primary assessment in England and implications for school accountability

This seminar will consider next steps for reform to primary assessment and the implications for accountability, including proposals to introduce a baseline assessment for children in Reception.

11 December, London

The unintended consequences of policy goals and funding methods on take-up and social mixing

This free IMEC seminar at the University of East London investigates take-up of the free entitlement among three-year-olds. Researchers found that almost 30% of children in low-income families did not take up their free place as soon as they became eligible. They also explore the extent to which children from low and higher income groups attend the same or different early education settings. To attend the seminar please email Eva Lloyd at elloyd@uel.ac.uk. You can find out more about IMEC here.

20 February 2018, Birmingham

8th British Early Childhood Education Research Association (BECERA) Conference

This one day annual conference provides a forum for reflective practitioner researchers to present their views and research for systematic peer-review and examination for its transferability and relevance to others. The 2018 BECERA is focusing on the importance and nature of **creativity and critical thinking within early years**.

Call for papers deadline is 8th January 2018.

More information: http://www.becera.org.uk.

ECU Bulletin is compiled and edited by NCB's Early Childhood Unit (ECU). Any communications about the ECU Bulletin should be sent to: ecuinfo@ncb.org.uk Please note that there may be a charge to download or view some documents featured in the Bulletin.