

The Future of Children's Centres

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The Way We Were



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How are Children's Centres doing?

- July 2012 survey (ECCE) showed centres offer 46 different types of services and programmes
- Most offer some evidence-based early intervention programmes
- NESS Evaluation found positive impacts at age 7:
 - More stimulating home learning environment
 - More positive parenting style
 - For some of the most deprived mothers, better life satisfaction
- Ofsted inspection shows 69 per cent good or outstanding, almost all (98 per cent) at least satisfactory
- Strengths in quality of care, guidance and support for families, effectiveness of safeguarding work
- Most (over 80 per cent) centres providing similar or more service, with disadvantaged families prioritised
- Parenting, early intervention, outreach and family work expanding



On the other hand...

- No evidence of impact on children's educational outcomes
- Inspection evidence not so positive on children developing skills for the future and parents developing economic stability and independence
- Most centres coping financially, but 1 in 10 'struggling'
- Provision of childcare is reducing
- Challenge of organisational change
- Nevertheless, centres remain well placed to engage and support the most vulnerable families, with a need to increase focus on the areas that make the most difference eg early child language development



Government priorities for children's centres

- A vibrant network of high quality children's centres, accessible to all, focused on improving outcomes for those in greatest need.
- Working in an integrated way with other services and each other
- Professional autonomy and responsibility of children's centre leaders and staff - a transformational role in their centre and across early years
- New ways to involve families and communities
- Strengthen accountability arrangements, to drive improvement in services particularly for families in greatest need



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“It is easier to build strong children than
to repair broken men.”

Frederick Douglass

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