

Early Years Strategy Progress Report

Education Children and Families Committee

21 June 2012

1 Purpose of report

- 1.1 To summarise the key achievements within Early Years and highlight the priorities for the future development of the service.

2 Main report

Background

- 2.1 The Early Years Strategy was agreed by the Education Children and Families Committee in January 2010 and officially launched in March 2010 at the Early Years Conference.
- 2.2 The strategy sets out a vision and long term commitment to improve the life chances for children and identifies early intervention as a key priority for the city and a core component of *Getting it right for every child* in Edinburgh. The strategy also supports the coalition's commitment to ensuring that every child has the best start in life. (Coalition Agreement Schedule 1, 1.1)
- 2.3 The Strategy has 4 aims:
- Aim 1: To develop integrated, flexible services to provide effective learning and childcare for all children and families
 - Aim 2: To develop a highly skilled and motivated workforce to deliver a high quality Early Years Service
 - Aim 3: To strengthen and develop universal services in partnership to provide support for all children and families
 - Aim 4: To develop learning through play opportunities and active learning as integral parts of the Early Years Service
- 2.4 Since the launch of the Strategy, substantial progress has been made in all 4 key areas. Over the past year the Early Years Team have been involved and influenced national developments in early years such as the Play Talk Read campaign, Wee Blether and the National Parenting Strategy development carrying out an exercise to engage with parents who are "hardly reached."

- 2.5 Staff across the sector have had the opportunity to hear national speakers on the importance of 0-3 and Curriculum for Excellence through locally organised conferences.

Key Achievements in 2011/12

Aim 1: To develop integrated, flexible services to provide effective learning and childcare for all children and families

- 2.6 The quality of provision in pre-school establishments is overall very good with 92% of pre-school establishments achieving positive inspection results. 100% of establishments were rated good, very good and excellent by the Care Inspectorate in June 2010/2011, up from 93% in 2009/10.
- 2.7 Approximately 40% of Edinburgh's pre-school children attend 120 partner provider nurseries and their inspection reports indicate very good provision overall. Two nurseries have received national awards this year. In order to maintain this standard of quality, partnership arrangements with 3 partner provider nurseries will not be renewed at the end of this session.
- 2.8 By increasing the number of early years peripatetic teachers, additional teacher support has been provided to 50% of partner provider nurseries.
- 2.9 High quality CPD opportunities have been offered to support the Curriculum for Excellence e.g. an early level literacy tracker has been produced to support literacy skills; the CIRCLE resource has been developed and launched to provide early literacy support; the Early Years Conference had a focus on health and well being; all centres have numeracy and maths pathways.
- 2.10 Priority has been given to supporting improvement in the quality of 0-3year services. A comprehensive training programme for staff working with 0-3s in baby rooms has been delivered; a quality assurance framework developed and implemented; changes made to service level agreements to include expectation that all 0-3s practitioners will implement the new Pre-birth to Three National Guidance.
- 2.11 The number of pre-school places within the local authority nurseries has been increased by 8% over the past two years to accommodate the increase in the number of pre-school children.
- 2.12 Opportunities to rationalise the early years estate and re-invest resources have been taken. Three nursery schools have closed and children from the closed nursery school have made successful transitions into other early years provision.
- 2.13 Resources from the closures have been re-invested and used to increase the number of nursery places and increase support to families in identified areas of the city, providing a wider range of early years services in the local communities. Developments include improvements at the Royal Mile, Prestonfield, Calderglen, Leith Walk, Corstorphine, Fort and two new 'hubs' at Clermiston and Gylemuir.

- 2.14 Following information road shows for staff and parents, the number of discretionary applications to delay entry into primary school has reduced from 218 in 2010/11 to 88 in 2012/13.

Aim 2: To develop a highly skilled and motivated workforce to deliver a high quality Early Years Service

- 2.15 Early Years staff have been supported both within the local authority and partner provider nurseries to meet Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) registration requirements. 52 practitioners are studying for a BA in childhood practice. The % of staff in partner provider nurseries meeting SSSC registration requirements has increased from 83% in 2010 to 89% in 2011.
- 2.16 This is the second year the Froebel certificate course has run at Edinburgh University and 22 students have successfully completed the course this year. A Froebel annual conference for over 100 delegates is planned for June 2012.
- 2.17 The Early Years Staffing Review has continued over this year. Two levels of senior posts for nursery nurses within nursery schools and classes have been introduced and an evaluation of joint management arrangements in early years establishments has been carried out.
- 2.18 Early years workers posts have been introduced into large nursery classes (40:40 and above) to provide additional leadership within the nursery. To date 13 new promoted posts have been created with a further 13 to be recruited over the coming academic year as vacancies arise. The new senior post will work alongside teachers and have a complementary role to ensure positive outcomes for children.
- 2.19 A consultation has taken place on the change of name for staff within early years. The change to job titles reflects the changing needs of the service and job remits of early years staff. The majority of staff have expressed support for this change. Appendix 1 shows current and proposed job titles for nursery staff.
- 2.20 The evaluation of the joint management arrangements within nursery schools and C&F Centres found that overall, joint management arrangements have been very positive. It has enabled staff from smaller establishments to share expertise and resources to improve service for children and families. It is recommended that, where appropriate, a staged 'organic' approach to the implementation of further joint management arrangements is considered. See Appendix 2 for copy of the evaluation report.

Aim 3: To strengthen and develop universal services in partnership to provide support for all children and families

- 2.21 Increased support to parents has been available to families with young children across all areas of the city through the PEEP programme and by the partnership approach to services within neighbourhoods.
- 2.22 The additional staffing resources allocated to nurseries in areas of deprivation has enabled staff to work more flexibly and been used to support parents and children, improve transitions and enhance children's learning e.g. A cluster pilot has been running over the past year across five nursery schools/classes in one

area. This has been achieved by the schools sharing a designated staffing resource of 1 Nursery Nurse who has provided cover for parenting programmes, individual and group work for children on literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing. This way of working has also allowed the schools to work together with many more parents and their children within local areas.

- 2.23 A comprehensive training programme for staff within early years to gain skills in engaging more effectively with parents has been undertaken. Over 200 staff are trained in the universal PEEP programme and approximately 70 groups are running across the city, providing early learning opportunities and universal support to families.
- 2.24 More targeted support to families with young children has been provided by the Child and Family Centres and Sure Start Projects. Child and Family Centres continue to provide services for our most vulnerable very young children (0-3yrs) and have also extended their community work with families providing various parenting support/programmes to enable vulnerable or “hardly reached” families access universal parenting or child development work within local communities.

Aim 4: To develop learning through play opportunities and active learning as integral parts of the Early Years Service

- 2.25 The Curriculum for Excellence early level now encompasses the pre-school and early years of primary school. Active Learning approaches are being further developed in the early stages of primary to improve transitions between the nursery and the Primary 1 class.
- 2.26 There is an increasing awareness of the importance of outdoor play and learning within nurseries and over 600 staff have attended wide ranging of CPD opportunities on play and active outdoor learning.
- 2.27 All local authority nurseries were given an additional grant to improve their outdoor play and learning experiences for children.
- 2.28 The annual Play Day event in the Grassmarket which highlights the value of free play opportunities attracted over 500 families.
- 2.29 Play@ Home has delivered targeted support to vulnerable families. This programme, in partnership with health, supports early language development.
- 2.30 An effective partnership with the Forest Education Initiative, Living Class Rooms, Grounds for Learning and the Criminal Justice authority have provided additional opportunities to improve outdoor play and learning in community woodlands.

Future Challenges and Priorities

- 2.31 The Early Years Strategy sets out a long term vision which describes the desire to create integrated flexible services that provide effective learning and childcare. It recognises that families may need additional support at some times in their lives and to different degrees and that families should be able to access this support no matter where they live. Substantial progress has been made

towards this vision since the launch of the Early Years Strategy in 2010 and we will continue to build on this strong foundation.

- 2.32 Our ambition is to ensure that each neighbourhood, community or cluster would have access to integrated flexible early years services .In order to realise this vision, resources need to be realigned, the way services are delivered and located needs to change and our workforce need to work more flexibility and across boundaries
- 2.33 Currently parents have to access services from a range of discrete providers e.g. nursery school and classes, child and family centres or the voluntary sector. Boundaries that exist between services and centres are not always helpful in meeting the range of family needs.
- 2.34 Historically we have concentrated services that offer intensive support in areas of deprivation. Some children in other parts of the city, facing similar issues are not able to access the same level of support. There are physical restrictions in the way we deliver services because of historical locations, size, age and design of buildings. (see appendix 3)

Aim 1: To develop integrated, flexible services to provide effective learning and childcare for all children and families

Pre-school Development

- 2.35 The continual improvement in the quality of early years settings will be maintained using a planned and proportionate support and challenge approach and offering a comprehensive CPD programme to support literacy, numeracy and well being
- 2.36 The Scottish Government has announced an intention to expand free nursery provision from 475 hours to 600 hours a year in September 2014 for all three- and four-year-olds. This commitment is expected to be included in the Children's Bill in 2013. There are a number of ways in which this increase could be implemented. Discussions will take place with all sectors within early years to agree the optimal way of implementing this increased entitlement to early learning and care. Additional funding would be required to implement this increase.
- 2.37 There are pressures on nursery places in some parts of the city due to demographic changes and housing development, with a 19% increase in pre-school children over the past 6 years. Planning will continue to increase the number of available nursery places to meet local demand wherever possible and improve the quality and fabric of nursery buildings.
- 2.38 A new SEEMIS database nursery management system will be introduced and for the first time will bring together local authority and partner provider nursery data.

Re-configuration and Investment in Early Years Services

- 2.39 Over the past year, three nursery schools were closed on the understanding that capital receipts will be re-invested in Early Years services. The plan is to

enhance and develop new services in identified areas which currently have limited service provision. Key areas of the city requiring additional support have been identified through analysis of demographics, resource allocations and referral indicators.

- 2.40 Services would enable children to experience education and childcare in a universal setting, meet some of the demand for pre-school education, and enhance provision particularly for vulnerable 2-3years olds. Plans include:

Expansion of service provision at Fort Early Years Centre

Enhance staffing in the centre to accommodate increased numbers of places for 2-3 year olds and wraparound provision for 3-5 years. This will support vulnerable children and be used to provide affordable childcare for some families. This will enable the centre to further enhance the current provision of early pre school early learning with childcare and support for vulnerable children in an integrated way.

Re-location of Pilrig Child and Family Centre to Craigentinny PS

Pilrig Child and Family Centre provides support to vulnerable children and their parents. The accommodation requires substantial upgrading. There is capacity within Craigentinny Primary School to accommodate the centre within the school building, alongside the existing pre school nursery class. This would then enable children and families to be supported from 0-5 in a universal early years setting. There would be capacity to increase the numbers of places for children aged 2-3.

Open a class for 2-3 year olds at Royal Mile PS and extend 3-5 years class to year round service.

The nursery class for the Royal Mile PS is located in an annexe building. There is capacity within the building to open a class for 2-3 year olds alongside the pre school provision. Both could be open all year round and this would provide additional support for vulnerable children and families combined with affordable childcare.

Develop a provision for 0-3 support in Oxgangs

There is potential within the school to develop a service for families with children aged 0-3. This would require additional staffing and partnership working within the school.

Open an Early Years Centre in the Clermiston/Drumbrae/East Craigs area

This part of the centre does not have an early years service providing for 0-3 that can be accessed locally. There is also the need to enhance provision for 3-5.

The capital cost of these new developments would be funded from the Early Years Change Fund and capital receipts from the nursery school closures. Further detail is included in the report "Early Years and Early Intervention Change Fund."

- 2.41 The ongoing review of the work within Child and Family Centres will plan the role of centres in delivering the wider aims of the strategy. Centres will continue to provide highly targeted services for pre-birth to three and a range of services which include early intervention/ preventative services to a wider range of parents. The model of provision will be flexible and responsive to the needs of families within their own communities and be available to parents across the city. There are opportunities within individual centres to develop their role further. The centres will be renamed as Early Years Centres to reflect the level of differentiated opportunities available for children and their families
- 2.42 The Scottish Government have allocated Early Years Change Funding to deliver a shared commitment to giving children the best start in life and to improve life chances of children. An additional allocation has been made for under 2s who are vulnerable/ looked after. This additional resource will be used to increase support to vulnerable children and improve access to services in line with agreed local and national priorities.

Aim 2: To develop a highly skilled and motivated workforce to deliver a high quality Early Years Service

- 2.43 Childcare workers will be given support to gain degree level qualifications in order to ensure the sector has suitably qualified managers to meet the SSSC requirements. All support staff within early years will need to be registered by the SSSC by end of 2013.
- 2.44 Work will continue to introduce new roles including new leadership and management roles within all early years settings to create a more flexible workforce that can work across the sector.

Aim 3: To strengthen and develop universal services in partnership to provide support for all children and families

- 2.45 The improvement and commitment to the development of Pre-Birth to Three Services will continue as set out in the Pre-Birth to Three Plan for Action. There are plans to: continue and expand the training programme for 0-3 practitioners and implement the quality assurance procedure. The first 0-3s conference for Edinburgh's practitioners is planned for September 2012
- 2.46 The PEEP programme will continue to be rolled out to all areas of the city with the aspiration to have an age appropriate group running within easy access in all areas of the city.
- 2.47 Edinburgh's Commissioning Plan for Early Years Services will be subject to a 3 month consultation process and reflect the priorities and aspirations as set out in the Early Years Strategy.
- 2.48 The availability of affordable childcare has been identified as a priority in the Early Years Strategy. Funding arrangements are to be reviewed to ensure coherence between the childcare strategy and the improving employability funding administered by Economic Development. Work is also underway to take forward the coalition commitment to establish a city wide childcare cooperative (Coalition Agreement Schedule 1, 1.6).

Aim 4: To develop learning through play opportunities and active learning as integral parts of the Early Years Service

- 2.49 Further development of play based learning in nursery and early primary will be taken forward by a range of methods including CPD and the sharing of good practice with plans to promote transformational change of school grounds for Outdoor Play and Learning.
- 2.50 Conferences and training events are planned to further develop both indoor and outdoor play opportunities for children. A further Play Day event is planned for the Grassmarket in August.

3 Financial Implications

- 3.1 Service development will take place within existing early years resources and will meet the agreed the Council's budget proposals February 2011/12.
- 3.2 The cost of the capital investment for the re-configuration of Early Years Services would be funded from the Early Years Change Fund and the capital receipts from the nursery school closures.

4 Equalities Impact

- 4.1 A relevance assessment was carried out and this area of work scores 6 in terms of equalities relevance and a full equalities impact assessment will be carried out before the next Early Years progress report in June 2013.
- 4.2 There will be a positive impact for the most vulnerable children by enhancing services in areas where additional support is required.

5 Environmental Impact

- 5.1 There are no adverse environmental impacts arising from this report.

6 Conclusions

- 6.1 Overall very good progress has been made since the launch of the early years strategy in March 2010.
- 6.2 Key achievements include; improving the quality of early years services; focussed work on 0-3s developments; the introduction of new posts within nursery schools and classes; re-invested resources in areas of need; increased the number of local authority nursery places; increased support for parents and improved the outdoor learning experiences for children.
- 6.3 Future Challenges and Priorities include: Continue to improve quality of early years services; agree way forward to implement the proposed increased entitlement to early learning and care; enhance and develop new services in identified areas; continue the phased introduction of new posts and titles and joint management arrangements within early year establishments.

7 Recommendations

7.1 It is recommended that the committee:

- a) Note the content of the report and the priorities for the next stage of development within early years
- b) Approve the intention to re-configure and invest in Early Years Services to enhance and develop new services including the expansion and relocation of provision and the change of name of child and family centres to Early Years Centre to reflect the broader range of services to be provided

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Director of Children and Families

Appendices	1 Job Titles and Remit 2 Summary Evaluation Joint Management Arrangements 3 Areas of deprivation by Social Work Neighbourhood area
Contact/tel/Email	Aileen McLean Senior Education Manager (Early Stages) Tel no 469 3300 aileen.mclean@edinburgh.gov.uk
Wards affected	All
Single Outcome Agreement	5. Our children have the best possible start in life and are ready to succeed
Background Papers	

APPENDIX 1 JOB TITLES

Current Job Title	Proposed New Job Title
Child and Family / Early Years Centre Manager (Grade 8)	Head of Centre (Grade 8)
Senior Early Years Worker, Deputes, Senior Nursery Officer (Grade 7)	Senior Early Years Officer (Grade 7)
Early Years Worker and Nursery Officer (Grade 6)	Early Years Officer (Grade 6)
Nursery Nurse (Grade 5)	Early Years Practitioner (Grade 5)
Learning Assistant; Crèche Worker/Assistants (Grade 3 – currently under review)	Early Years Assistant (Grade 3 – currently under review)

N.B. The above list does not include the titles of other posts within Early Years establishments e.g. teacher, group worker etc

Summary Evaluation of the Joint Management arrangements within Nursery Schools, Early Years and Child and Family Centres

1. Background

The Early Years Strategy sets out a vision which describes the desire to create integrated flexible services that provide effective learning and childcare. It recognises that families may need additional support at some times in their lives and to different degrees and that families should be able to access this support no matter where they live. We need to develop teams in early years to be able to deliver a service that is flexible, supports education and childcare, able to cater for our most vulnerable children and be accessed locally. In addition, we need to ensure that we can support transition from home to centre and throughout the early level, from nursery setting to pre-school.

Our ambition is to ensure that each neighbourhood, community or cluster would have access to integrated flexible early years services. In order to realise this vision, our staff in early years need to be flexible and work across professional and physical boundaries. We have, for example, set up early years hubs which provide satellite support from larger centres to ensure that parents have a local point of access for services from 0-3.

Work is already underway to introduce new roles within early years to create a more flexible workforce that can work across the sector. New leadership roles have been introduced and management structures in nursery schools are being piloted to ensure that headteachers have time to fulfil a wider role. Staffing structures of child and family centres are under review.

Over the last three years opportunities have occurred where it has been possible or necessary to put in place joint management arrangements across early years settings.

In order to make decisions about the future of joint management arrangements, an evaluation of these pilots has been undertaken to identify the benefits and potential issues.

In the settings involved staff have embraced the new working arrangements and we would want to recognise their commitment to making things work. People respond to change differently and this report attempts to summarise principles that made things successful and identify what would be important in moving forward.

2. Examples of Joint Management

There are 3 different scenarios evaluated in this report.

Scenario 1

This scenario includes two stand alone nursery schools managed by one headteacher with the addition of a senior early years worker. One is a medium sized nursery school and the second is a small nursery school. At the time of writing this report 6 children attended this nursery for afternoon sessions. Both establishments were managed by a headteacher who would have had management time of 1-2 days per week and the rest of the time included in the ratio working with children. As part of the pilot, the headteacher was not included within the ratio and additional management support came from a senior early years worker.

Scenario 2

This scenario includes a large primary school and a nursery school. Both are situated in the village although they are 0.5miles apart. The headteacher and the management team of the primary school took over the running of the nursery school with an additional early years worker employed. Previously the nursery had been managed by a nursery head teacher with 1-2 days management relief. A principal teacher was deployed to the nursery reporting to the DHT/HT.

“The manager is not in the centre all of the time but can be contacted at the end of a phone, not a problem”

Practitioner

Scenario 3

This scenario includes an Early Years Centre and a Child and Family Centre being managed by one centre manager. The Early Years Centre has a large team and is located in a new facility. The Child and Family centre is small and located 1.5miles away in a building that requires to be upgraded. Previously each centre had a manager.

3. Evaluation Process

The evaluation was completed by representatives from the Early Years Staffing Review Group and an additional member of the early year’s team. The team included a Principal Officer, a Child and Family Centre manager, a nursery headteacher, a primary headteacher and a QIO. Some of the team had conducted a review in the previous session that looked at the role of senior/early years worker. This review also involved some of the same centres and meant that some staff felt comfortable with the review team.

‘ My job is 100% better, so much has opened up, improved the service and I feel less isolated’

Practitioner

The review team used quality indicators in the national performance framework Child at The Centre to inform the questionnaire. The review involved interviews with all staff or in the larger centres, a representation of staff roles across the team. Staff were interviewed in confidence and this report will give a broad summary of views to ensure that staff cannot be identified.

4. Positive Outcomes-What were the positive key features of joint management?

Staff

- Had a very clear understanding of the vision and aims for the centres and the time and energy spent by management teams in developing this understanding was regarded very positively by staff teams
- Were involved in planning for the centres and described an improved sense of teamwork.
- Responded very positively to distributed leadership and had more ownership of centre priorities.
- Had more opportunities to participate in training and job shadowing across a larger team.
- Had more access to a range of resources and described more effective use of available resources.

'Pulling together resources is really beneficial. PEEP is now running within the community and curriculum development has improved'

Manager

Parents and children

- Experienced improved transitions for children from home to nursery and nursery to school and earlier involvement in the primary school
- Accessed a wider range of support within their local community
- Benefited from the arrangements because of increased opportunities offered through the larger teams e.g. parenting programmes such as PEEP, Mellow Parenting, counselling could be offered more frequently.
- Experienced enriched learning experiences due to improved access to resources and benefited from staff who had increased training opportunities.

'Communication-making sure everyone knows what is going on can be difficult'

5. Challenges and how they were overcome

- Good communication is necessary when working across different locations and introducing major change.
- Clear role, remits and lines of responsibility across managers need to be established and an understanding and sense of trust developed among staff teams.
- Good time management is required by senior managers to ensure a balance between time for planning and maintaining a high profile in the centre
- Decisions about staffing structures and appointments need to be made timeously to overcome uncertainties for staff teams

Manager

6. Quality Measures

Throughout the pilot period there were no external inspections from Care Inspectorate or HMIE. Previous inspection reports indicated that the centres were performing at a very good level across a range of quality indicators from former Care Commission inspections. The centres own self evaluation audits taking account of the views of parents/carers and visits from our Quality Improvement Team would indicate that centre standards have been maintained or improved.

Following a very good evaluation as part of the review of the staffing pilot, one centre was observed to have very good practice in assessment of children's learning. Staff had developed systems which extended the engagement of parents and children in sharing learning targets. This practice was submitted by the authority to Education Scotland to be considered as an example of good practice for the National Assessment Resource (NAR) for reporting and profiling. Practice was recognised as excellent and given a quality kite mark.

7. Conclusion

The joint management arrangements have overall been very positive. Where centres and staff work as part of a wider team there are benefits in the opportunities available to staff, parents and children, providing opportunities to share resources and expertise across centres.

There has been a better balance between leadership / management responsibilities, teaching duties and transition arrangements from pre school to early level have improved in one scenario.

There can be a cost benefit in sharing management across centres and this can make smaller establishments more cost effective and viable in the future.

There are examples in place across Scotland of shared management arrangements, particularly in rural settings. In some areas there are campus models of schools from nursery to secondary.

8. Recommendations

It is recommended that a staged, 'organic' approach to the implementation of further joint management arrangements is implemented taking into account the following:

- Consideration should be given to staff working outwith the ratio in order to address issues of time required for planning and improve the flexibility and management of the centre.
- Ensure that the combined size of establishments comply with Care Inspectorate regulations.
- The distance between establishments and the nature of the service.
- The changing needs of the service, taking into account local and national priorities
- Decisions about leadership roles will be dependent upon the type of service and will include the roles of Principal Teacher and the Senior Early Years Worker

APPENDIX 3: AREAS OF DEPRIVATION BY SOCIAL WORK NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA

