Children’s centres: Impact on child poverty

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Two studies

Outreach to children and families:
a scoping study of children's centres and extended schools 2008-9

The challenges and opportunities for children's centres in rural communities 2009

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Outreach to children and families

Children’s centres and extended schools successfully engage and gain the trust of families affected by poverty, poor living environments and other features of social exclusion.

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Outreach to children and families: parents

56% on incomes of 15k or less
44% lived in workless households
80% of lone parents unemployed
48% qualified to Level 1 or below
36% had long-term health problems

But this data often not captured

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Outreach to children and families: parents

Support from children's centres and schools was described as qualitatively different from dealings with other services or agencies. For the first time, parents felt understood and not stigmatised. The perceived benefits were, in some cases, described as "life-changing".

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Outreach: main benefits

Parenting skills
Better able to deal with problems
Self-confidence
Reduced isolation

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Outreach: changes in family

Family relationships improved	63%
Children’s development	38%
Training or employment	29%
Playing/reading with children	26%
Reduced debt/housing problems	11%

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Outreach to children and families: poverty

Staff varied in their understandings of why families needed support. Staff were well aware of the existence of poverty, but the weight given to it, as both a cause and an explanation for the vulnerability of certain families, varied.

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Outreach to children and families

Parents' main concern was for their children, but many of them wanted help to find jobs, to improve life for their families.

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Parents: areas where help needed

Children's behaviour	52%
Children's learning	44%
Getting back to work	42%
Childcare	41%
Health	38%
Relationships	19%

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Workless parents: areas where help needed

	All	Workless
Getting back to work	42%	57%
Childcare	41%	51%
Managing Money	19%	40%

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Children's centres: rural communities

400,000 children in rural communities in England live in poor households. Rural poverty is rising.

For families without jobs the disadvantages of rural life are very significant, causing some of them to miss out on primary health care, continuing education, social relationships, childcare and employment.

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Children's centres: rural communities

Asked about the areas of family life that parents would most like help with, the most frequent responses related to children's behaviour or learning.

But

50%, of parents living in workless households wanted help with getting back to work.

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What more?

Understanding poverty

Tackling it systematically

Capturing aspiration

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