working in partnership with parents – the role of early years providers

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who we are

- National membership organisation for children's nurseries across the UK
- Registered charity since 1999
- Promoting quality in early years
- Specialist support for children's nurseries
- Support to local authorities

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a new era and new politics

- Department for Education
- New coalition ministerial team
- Michael Gove Conservative MP – Secretary of State for Education
- Sarah Teather Lib Dem MP – Minister of State for Children and Families
- Tim Loughton Conservative MP – Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Children and Families

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key policy statements from the coalition government

- Free nursery care through a diverse range of providers
- Free entitlement extension to 15 hours from September for all 3 and 4 year olds
- 20,000 free places for the most disadvantaged 2 year olds
- More men to become childcarers
- Sure Start funding for outreach services and 4,200 health visitors
- No news on EYFS
- Child poverty targets retained

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the UK childcare market

- Estimated total of 15,040 nurseries provide care and education for 662,835 children
- The nursery sector employs over 200,000 people
- Average cost for a full-time nursery place is £156 per week
- Private and voluntary providers comprise 87% of the market
- Average pay for a qualified nursery employee is £8.04/hr
- The value of the UK children's nurseries market is 3.9bn
- Over 4,000 Early Years Professionals

Ref: Laing & Buisson 2010

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key milestones

Policy developments for early years providers:

- 1997- increased investment in early years
- Universal services – free entitlement
- Targeted support – Sure Start, focus on disadvantage
- Related wider policy developments – eg. increased maternity leave, flexible working rights, childcare vouchers, tax credits

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key milestones

- Every Child Matters – vision for ‘a family centred system’ by 2010; integrated services
- Childcare Act 2006 – duties for local authorities; Sufficiency Assessments; information and advice for parents
- EYFS – partnership working with parents

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what do parents want?

Top reasons for choosing setting:

- Reputation/Recommendation
- Environment
- Location
- Staff

Parents' views of main benefits of childcare

- Social skills and school readiness

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services parents want to see at their early years setting

Service	%
Courses or training	19
Health services for families	25
Advice or support for parents	15
Help in finding additional childcare	10
Job or career advice	10
Parenting classes	11
Parent or childminder and toddler sessions	16
Counselling services	5
Other services	1
Would not like to use any services that are not currently available	46

Source: Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents 2008 – National Centre for Social Research

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conflicting messages…

Parenting advice industry – books, TV, website, chatrooms, friends, family….

Role of early years providers:

- Personalisation – know and understand the child, family and family circumstances
- Partnership – work together
- Practical – helping parents take learning home

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what is good practice?

Ofsted – Leading to Excellence 2008

Key points – in strong settings:

- Parents are active partners
- Two-way communication between parents and practitioners
- Key staff spend time with parents and use information to inform planning
- Creative approaches to meet parents' needs – eg websites, texting, meetings, translation
- Parents contribute and get involved in setting

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key points of focus for early years providers

- Quality and continuous improvement
- Training and development
- Parents as partners
- Communication and parental involvement
  - New government policy changes
  - Key worker system
  - Sharing the child's achievements as well as the nursery's achievements

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key points of focus for early years providers

- Marketing
- Local networks
- Use of technology

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